EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF STUDENT IN CONDUCTING THEIR RESEARCH STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research was undertaken to determine the challenges encountered by the students in conducting their research study. Specifically, the researcher sought to find out the profile of the respondents in terms of gender and program enrolled, to know the challenges encountered by the students in conducting their research study in terms of research topic, resources, instructor factor, and student factor, and the coping mechanisms of the students in addressing the different challenges encountered in conducting their research study. This study used a mixed research method, including explanatory research, to analyze the challenges encountered by students at Data Center College of the Philippines, Laoag City. This method gathers and analyzes both quantitative with a total respondents of 236 and qualitative data with 7 participants, aiming to increase understanding and predict future occurrences of criminological issues. Frequency and percentage were used to treat the gathered data statistically. Based on the findings the The participants really challenged in conducting their research study. They mention different challenges and different strategies. Based on the participants' answer, the researchers developed six (6) themes: (1) seek professional advice (2) web browsing (3) fair contribution, (4) establish consistent consultation, (5) persistence and (6) constructive discussion. The researchers concludes that research subjects are formidable challenges because research studies are never easy, and the students had no choice but to deal with them because they were part of their degree.

Keywords: *Seeking professional advice, Web browsing, Fair contribution, Establish consistent consultation, Persistence, Constructive discussion, Exploring, Challenges, Conducting, Research study.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational research and research in general, promote national development. When students can identify educational problems and research into it, they are more likely to come up with solutions which could bring about improvement in practice and developmental changes in educational policies. Students are required to study and conduct research to discover strategies and guidelines to better understand educational issues, and to develop and/or modify the existing theory to improve educational research. (Tuijnman, 2003).

According to Sekaran (2003), there are some essential points included in the research process, starting with the picking of a research subject and the working out of an experimental thesis, which is the dispute that is necessary to be defended in the research paper itself. After the topic has been selected, it is required to find all the possible necessary sources which are claimed to support the research.

Research is conducted to address a particular issue. The research provides an avenue for students to gain in-depth experience learning and conducting with a topic related to their specific field of study. The ability to collect, analyze and present empirical data is a core skill every *student* must learn. The students are exposed to how and why research is developed to help solve problems that currently do not have answers. This must be done precisely and methodically in order to look for new information, skills, attitudes, and values, or to reinterpret existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. Research also provides an opportunity for research advisors to guide the students on their path to becoming professionals and help them explore career opportunities that may not otherwise be available (Bocar, 2009).

This research study determined how challenging the problem encountered in conducting research and understand the coping mechanism in overcome challenges.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aimed to explore the challenges of students of Data Center College of the Philippines in conducting their research study.

Specially, it south to answer the following questions:

1. What is the Profile of the respondents as to:
    1.1 Gender; and
    1.2 Program Enrolled.
2. What are the challenges encountered by the students in conducting their research study, in terms of:
    2.1 Research Topic;
    2.2 Resources;
    2.3 Instructor Factor; and
    2.4 Student Factor.
3. What are the coping mechanism of the students in addressing the different challenges encountered in conducting their research study?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

David A. Kolb (1970s), a psychologists who proposed experiential learning theory "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge result from the combination of grasping and transforming the experience." This theory suggest the students need to learn from the experiences of previous researchers to connect new knowledge with their existing understanding. This will be the basis for the new researchers to build a strong foundation for conducting their research study.

4. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This study focused on exploring the challenges of the students in conducting their research study specifically to the research topic, resources, instructor factor and student factor as well as the coping mechanism in addressing the different challenges.

This study delimits to the fourth (4) year students who are officially enrolled in research subject in the school year 2023-2024 at Data Center College of the Philippines of Laoag City, Inc.

5. SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

Professors. The results of this study could be useful to the professors when they discuss research subject. By knowing about the problems of the students in conducting their study, professors will be able to modify their teaching methods to provide more effective discussion and the professors will be aware on the situation of the students.

Researchers. The researchers will gain more experience in conducting research study, fulfillment personal interest, knowledge advancement and also pursue their degree despite the challenges that arise.

Future Researchers. This research will be a useful reference for the researchers who would plan to make any related study particularly this topic exploring the challenges of undergraduate students in their research. In addition, it would more easier and faster for them to look for possible sites that would help them look for references.

6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Challenges. It implies the level of difficulty or complexity of the students in dealing the challenges they encountered in conducting their research study, and it can be subjective based on the skills or capabilities of the students.
Explore. To scrutinize the challenges that have been experienced by undergraduate students in research.

Undergraduate Students. These are the students who are not yet graduate on their bachelor's degree and who are currently pursuing their research subject.

7. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study of Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) is about examining the challenegs of undergraduate students in conducting their research particularly in Harare and Bulawayo region of the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). In this study, the researchers used descriptive survey, focus group discussion and documents analysis. They used random sampling for descriptive survey while purposive sampling for focus group discussion and document analysis in choosing their respondents. The data were interpreted and analysed though thematic analysis. This study identifies three main categories of challenges that affect how successful a student's research experience is. These challenges are: Mentor-student challenges, student-related challenges, and institution-related challenges. The mentor-student challenges comprise the level of engagement between the advisor and student, advisor availability, and student interest in the topic. These challenges are the Supervision challenges which explains that students can face the challenges of poor communication from supervisors or poor guidance. It is important that undergraduate students specially have adequate guidance. It should be noted that undergraduate students have little to no background in their assigned research area, making it necessary for the supervisors to teach them enough about the topic to get them productive early in the process while still maintaining their excitement. Another challenge under the mentor-students challenges is that the pacing of content, this can be an issue for undergraduate research; too slow, and they can get bored or disinterested; too fast, and it can seem like too much and they may become overwhelmed or disinterested. However, on the study of (Bocar , 2009), mentioned that it is all about investigating the most difficult item student-researchers of Political Science 8 in La Salle University encountered when they conducted their research study during the first semester of the school year 2008-2009. The descriptive survey method was utilized in this study. The researcher – made instruments consisted of open - ended questions administered to the 14 students officially enrolled in subject, Political Science 8. Majority of the respondents found it difficult to finish their research. The learning which the student-researchers got from their class discussions and applied in the conduct of their research work is not the very reason that results in serious academic difficulties and failures. The cooperation of the chosen respondents beyond the academic institution is a very crucial problem. To some extent students also felt that those personal problems like time and stress management may disturb their concentration.

8. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The researchers used mixed research method through explanatory research design. The mixed research method refers to the methodology of the research approach whereby researchers collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study (Allison Shorten and Joanna Smith, 2017). The explanatory research design was used because the researchers wanted to go beyond identifying challenges and aim to explain the underlying factors, relationships, and causes contributing to these challenges. This was used to dig deep the reason why certain problems are existing and also to understand the effective strategies to address the challenges encountered by students in conducting research studies. It can increase the understanding of how or why a problem is occurring and help predict future occurrences. On the study of Lobo (2023), he used sequential explanatory research to evaluate the challenges and obstacles experienced by undergraduate students while finishing their thesis.

8.1 Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study are 236 fourth-year students enrolled in research subjects in every department. The researchers used the Slovins formula to get the sample size in every department in choosing the respondents in the survey questionnaire, while systematic random sampling was used in the in-depth interview. The technique that was used in choosing the participant in the systematic random sampling, regardless of the names, as to the number of respondents is every count of 2.

9. PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

The said data were presented in tabular form in accordance with the specific posited on the statement of the problem.

9.1 Profile of the respondents

This section presents the profile of the respondents particularly the gender and program enrolled by the respondents. Data includes the following:

Table 1. Gender and Program Enrolled of the respondents n=236

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Male	106	45 %
Female	130	55 %
Program		
Bachelor of Science in Criminology	48	20%
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	30	13%
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	13	5%
Bachelor in Elementary Education	39	17%
Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management	106	45%
Total:	**236**	**100%**

The Table 1 shows that out of 236 respondent 45% of them are male 55% are female. Meanwhile, the greater percentage of respondents is enrolled in Hospitality Management with a percentage of 45%, followed by the Bachelor of Science in Criminology with percentage of 20%, Bachelor of Elementary Education with a of 17%, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a percentage of 13% and Information Technology with a frequency of 13 and a percentage of 5%.

It indicates that the female respondents is greater than the male respondents of this study and majority of them are from Hospitality Management because it has the huge population.

9.2 Challenges Encountered by the Student in conducting their research study

This section presents the challenges of the students in terms of research topic, resources, instructor factor and student's factor including the range value and descriptive interpretation.

Table 2.1 Research Topic

Research Topic	Range Value	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)
Identifying researchable issues.	3.30	Very High
Construction of research topics.	3.28	Very High

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Formulating statement of the problem.	3.22	High	**esea**
Formulating research rationale and objectives.	3.13	High	**rch**
Searching and collecting related studies.	3.19	High	**topic**
Composite Mean	**3.22**	**High**	

. Identify researchable issues with a weighted mean of 3.30 which interpreted as very high, followed by construction of the research topic with a mean of 3.28 which interpret as very high, the formulation of the statement of the problem with a mean of 3.22 which interpret as high, searching and collecting related studies with a mean of 3.19 which interpret as high and the lowest with a mean of 3.13 which interpret as high is the formulating of research rationale and objective which garnered the composite mean of 3.22 which is high and with a verbal interpretation of challenging.

It indicates that the problems encountered in terms of the research topic are rated "*High*" with a verbal interpretation of "*Challenging*". All the problems encountered in the table above is being experienced by the student researcher.

Table 2.2 Resources

Resources	Range Value	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)
Lack of necessary devices for encoding/editing	2.69	High
Lack of financial resources.	3.05	High
Limited books and resources.	2.97	High
Poor internet connection.	2.90	High
Lack of printing device.	2.86	High
Composite Mean	**2.89**	**High**

Resources. This table shows that lack of financial resources is the number one problems that they've experience in conducting their research study with mean of 3.05 which interpret as high, followed by limited books and resources with a mean of 2.97 which interpret as high, poor internet connection with a mean of 2.90 which interpret as high, lack of printing device with a mean of 2.86 which interpret as high. Lastly, lack of necessary device for encoding/editing with a mean of 2.69 are challenging for them, with the composite mean of 2.89 which is high with a verbal interpretation of challenging.

With this study, lack of financial resources is the major problems that the students encountered which garnered the highest point, while lack of necessary devices for encoding garnered the lowest point.

Table 2.3 Instructor Factor

Instructor Factor	Range Value	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)
Unable to deliver the discussion properly.	2.91	High
Favors only in one group.	2.67	High
Not approachable when there are clarifications or questions.	2.55	High
Doesn't provide any materials for references.	2.55	High
Unable to provide proper guidance.	2.52	High
Composite Mean	2.64	High

Instructor Factor. Unable to deliver the discussion properly with mean of 2.91 which is high. Next, instructor's favors only in one group with a mean of 2.67 which is high, instructor is not approachable when there are clarification or questions with a mean of 2.55 which is high, the instructor doesn't provide any material for reference with the mean of 2.55 which is high. And, unable to provide proper guidance to the student researchers with the mean of 2.52 which is the lowest among the challenges under instructor factor with a composite mean of 2.64 rated high which interpret as challenging.

The instructor factor garnered a composite mean of 2.64 which rated as "high" and interpret as "Challenging". It implies that the students were challenged when it comes to instructor factors. It is important that students must have a good relationship between their instructors. Students will no longer bring up issues related to the research study during consultation hour if the research instructor is unapproachable. The instructor is a big factor in the success of the research because they are the one who guides the students.

Table 2.4 Student Factor

Student Factor	Range Value	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)
Lack of confidence.	2.95	High
Unable to express their ideas using the English language.	2.98	High
Unable to manage their time.	2.91	High
Failure to build a research team.	2.80	High
There is no unity.	2.67	High
Composite Mean	**2.86**	**High**

Student Factor. It shows that most of the student challenged to unable to express their ideas and thoughts using English language with a mean of 2.98 which is high, followed by lack of confidence with a mean of 2.95 interpreted as high, unable to manage their time with a mean of 2.91 interpreted as high, failure to build research team with a mean of 2.80 interpreted as high and there is no unity with a mean of 2.67 interpreted as high which garnered the lowest among the challenges under this factor.

The student factor garnered a composite mean of 2.86 which rated as "high" and interpreted as "Challenging". It implies that students are really challenged when it comes to the student factor. The poor English comprehension made it challenging for the students to compose research papers. And the students have lack of confidence that's why they cannot express their ideas using English language.

9.3 Coping Mechanism

The participants offered a range of coping mechanisms in response to the challenges they faced during their research study. Based on the participants' responses, six (6) themes were developed.

Theme 1: Seek Professional Advice.

It is the strategy of the students to gather ideas from professionals and well experience in the field of research. Through the help of professionals, the students may gained knowledge on how to formulate research topic and also overcome challenges in research study. Additionally, professionals can give valuable feedback and enhance the credibility of research.

Participants stated that:

"To get the opinion of some well minded people."

Theme 2: Web Browsing

The engagement of the students in using different websites to gather related studies, review research abstract and search resources accessible over the internet. The students search for scholarly articles, read research papers, and extract data from previous research studies that were used in formulating research topics.

Participants stated that:

"We looked to the internet for a previous studies

and for possible ideas we can gather as a basis

in formulating our research topic"

Theme 3: Fair Contribution.

This pertains to the fair and just money contribution among research members. It is the student's way of making funds for the research expenses. The strategy of the students to save and budget the funds.

Participants stated that:

"We overcome it by saving and sharing money."

Theme 4: Establish Consistent Consultation

The students' way of approaching the research instructor to address the problems in their research study. It is also the research instructor's ways of giving feedback and comments, support and guidance throughout the research process. Constant consultation allows the students to stay informed about the latest development in the study.

Participants stated that:

"Approach our instructors on her vacant time."

Theme 5: Persistence.

This persistence to the student's' sustained efforts, dedication and determination in the research despite of the hurdle throughout the research process.

Participants stated that:

"I handle the problems through my
patient because patient is a virtue."

Theme 6: Constructive Discussion.

This involves collaborative discussion wherein through exchanging ideas and critical analysis in a specific topic. Students are able to acquire various insight all throughout the development of the study.

Participants stated that:

"By brainstorming and dedication"

11. DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents is female. The program enrolled of the respondents with a total population of 236 appears that greater percentage of respondents is enrolled in Hospitality Management with a frequency of 106 and a percentage of 45% while the Information Technology garnered the lowest frequency of 13 and a percentage of 5%.

Research Topic. The most challenging is finding researchable issues, which described as very challenging and formulating the research rationale and objectives is the least problem which they describe as challenging.

Resources. The most common problem they encountered was a lack of financial resources, which described as challenging. The least common was a lack of encoding devices, which described as challenging.

Instructor Factor. Unable to deliver the discussion properly has the highest point while unable to provide proper guidance garnered the lowest point.

Student Factor. The biggest problem that they encountered was unable to express ideas using the English language, which interpreted as challenging while the least problem was lack of unity which interpreted as being challenging.

Coping Mechanism

The participants really challenged in conducting their research study. They mention different challenges and different strategies. Based on the participants' answer, the researchers developed six (6) themes: (1) seek professional advice, (2) web browsing (3) fair contribution, (4) establish consistent consultation, (5) persistence and (6) constructive discussion.

12. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concludes that research subjects are formidable challenges because research studies are never easy, and the students had no choice but to deal with them because they were part of their degree.

Research Topic. Students often struggle to find interesting topics for their research, and this can make them feel upset and lose interest in learning. The main issue they face in research is having a hard time finding suitable topics to study. This difficulty in finding researchable issues is a significant problem for students in the course of their studies.

Resources. It is really difficult when there is limited information and references. Researchers may struggle to look for related studies. The main problem that the students have encountered is their financial shortcomings. Many students face financial difficulties. They may not have enough money to have internet access and reproduce materials and prints because of frequent checking. These financial shortcomings can become a big roadblock in the course of their study.

Instructor and Students Factor. Even after the research instructor explained the discussion clearly, students may still not understand it, the research instructor may also consider the level of understanding of the students. It is not just the students who have the problem but also the research instructors.

13. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the research study, the researchers came up with a solution to help future researchers deal with the challenges in their research study.

Students. The researchers recommend to the students that they choose a research topic that aligns with their interests and has accessible resources, make the most of online databases, libraries, and academic journals for comprehensive research material, and plan their research timeline wisely to avoid last-minute stress and ensure thorough exploration of the topic.

Instructors. The researchers recommend to the instructors that they offer clear guidance to the students in conducting research and provide assistance in refining research topics, ensure students have access to necessary resources and encourage collaboration for shared access to materials, establish a feedback loop to guide students in refining their research approaches and enhancing the quality of their work. Also, the instructors should have a consultation hour in order for the students when they will be able to consult. Provide workshops on effective research methodologies and tools. Establish a mentorship program among faculty members to share best practices in guiding students through research process.

School. The researchers recommend that the school have a room for computers and printing in order for the students to have a place for searching. Invest in updated library sources and digital databases for diverse research materials.

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