

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Mohamed Seddik BenYahia. Jijel
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



Exploring the Methodological Problems Encountered by EFL Students
When Writing their Dissertations

The Case of Master Two Students of English at the University of
Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia - Jijel

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master Degree in
Didactics of English

Submitted by

- Asma BENCHIHEB
- Nada LAIOUER

Supervised by

- Salma BOUHALI

Board of Examiners

- **Chairperson:** Meriem BOUSBA, University of Mohamed Seddik BenYahia, Jijel
- **Supervisor:** Salma BOUHALI, University of Mohamed Seddik BenYahia, Jijel
- **Examiner:** Sarra LEKKAT, University of Mohamed Seddik BenYahia, Jijel

2022

Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Exploring the Methodological Problems Encountered by EFL Students When Writing their Dissertations” is our own work and all the sources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

Signature

- Asma BENCHIHEB
- Nada LAIOUER

Date

14/07/2022

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

I dedicate this humble work to:

the most precious people to my heart, my tender mother and my dear father, who offered their

endless support, love, and their constant prayers,

my beloved brothers,

my sympathetic sister,

my cute nieces, **Rahaf** and **Rokaya**,

my lovely nephews,

my dear cousins **Nawel**, **Amina**, **Amani**, **Lamia** and all my relatives,

my best friend **Arifa**,

my wonderful and beautiful partner **Nada** whom I shared this work,

my all friends with whom I shared the university life and all my teachers,

and to all those who love me.

Asma

Dedication

In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most compassionate without his mercifulness,
guidance I would not complete this work.

I dedicate this work to my parents without them I could not achieve all of this,
to my mother who dedicate her life for our happiness and comfort
to my father who was always by my side who believed and encouraged me during my academic
studies
to my amazing brothers **Fayssal**, **Housseem**, and **Yassine** who have a special place in my heart,
and have helped to accomplish my research paper

I would never forget to thank my wonderful sister **Mouni**, for her inspiring, caring and who has
an exceptional role in my success.

I thank my brilliant partner **Asma** who shared this process with me with love and patient
A special thank to my lovely friend **Ferial**, for her kindness, pure heart and her collaboration.

To all the admirable friends and people I have met during this journey.

Nada

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we thank Allah the Almighty for lightening our path and for providing us the strength and the determination to conduct and finish this research paper, despite all difficulties.

Exceptional thanks, appreciations and sincere gratefulness go to our teacher and supervisor Mrs. **Salma BOUHALI** for her endless support, precious guidance and her patience throughout the process. No words will be sufficient to express for her how much appreciation and respect we own her.

Special thanks are to the broad of examiners: **Mrs Sarra LEKKAT** and **Mrs Meriem BOUSBA** for accepting and devoting their precious time to read and examine our humble work.

Deepest thanks also go to all teachers of research methodology and to our classmates, Master Two students at the department of English Language for their collaboration.

Last but not least, we thank all people who took part and help to fulfil this piece of research work.

Abstract

The present research paper aims at exploring the methodological problems that EFL students encounter when writing their dissertations and finding the different causes that lead to this type of problems. It is based on the hypothesis that ‘providing EFL students with more practice in research methodology course will help the students to overcome the methodological problems and write a well formed dissertation’. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to confirm the suggested hypothesis. Two questionnaires were designed for both students and teachers. The first questionnaire was handed to 35 Master two students in order to know students’ perspectives towards the process of writing a dissertation, and whether the instruction of research methodology was successful or not. The second questionnaire was emailed to 10 teachers to evaluate the research methodology course. The results obtained from the students’ questionnaire indicated that students face serious problems from right the beginning of the process and till the end due to the lack of knowledge of the basics of writing a dissertation, in addition, to the absence of practice in the research methodology subject. On the other hand, the teacher questionnaire indicated that despite the importance of the research methodology course for students in writing their dissertations, there are some challenges. It is found that the method of delivering the content of this course is not appropriate and there is also a lack of practice, which affect negatively the students’ performance when writing their dissertations.

Keywords: Hindrances, writing dissertations, Research Methodology, Master two students.

List of Acronyms and Symbols

APA: American Psychological Association

EFL: English as Foreign Language

Q: Question

%: Percentage

List of tables

Table 1. The Difference between Research Methods and Research Methodology.....	23
---	----

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Students' views about writing a dissertation.....	32
Figure 2. Students' attitudes towards easiness or difficulty of writing a dissertation.....	32
Figure3. Students' attitudes towards easiness or difficulty in choosing a topic.....	33
Figure 4. Hindrances in choosing a research topic.....	34
Figure 5. Difficulties encountered when planning the research.....	35
Figure 6. Writing a research proposal.....	36
Figure 7. Students' difficulties when writing research proposal.....	36
Figure 8. Problems related to the theoretical part.....	37
Figure 9. Problems faced in the theoretical part.....	38
Figure 10. The reasons behind the challenges in citations.....	39
Figure 11. Problems related to the practical part.....	39
Figure 12. Students' problems in the practical part.....	40
Figure 13. Main challenges encountered by students.....	41
Figure 14. Students' most difficult steps in research.....	42
Figure 15. The reasons behind the difficulties faced when writing a dissertation.....	43
Figure 16. The students' level in Research Methodology.....	44
Figure 17. The Importance of Research Methodology in the Students' instruction.....	45
Figure 18. The Students' training in writing a piece of research paper.....	46
Figure19. Doing Research Project Respecting the APA Style.....	46
Figure 20. Difficulties in designing Research Tools.....	47
Figure 21. difficulties faced in data analysis.....	48
Figure22.The students' views concerning the successfulness of Research Methodology	49

instruction.....	
Figure 23. Problems in the Research Methodology course.....	49
Figure 24. Teachers' degree.....	51
Figure 25. The teaching experience.....	52
Figure 26. Teaching Research Methodology.....	53
Figure 27. Teachers' views about the number of sessions devoted to Research Methodology.....	54
Figure 28. Teachers' views concerning the importance of current research methodology courses in writing a dissertation.....	56
Figure 29. The teachers' views about the adequacy and relevance of the content of Research Methodology.....	57
Figure 30. The teachers' views about the value of the content of Research Methodology in writing a dissertation.....	58
Figure 31. The teachers' views about the focus of teachers in Research Methodology.....	59
Figure 32. The methods used in teaching Research Methodology.....	59
Figure 33. The method followed by teachers.....	60
Figure 34. Teachers' assignments after each session.....	61
Figure 35. Providing feedback for students.....	62
Figure 36. Writing a piece of research work.....	62
Figure 37. Teachers' view about students' need for Practice.....	63
Figure 38. The effective teaching method in Research Methodology teaching.....	63

Table of content

Declaration	I
Dedication 1.....	II
Dedication 2.....	III
Acknowledgement.....	IV
Abstract.....	V
List of abbreviation.....	VI
List of Tables.....	VII
List of Figures.....	VIII
Table of content.....	IX
General Introduction	
1. Background of the Study.....	01
2. Statement of the Problem.....	02
3. Aims of the Study.....	03
4. Research Questions.....	03
5. Research Hypothesis.....	03
6. Research Methodology.....	03
7. The structure of the dissertation	04
Chapter One : Literature Review	
Introduction.....	06
Section One: Writing a Dissertation.....	06
1.1.1. Definition of Dissertation.....	07
1.1.2. The Difference between Thesis and Dissertation.....	07

1.1.3. The Significance of Writing a Dissertation.....	08
1.1.4. The Structure of the Dissertation.....	08
1.1.4.1. The Preliminary Section.....	08
1.1.4.1.1. Title Page.....	09
1.1.4.1.2. Abstract.....	09
1.1.4.1.3. Acknowledgment.....	10
1.1.4.1.4. List of Contents.....	10
1.1.4.1.5. List of Acronyms and Symbols.....	11
1.1.4.2. The body of the Work.....	11
1.1.4.2.1. Introduction.....	11
1.1.4.2.2. Literature Review.....	12
1.1.4.2.3. Methodology.....	12
1.1.4.2.4. Results/ Data.....	13
1.1.4.2.5. Analysis and Discussion.....	13
1.1.4.2.6. Conclusion.....	13
1.1.4.3. A Supporting Section.....	14
1.1.4.3.1. Bibliography.....	14
1.1.4.3.2. Appendices.....	14
1.1.5. The Stages of Writing a Dissertation.....	15
1.1.5.1. Choosing a Topic.....	15
1.1.5.2. Planning the Research.....	16
1.1.5.3. Forming the Hypothesis.....	16
1.1.5.4. Collecting Data and Evidence.....	16

1.1.5.5. Analyzing the Data.....	17
1.1.5.6. Presenting the Findings.....	17
1.1.5.7. Revision.....	17
1.1.6. Major Hindrances when Writing a Dissertation.....	17
1.1.6.1. Hindrances in Selecting a Topic.....	18
1.1.6.2. Hindrances in Accessibility and Availability of Data.....	18
1.1.6.3. Hindrances Related to Literature Review.....	19
1.1.6.4. Research Methodology Hindrances.....	19
1.1.6.5. Citation Hindrances.....	19
1.1.6.6.Hindrances Related to Time Management.	20
Section Two: Teaching Research Methodology in the EFL Context.....	20
1.2.1. Definition of Research.....	20
1.2.2. Research Methods Vs Research Methodology.....	21
1.2.2.1. Definition of Research Methods.....	21
1.2.2.2. Definition of Research Methodology.....	22
1.2.3. The Significance of Research Methodology as a Subject.....	23
1.2.4. Approaches in Teaching Research Methodology.....	24
1.2.4.1. Teacher Centered Approach.....	25
1.2.4.2. Students Centered Approach.....	25
1.2.4.3. Participative/ Interactive Method.....	26
1.2.4.4. Content-Based Methods.....	26
1.2.5. Challenges of Teaching and Learning Research Methodology.....	27
1.2.5.1. Students' Challenges.....	27

1.2.5.2. Teachers' Challenges.....	27
Conclusion.....	28
Chapter Two : The Field Work	
Introduction.....	30
2.1. Methodological design.....	30
2.2. Setting.....	30
2.3. Population.....	30
2.4. Sample.....	31
2.5. Means of research.....	31
2.6. Students Questionnaire.....	31
2.6.1. Administration of Students questionnaire.....	31
2.6.2. Description of the Questionnaire.....	31
Section Two: Research Methodology Instruction.....	31
2.7. Teachers questionnaire.....	51
2.7.1. Administration of the Teacher Questionnaire.....	51
2.7.2. Description of the Teacher questionnaire.....	51
2.7.3. The Analysis of the Teachers Questionnaire.....	51
2.7.4. Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Student Questionnaire.....	65
2.7.5. Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Teacher Questionnaire	66
2.8 General Discussion.....	67
2.9. Limitations of the Study.....	68
2.10. Pedagogical Recommendations.....	68

2.11. Suggestions for Further Research.....	69
Conclusion.....	69
General conclusion.....	71
List of references.....	72
Appendices.....	75
المخلص.....	85

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

During the last year of graduation, EFL Master Students are expected to conduct a research and to write the most crucial assignment in their academic studies. Writing a dissertation is a complicated, systematic, and structured process, in which students have the opportunity to work on a topic of their own interests, in order to find answers to some questions or suggest solutions to some problems. Through this process students may face different and various methodological hindrances. Therefore, this process requires not only the linguistic knowledge but also the research skills that students have learnt over the past four years.

Among the most important subjects that EFL students study from first year to the Master degree is Research Methodology. In this subject, students are supposed to acquire essential skills and knowledge about all aspects related to conducting a research including tools, methods, and techniques. Therefore, research methodology paves the way for EFL students to write a research paper successfully. According to Dawson (2002), research methodology is considered as a philosophy that guides research and an outline that helps the researchers to tackle a specific issue. However, during the process of writing their dissertation, EFL students encounter various problems (p.14).

A number of studies (Tiwari, 2019; Qasem and zayid, 2019 and Habouch and Adjabi 2021) have been conducted to explore the problems that EFL students faced when writing their research project. Tiwari (2019) in his article, dealt with the challenges faced by students when writing a thesis in English education. He carried out a study which aims at investigating the most common pitfalls that Master students of education (M.E.A) in English in Tribhuvan University (T.U) encountered when writing their thesis. The results revealed that the major reasons of the

challenges faced by students were choosing the inappropriate topic of their studies and the unsupportive behaviour of the supervisor. Qasem and zayid (2019) conducted a research concerning the problems faced by students in early stage of writing a research project in a second language, University of Bisha Saudi Arabia. In this study, the researchers attempted to give recommendations and suggestions to overcome the challenges that they have explored: difficulty in deciding the topic for research, lack of good knowledge in methodology, lack of interest in research and the lack of time.

Habouch and Adjabi (2021), their dissertation aims to investigate the students' and teachers' perceptions at the University of M'ssila and other two Algerian universities. The findings revealed that the students encountered some problems related to methodology, lack of resources, personal psychological factors such as: lack of motivation, lack of training and experience in writing, problems with supervisor, and research skills.

Conducting this current research and making the decision of working on this theme is based on the supervisor's suggestion and from her personal observation as a first path. She noticed that EFL undergraduate Master students face different methodological problems during the process of writing a dissertation. As researchers, this theme was an area of our interest.

2. Statement of the Problem

All EFL Master Two students are expected to have sufficient knowledge about how to write academically and more specifically writing a dissertation. However, undergraduates EFL students encountered various problems when writing their dissertations. Such difficulties can be related to language itself or even to the choice of the appropriate techniques and methods that are used in conducting a research, and which are learnt through the research methodology subject. However, most researchers focus only on the issues that are related to language itself without

giving attention to the different skills that learners should acquire to successfully write a well formed dissertation. This increased the need to discuss such issue and shed light on the methodological problems that Master two students face when writing their dissertation.

3. Aims of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to identify the methodological challenges that Master two students encounter when writing their dissertation. In addition, it attempts to explore the reasons behind these challenges as well as to give some suggestions to overcome those problems.

4. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the methodological hindrances that EFL Master two students faced when writing their dissertation?
2. What are the reasons behind these hindrances?

5. Research Hypothesis

Based on the aforementioned questions, it is hypothesis that:

Providing EFL Master two students with more practice in research methodology course will help the students to overcome the methodological problems and write a well formed dissertation.

6. Research Tools

In order to achieve the aforementioned aims of this study, which are exploring the methodological pitfalls that undergraduate EFL students face during the process of writing their dissertation on the one hand and on the other hand it attempts to provide students with some suggestion to overcome those problems, two questionnaires were designed. The first questionnaire was administrated to 35 Master two students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia

University, department of English. The second was delivered to 10 teachers in the same department.

7. The Structure of the Dissertation

The present research paper contains two chapters with a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical part which is in turn divided into two sections. The first section is considered as an overview about the dissertation. It highlights the main concepts related to writing a dissertation, including a definition of a dissertation, the difference between a dissertation and a thesis, its structure, the different stages to be followed to write it and also the challenges encountered by students in the process. The second section deals with research methodology course and its importance in the process of writing a dissertation, the way and the challenges in teaching that course. While, the second chapter is devoted to the practical part and which is concerned with the analysis and discussion of the students and teachers questionnaire, limitations and implications of the study.

Chapter One

Chapter One

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the literature review of this research paper which is divided into two sections. The first section presents different views and information related to the term dissertation, in addition to the main stages of writing a dissertation and the structure that students need to be aware of it, in order to facilitate this process. The last element highlights the challenges encountered by students when writing their dissertation. The second section provides information about research methodology as a concept. Then it identifies this concept as a subject in a college or at a university and its significant when writing a dissertation. It shows how the research methodology course is designed and how it is taught. After that, it tackles the main approaches used to teach the course and the last element that this section ends with is the main challenges faced by both teachers and students when teaching and learning research methodology.

Section One: Writing a Dissertation

1.1.1. Definition of Dissertation

The term dissertation is widely used in higher educational settings; it attracts the attention of many researchers due to its importance. Cambridge advanced learners dictionary, third edition, clearly defined the term dissertation “as a long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one that is done as a part of a course at college or university”. According to McMillan and Weyers (2007), the term dissertation may vary from one researcher to another depending on the context. The authors stated that “...it is used to refer to a formal written study of a specialist

subject, submitted as a part of the assessment for a university degree” (p. 221). Richer (2013, p.9) declared that an undergraduate dissertation consists of 10,000 words, and it is regarded as an academic book which is well ordered into chapters and divided into sections. In addition, Biggam (2011) said that “A Master’s dissertation involves the production of a substantial piece of work normally consisting of about 15,000 words” (p.1).

From the previous definitions, it is concluded that a dissertation is one genre of academic writing which is submitted in a college or a university to get a degree. It is considered a harvest of the students’ efforts, knowledge and skills. It gives undergraduate students an opportunity to gather and put into practice all what they learnt during their academic studies. Moreover, a dissertation is to work on a specific topic by thinking critically about an issue being observed during the academic study and try to find and suggest solutions or adding more information.

1.1.2. The Difference between Thesis and Dissertation

For some researchers, the terms thesis and dissertation are defined similarly and used interchangeably in academic setting. Ang and Nather (2015, p.273) stated that “A thesis or dissertation is a document submitted in support of candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification. It presents the author’s research and findings”.

In the other side, Murray and Hughes (2008, p.120) stated that there is no clear difference between the two terms since both of them share common principles and have the same structure and organization. However, the authors stated that there is a slight difference between the two since a dissertation is associated with bachelor Masters Degree and it is short and less detailed; while a thesis is more detailed than a dissertation and it refers to PhD Degree.

1.1.3. The Significance of Writing a Dissertation

Writing a dissertation is a significant experience in higher educational studies where students are expected to use the knowledge, skills and abilities they have acquired and learned during their courses. Agrawal, Arch and Islamia (2013) stated that the dissertation is an original research paper which is regarded as a judgment of the students' knowledge, skills and abilities. They also claimed that the dissertation contributes in a specific field by adding new information, generally through proving a suggested hypothesis.

Moreover, Ang and Nather (2015, p.273) claimed that students who reach the phase of writing a dissertation successfully are prepared now to work professionally in a particular field and thus capable to conduct other independent, meaningful, and original research. In addition, Richer (2013, p.12) said that "The dissertation marks a transition from student thinking to academic thinking". This means that being able to write a dissertation is considered a big step towards figuring your thoughts in academic papers.

1.1.4. The Structure of a Dissertation

Like all the research papers in academic writing, a dissertation involves a set of sections that are organized in a specific way. However, according to Roberts and Hyatt (2019), the structure of such research paper may differ depending on the academic discipline and the methodology used in the dissertation. According to Murray and Hughes (2008, p.137), a dissertation contains the following three sections:

1.1.4.1. The Preliminary Section

In this section, the researcher Murray and Hughes (2008, p.137) gave an overview about his research. It includes: the title page, the abstract, acknowledgment, the list of contents, the list of tables and the list of figures and illustrations. According to Tiwari (2019, p.46), the

preliminary page as he stated “ It includes cover page, inside cover page, declaration, recommendation for acceptance, recommendation for evaluation, evaluation and approval, dedication, acknowledgement, abstract, table of contents, list of tables and charts and list of abbreviation and symbols”.

1.1.4.1.1. Title Page

George (2022, p.1) declared that the title page of any research paper should include all the details about the research work, which are: the title of the dissertation, the name, the type of the document, the department, the degree and the submission date. Also, Roberts and Hyatt (2019, p.51) mentioned that a title page is the first page and it involves: the title, the name of the author, the degree requirements that the dissertation fulfills, and that date.

In the same vein, Murray and Hughes (2008, p.138) stated that, a title page includes the title of the study that should in turn identify the nature and the purpose of the research. Also, it should include the main terms and concepts related to the subject. They also claimed that unlike the pages in the preliminary section which they are numbered using Roman numerals, the title page should not be numbered.

1.1.4.1.2. Abstract

The abstract is a brief summary for the entire dissertation in which the reader understand how the study was conducted and have an idea about its results. It is allocated after the title page in a separated page.

According to Murray and Hughes (2008, p.139), the abstract is an important element in the research project because it is regarded as a summary of the crucial elements and ideas related to the research. It should include: a statement of the main question or problem, the method(s) used, the results and conclusion. Therefore, the abstract helps the reader to decide whether the

work is adequate to its own study or not. They stated that “Typically, abstracts are between 250 and 300 words in length and it should not go beyond one side of A4”. In writing a dissertation, it is preferable to leave writing the abstract to the final stages to avoid wasting time when making changes.

1.1.4.1.3. Acknowledgment

In this section, Murray and Hughes (2008, p.141) claimed that, the researcher mentions people and institutions that contributed and helped him directly or indirectly in conducting his work. He expresses his gratitude and gratefulness towards their services, facilities, or even advice and motivation. They also claimed that an acknowledgement addresses mostly the supervisor for his efforts to help students.

Roberts and Hyatt (2019, p.57) also defined acknowledgement; they said that it is a special thank to the persons who have helped in this process. It generally acknowledges the people like committee members, supportive colleagues, technical consultant, family and friends.

1.1.4.1.4. List of Contents

List of content is the list in which a researcher represents the title and subtitles that he will discuss in his research paper. Murray and Hughes (2008, p.143) defined it as a detailed list that represents accurately the structure of the work, including all titles and subtitles arranged in chapters and sections as they are mentioned in the text using a decimal numbering system. It is followed consecutively by the list of tables, figures and illustrations.

It can be concluded that the existence of the list of contents is significant in a research paper. Because it includes all the titles that will be tackled, it will help the reader to have a clear idea about the whole plan.

1.1.4.1.5. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

According to Murray and Hughes (2008, p.143), the list of acronyms and abbreviations is usually allocated after the list of contents. It is used in order to avoid writing the full names of source materials and writing them in short forms ‘acronyms and abbreviation’; however, the meaning of those acronyms and abbreviations are clearly mentioned after their first mention in text.

However, the terms acronym and abbreviation are different in meaning, and it is necessary to distinguish between them. Based on the web site, Discover PhDs “An abbreviation is a shortened version of a term or phrase, e.g. kg for kilogram or Dr. for doctor”. While, “An acronym is a type of abbreviation constructed from the first letters of a term, e.g. FRP for Fibre Reinforced Polymer or STEM for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths”.

1.1.4.2. The body of the Work

The body of the dissertation is considered as the longest part in which a researcher gathers and orders the information that are related to his topic. Murray and Hughes (2008, p.137). stated that the body of the work, which is the second section in a dissertation, includes: introduction, literature review, main body/ descriptive section, results, discussion and conclusion.

1.1.4.2.1. Introduction

The aforementioned writers Murray and Hughes (2008) declared that “The introduction, then, is that part of the report where you indicate the provenance of your research, put in perspective and set the scene for what is to come in the pages that follow” (p.144). Therefore, in the introduction a researcher should identify the knowledge gap in the literature of the subject and the motivational sources that push him to work on such topic. Also, he should clearly state the research question he expected to deal with, the key constructs underpinning them and the

variables. In addition, he should include a brief description of the way the research tackles the research questions.

Roberts and Hyatt (2019, p.59) mentioned that the introduction is a chance to attract the reader's attention. This part includes: the research question or hypothesis, the purpose, the significance of the study, a definition of terms, assumptions, and organization of the study.

1.1.4.2.2. Literature Review

In the literature review, researchers attempt to summarize and describe the previous research on a specific topic. According to Murray and Hughes (2008, p.145), a literature review represents the background of the study, in which the previous works related to the subject are briefly presented in a chronological order. Those research works are evaluated in order to find shortcomings or research gap.

Mc Combes (2019, p.60) claimed that, the literature review includes the researchers' work related to the topic discussed and it enables you to highlight significant concepts and theories, approaches, and research gaps.

In the same context Roberts and Hyatt (2019) declared that, "It provides a background for the important variables or concepts in your study and describes the similarity and difference between your work and that of other authors and researchers in the field" (p.60).

1.1.4.2.3. Methodology

In this part, the writer states the way through which he dealt with in his study and the methods used in collecting and analyzing the data. Therefore, Murray and Hughes (2008, p.148) said that:

“... the overall aim of the methodology section is the same: to provide the reader with an overview of the

methods employed so that a judgment can be as to how appropriate they are given the objectives of the research, and how valid the data is that they have generated”.

Mc Combes (2019) stated that, methodology helps to indentify the researcher work, what he did and how he did it. Also it helps the reader to estimate the reliability and validity of the work.

1.1.4.2.4. Results/ Data

In this section a researcher attempts to report the findings of his study based on the methodology he used in collecting data. Murray and Hughes (2008, p.153) stated that, in some cases, the indication of research results and the discussion are integrated in order to avoid the raise of spontaneous and quick questions to readers. Therefore, in this part the findings of the research are presented through a statistical analysis that is used with brief comments.

1.1.4.2.5. Analysis and Discussion

In this section, a researcher is expected to explain, to make comments on the results and assess their equivalence with research objectives, hypothesis and the state of the debate in the field (Murray & Hughes, 2008, p.167).

Mc Combes stated that, this part has to focus on describing and analyzing the findings, and the way in which they are related to the literature review and making argument to support the conclusion.

1.1.4.2.6. Conclusion

In the conclusion of a dissertation, a researcher tries to skillfully restate the main concepts and ideas including the problem discussed in the research paper and the findings without adding new information. According to Murray and Hughes (2008,p,169), this section is

different from any other conclusion because it is composed of three interrelated elements which they are: a discussion of those inferences that can be drawn from the research, a statement of the contribution the research has made to do field inquiry, and suggestions for future research.

Roberts and Hyatt (2019, p.63) mentioned that through this part, the researcher describes the substances that he drew from the research questions. They added that, “It details how your findings compared with those in the literature and with your conceptual framework”.

1.1.4.3. A Supporting Section

Murray and Hughes (2008, p.137) mentioned that, this section includes additional information about the references and materials used in the study. It includes bibliography and appendices.

1.1.4.3.1. Bibliography

According to Murray and Hughes (2008, p.170), a bibliography is a list that includes all the references that the researchers have consulted during conducting the research. However, researchers sometimes use the list of references instead of the bibliography. Robert and Hyatt (2019, p. 64), distinguished between the two; they claimed that, a bibliography contains all the relevant materials that a researcher used in his study even he did not cite them directly in the text, while references is a list that should include only the works that were cited in the research paper.

1.1.4.3.2. Appendices

This section contains the materials that are not really essential elements in the text; however, it helps readers to better understand the research work. Murray and Hughes (2008, p.176) stated that this part of appendices involves all the materials that are considered as a distraction for the main arguments in the work. It may include: lists, questionnaire, documents,

tables, glossaries...etc. Moreover, Robert and Hyatt (2019, p.65) said that, “Materials that document important components of the dissertation that would to lengthy, awkward, or distracting to include within the text should be included as appendices”.

1.1.5. The Stages of Writing a Dissertation

During the process of writing a dissertation, students are supposed to follow some principle stages to fulfil their work. As it is stated in Opentech (2013), there are seven crucial stages that guide the students to write their dissertation: choosing a topic, planning the research, forming the hypothesis, collecting data and evidence, analyzing the data, presenting the findings, and revision.

1.1.5.1. Choosing a Topic

Choosing a topic for a dissertation is the first and the most important step in writing a dissertation. It may take time for students to select a relevant topic that fits their interests and which could be considered feasible in the academic settings. Therefore, the topic should be specific, precise and clear in order to avoid ambiguity. Opentech (2013),

Mc Combes (2020) stated that, in the process of selecting a topic, a researcher has to take into consideration:

- The institution and the department’s requirements
- Its areas of knowledge and interests
- The availability of sources and data
- The scientific, social, or practical relevance

1.1.5.2. Planning the Research

After the topic is being selected, the students then have to identify clearly the way in which they will deal with the study. In planning the research, students should take into consideration the principles of scientific approach in order to be methodic and organized.

In this stage, students are required to state the list of sources that are being used, approaches, and whether the topic will have sufficient practical evidence or not (Opentech, 2013).

1.1.5.3. Forming a Hypothesis

Forming a hypothesis is the path to start working on any research paper. It requires dealing pensively with research and thought. Actually, students need guidance and advice from the supervisor before starting (Opentech, 2013).

In addition, and as it is mentioned by Enago Academy platform (2021) a good hypothesis should be specific and testable and in order to achieve that, it is important to consider the following things:

- Stating clearly the problem that you are trying to solve
- Trying to write the hypothesis as an if-then statement
- Defining the variables

1.1.5.4. Collecting Data and Evidence

After forming the hypothesis, the researcher should start to collect sufficient data from different sources, either to confirm or reject that hypothesis. As it is stated in (Opentech, 2013) “This work is known as ‘fieldwork’ and is the most energy consuming”. In other words, it needs more time and efforts to be done. The five methods used in collecting data are: questionnaire and survey, interviews, focus groups, direct observations, and document review.

1.1.5.5. Analyzing Data

In this stage, the collected data should be critically analyzed and discussed. Hence, the researcher may use different types of analysis such as: structural analysis, interpretation, statistical analysis (Opentech, 2013).

1.1.5.6. Presenting the Findings

Once the research results are being represented and explained, the researcher try to clearly state a conclusion for his study that should be supported depending on those findings. According to Swaen (2016), “All the relevant results should be reported concisely and objectively in a logical order”.

1.1.5.7. Revision

This is the last stage through which students add the final touches in order to confirm that their dissertation is well written, by checking the mistakes and making sure that everything in coherent and clear (Opentech, 2013).

1.1.6. Major Hindrances when Writing a Dissertation

Writing a dissertation is highly recommended in higher academic education. This process requires from students to follow certain guidelines and specific structure to achieve it. However, during this process undergraduate students may face different hindrances and problems that obstruct the progress of writing their dissertation.

Roberts and Hyatt (2019) stated that “completing a dissertation represents the pinnacle of academic achievement” (p.44). They claimed that writing a dissertation is a diligent task since it is a new experience, in which students face new challenges. Therefore, it demands the use of proficient high skills, knowing about research methods and being able to present results in a concise and clear manner. In addition, Winstanley (2010.p, 9), maintained that, working on a

dissertation is an exciting, enjoyable experience; however, it can be a stressful task, time consuming and obstructing due to different factors.

Therefore, there are different hindrances that students may face when writing a dissertation. They can be related to selecting a topic, accessibility of data, literature review, research methodology, citation or time management.

1.1.6.1. Hindrances in Selecting a Topic

At an early stage, students may face a challenging issue that is related to choosing a topic. This process takes a considerable amount of time, since students are supposed to select a topic that fits their interests. Millan and Weyers (2010, p, 10) argued that the correct choice of dissertation topic or research project will improve the chances of a successful outcome. In other words, it has a crucial influence on how well the students conduct the research and write their dissertation. So according to them, choosing an interesting topic is considered as the driven force that pushed students to work on it. Therefore, by choosing an inadequate topic, students will struggle to deal with it and at the same time they will be demotivated.

1.1.6.2. Hindrances in Accessibility and Availability of Data

Students may face various challenges related to the process of finding reliable data. Therefore, when working on a research proposal, it is necessary to provide students with the essential resources, in addition, to the access of the internet in every university's library.

However, some universities do not provide the needed materials for students who struggle to find adequate references. Millan and Weyers (2007, p.14) argued that, "Some dissertations or research project run into difficulties because it is not possible to obtain the materials required to carry out the work". As result, students may spend too much time in the process of searching for relevant data.

1.1.6.3. Hindrances Related to Literature Review

As Yusuf (2013, p.3) mentioned that, literature review is still being a problematic area for many students. Based the analysis of some researchers, they have found that some students' research paper dose not contained the previous research studies related to the topic; while, some other students mentioned the previous study but it does not concentrate on the topic discussed.

1.1.6.4. Research Methodology Hindrances

Research methodology is viewed as one of the main challenges that students encounter during the process of writing their dissertation. Based on the results of a conducted research about investigating the major challenges faced by students of Master Education by Tiwari (2019, p.51), the students found obstacles in choosing the appropriate research methodology that suits their topic.

In the same vein, he claimed that, "All the participants touched upon problems areas such as gathering data, ensuring questionnaire validity, interviewing, analyzing data and determining the sample". Moreover, the students declared the reasons behind those obstacles and stated that there was no workshop related to research methodology subject that helps the students in the future when writing their research paper.

1.1.6.5. Citation Hindrances

One of the main tasks that EFL students need to master is citation. In this process they attempt to acknowledge others' works used in their dissertation in order to give credibility to their works. However, and due the lack of training on such tasks in the academic studies, students may face different problems related to citation such as: plagiarism.

Plagiarism is considered as one of the main crucial problems that students encounter when writing their dissertation. It is the case in which they use someone else's works or ideas as if they were their own without any acknowledgment. Therefore, the case of being stealing others' works or ideas consciously or unconsciously can effect negatively on the students' marks. In this context Millan and Weyers (2007, p.185) declared that, "Many students have only a vague understanding of plagiarism and copyright issues. However, failing to take account of them means you may risk loss of marks and serious disciplinary actions".

1.1.6.6. Hindrances Related to Time Management

Dissertation is a time consuming process, and one of the main highlighted challenges students face is the lack of time. The students often take a lot of time to choose and so the administration to accept all topics being discussed. After that, students procrastinate to start working on their research paper, and they waste a lot of time to make a decision on the structure and the main points to be discussed in their research paper, in addition, to the other difficulties that took time such as: searching and gathering the appropriate data, writing a questionnaire, preparing an interview, and analyzing the finding data.

Section Two: Teaching Research Methodology in the EFL Context

1.2.1. Definition of Research

The origin of the term research is brought from the French word '*recherché*' which means seeking knowledge. According to Kothari (2004, p.1), research is an art of scientific investigation and a systematic process in which the writer search for knowledge on a particular topic. He claimed that, research involves identifying the problems, formulating the hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and reaching conclusion in order to check whether it suits the suggested

hypothesis. He added that, “Research is, thus, an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement”.

Anderson and Arsenault (2015, p.6) claimed that research in education is a systemized endeavour to solve problems through collecting and analyzing the data in order to make a full description and explanation about phenomena, generalization of facts and prediction. Naoum (2007, p.2) claimed that the term research can be used interchangeably with the terms inquiry, investigation or study, which they all should all be tackled carefully, scientifically and critically. Furthermore, Tuckman and Harper (2012, p.3) have defined a research as a systematic process in which the researchers try to investigate the relationship between two or more variables in order to find solutions to the problems related to the relevant problem.

1.2.2. Research Methods Vs Research Methodology

Working on a research paper needs from the students to learn various skills and techniques that help them to successfully conduct their research. Thus, students are expected to adopt research methodology with research methods. However, students may confuse in the use of the two terms and possibly they can consider them as synonyms. As it is cited by Mzi (2017, p.5), Deborah (2011) stated that “understanding the difference between method and methodology is a paramount importance”. Many researchers such as Walliman (2022) provided clear definitions for these terms to clarify the main differences between them.

1.2.2.1. Definition of Research Methods

According to Cambridge English dictionary, a research method is “a particular way of studying some things in order to discover new information about it or understand it better”. Walliman (2022, p.1) viewed that research methods are “the tools and techniques for doing research”.

Another definition is provided by Kothari (2004, p.7) in which he stated that research methods refer to all the methods and techniques that researchers use in conducting their research. Also he classifies research methods into three categories: the methods which are related to the process of collecting data, the methods that involve the statistical technique used in identifying the relation between the data and the unknown and the methods which are concerned with the evaluation of the accuracy of results.

1.2.2.2. Definition of Research Methodology

The term research methodology is defined by McGregor and Murnane (2010, p.2) as:

Word methodology comprises two nouns: methods and ology, which means a branch of knowledge; hence, methodology is a branch of knowledge that deals with general principles or axioms of the generation of new knowledge. It refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underline any natural, social or human science study, whether articulated or not. Simply put, methodology refers to how each of logic, reality, values and what counts as knowledge inform research.

Kothari (2004, p.8) stated that research methodology is the science that deals with how a research is conducting in a systematic and scientific way. He added that, in addition to knowing and understanding research methods and techniques, the researcher needs to design his methodology depending on the problem.

As it is mentioned before the two terms cannot be used interchangeably. According to Kothari (2004, p.8), “The scope of research methodology is wider than that of research

methods”. Hence, research methods are considered as a part of research methodology. However, the difference between the two was illustrated in the following table (Table 1.)

Table 1.The Difference between Research Methods and Research Methodology

Research Method	Research Methodology
The scope is lesser than research methodology.	The scope is very wider than research methods.
It is a part of research methodology.	It has many dimensions.
It seeks to answer: what the researcher uses to complete his research.	It seeks to answer: how the researcher completes his study .
Research methods are the techniques and the tools by which you research a subject or a topic	Methodology explains and justified the techniques and tools by which you may proceed with your research
it involves the tasks of conducting experiments, tests, surveys, and the like utilizing the knowledge and skills learned through research methodology	it involves the learning of various techniques to conduct research and acquiring knowledge to perform tests, experiments, surveys, and critical analysis
it aims at finding solutions to research problems	it ensures the employment of the correct procedures to solve the problems
research methods are the end of any scientific or non-scientific research	it paves the way to choose appropriate research methods and thus is the beginning of any research

Note. Retrieved from ppt.Slideshare.net

1.2.3. The Significance of Research Methodology as a Subject

Research methodology is an important subject that EFL students need to study in order to become able to conduct and write academic research papers. Its course helps students learn many things that are related to the field. As it has been stated by Indeed Editorial Team (2021), Research methodology guides the researcher to work on a plan smoothly and effectively in order to reach authentic and valid results. In addition, identifying the research methodology helps the

researcher to choose the appropriate methods for the aims. In other words, it gives him a clear vision at first stage about what they want to achieve. Moreover, Research methodology entails about how the data are collected and analyzed. In this context, Kothari, (2004, p.10) claimed that:

The study of research methodology gives the students the necessary training in gathering materials and arranging or card-indexing them, participation in the field work when required, and also training in techniques for the collection of data appropriate to particular problems, in the use of statistics, questionnaire and control experimentation and in recoding evidence, sorting it out and interpreting it.

1.2.4. Approaches in Teaching Research Methodology

Throughout the last centuries, teaching English as a second or a foreign language witnessed changes in the methods and approaches used. Educators are always trying to find the best and the most effective method that can replace the most recent ones due to their shortcomings and try to make improvement in the field.

According to Jacobs and Hayirsever (2016), the issue of searching and looking for the best method of teaching and learning was very crucial for centuries, since the aim of education has shifted to learn how to learn rather than the method of transmitting knowledge. Thus, the term teaching method, as was mentioned in Teach.com (2022), indicates the different rules, pedagogy and the various management strategies implied inside the classroom.

However, teaching methods can be categorized into four types. They are: teacher-centered method, student-centered method, content based method and participative method.

1.2.4.1. Teacher Centered Approach

One of the main traditional and conventional teaching approaches is teacher centered approach (Lathan, 2022) in which the role of the teacher is to present information to the learners who passively receive the provided knowledge. In addition, as it is published by team Ugcnet paper, this approach is known also as instructor centered method. The teacher is considered as an expert and an authority who controls the learner and classroom in general.

Moreover, in this context, Garrett (2008) claimed that the teacher attempts to preserve his control on the whole class. Also, the interactions are based on asking questions and independent tasks for the learners to answer. Edward (2004 - as it is cited in Garrett, 2008) stated that there are some instructional methods that help the teacher to maintain the control over his students such as: lectures, guided discussions, demonstrations and “cook book”.

1.2.4.2. Students Centered Approach

This approach was a shift from teacher centered approach to learner centered approach. Rogers (1983) described the change from the expert teacher to the learner; he viewed that there is a need to change the traditional methods in which the teachers are expected to do everything while the students are passive, passionless and demotivated to learn.

Barr and Tagg (1995) emphasized the change from teacher centered method to students centered one because the method of transmitting information and lectures to the students has been widely criticized. Thus, this criticism led to the emergence of students centered learning.

McCarthy (2015) stated that Student centered approach depends more on the work of the students through involving them in planning, implementation, and assessment. On the other hand, the teacher role is to guide and encourage students to share in decisions and show their capacities in learning.

1.2.4.3. Participative/ Interactive Method

According to Kucharcikova and Karcikova (+year), participative method is a teaching method in which there is a change from the belief that students have a passive role in the classroom because they are waiting from the teacher to provide them with everything, to the belief that students are able to construct and learn knowledge independently. In other words, it emphasizes the interaction and the involvement of the students in the classroom through designing group work that aims to improve the students' abilities to interact with each other.

As it is mentioned by Team UGCNETPAPER1 in Teaching Aptitude, in this participative method researchers try to take into consideration the element of strengths of the previous three methods without focusing on either the teacher, the student, or the content. In addition, this method is controlled and guided by the situational analysis of what is supposed to be the suitable thing for the learner.

1.2.4.4. Content-Based Methods

Content-based method or instruction (CBI) is the fourth approach in language teaching in which the focus is on what is being taught through the language, rather the language itself. According to Villalobos (2013),

Content-based instruction is an approach in which the teaching is organized around the content. Likewise, the principles of Content-Based Instruction are heavily rooted on the principles of communicative language teaching since they involve an active participation of students in the exchange of content.

In the same context and as it is mentioned in UGCNETPAPER1, the teacher and the students are expected to adapt with the content that is taught, in which the knowledge and skills are considered very crucial. In this method, making change in the content is not allowed and both of teachers and students should exactly follow the content.

1.2.5. Challenges of Teaching and Learning Research Methodology

In the process of teaching and learning research methodology, both teachers and learners may face various challenges that may affect them and interrupt their performance negatively.

1.2.5.1. Students' Challenges

During the research methodology course students may face some problems. According to Gal et al. (1997), “for many students, the study of research methods and statistics is anxiety provoking” (as cited in Rock, Coventry, Morgan, & Loi, 2016, para.1). In the same context, other researchers (Burgess, 1981; Edwards and Thatcher, 2004; Schutt, Blalock, and Wagenaar, 1984) argued that the subject of research methodology causes confusion and trepidation for graduate and undergraduate students (as cited by Ekmekci, Hancock, and Swayze, 2012).

In addition, Ball and Pelco (2006) claimed that, getting low marks in research methodology courses and using complex materials may demotivate students and causes frustration. (as cited by Ekmekci, Hancock, and Swayze, 2012).

1.2.5.2. Teachers' Challenges

In the process of delivering the research methodology course, teachers may encounter various challenges. Benson and Blackman (2003) declared that there are some pitfalls concerning the process of making a link between theory and practice in research methodology course. In other words, the teacher depends on presenting lectures grounded in theory, rather than putting them into practice. (as cited by Ekmekci, Hancock, and Swayze, 2012)

In addition, one of the main challenges that teachers face in the process of teaching the research methodology subject is to find and construct an experiential basic in order to engage students since, not all the students have the same educational and professional background, and also there are no common learning experiences (as cited by Barraket, p. 67).

Another pedagogical challenge is to design an interesting syllabus for research methodology in which teachers try to apply student-centered method instead of the traditional method (teacher-centered method), in order to master technical information through the process of communication (as cited by Barraket, p. 67).

Conclusion

Writing a dissertation is a new experience and a challenging task for students in their academic studies. It requires certain guidelines and process to follow .In this process students may face some methodological problems that affect negatively their performance. Hence, the research methodology course plays a great role in teaching this process. Therefore, teaching research methodology requires using effective approaches that put emphasis on fulfilling the pre-determined objectives and the expected outcomes specially those that are related to writing a dissertation in order to minimize the challenges faced by students during learning, as well as preparing them to write a well formed dissertation.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two

Fieldwork

Introduction

The current research paper aims at exploring the methodological problems encountered by students when writing their dissertation. This chapter presents a description of the overall practical side of the study; it indicates the context where the study took place, the sampling population that was selected to work with, the data collection tool, an explanation and an analysis of the obtained results.

2.1. Methodological design

This research paper is considered as a descriptive study in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected through distributing two questionnaires for both students and teachers of research methodology at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia.

2.2. Setting

The present study was conducted at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, at the department of English Language. It is the right place where to conduct this case study, since students are expected to write a dissertation by the end of their studies as Master students.

2.3. Population

The target population of this research paper are Master two students, a total number of 120, and ten (10) research methodology teachers in the department of English language at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. They are selected in this way, because the students are expected to write a dissertation at this level on the one hand, and teachers of Research Methodology on the other hand since this research work concerns methodological problems.

2.4. Sample

This study was conducted with Master two students in which 35 out of 120 students took part in this study which represent 30% of the population. Respondents who formed the sample consist of thirty five students, and ten teachers participated through answering the two questionnaires. The participants were selected randomly in order to examine the hypothesis and research questions.

2.5. Means of Research

In this research, two questionnaires are used as a research tool; the first questionnaire was designed for students because they are viewed as the most commonly used method due to their advantages in terms of dealing with large numbers of population. On the other hand, the second questionnaire was submitted to teachers of research methodology.

2.6. Student Questionnaire

2.6.1. Administration of Student questionnaire

The student questionnaire was administered to master two students in the form of printed handed papers, in which 33 students answered the questionnaire instead of 40 students.

2.6.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The student questionnaire contains of 25 questions classified into two sections. The first section involves 16 questions about the process of writing a dissertation as well as the difficulties encountered by students in this process. The second section consists of nine questions that are related to the research methodology instruction and the students' knowledge about it.

2.6.3. The Analysis of the Student Questionnaire

Section one: Writing a Dissertation

Q1. How do you consider writing a dissertation?

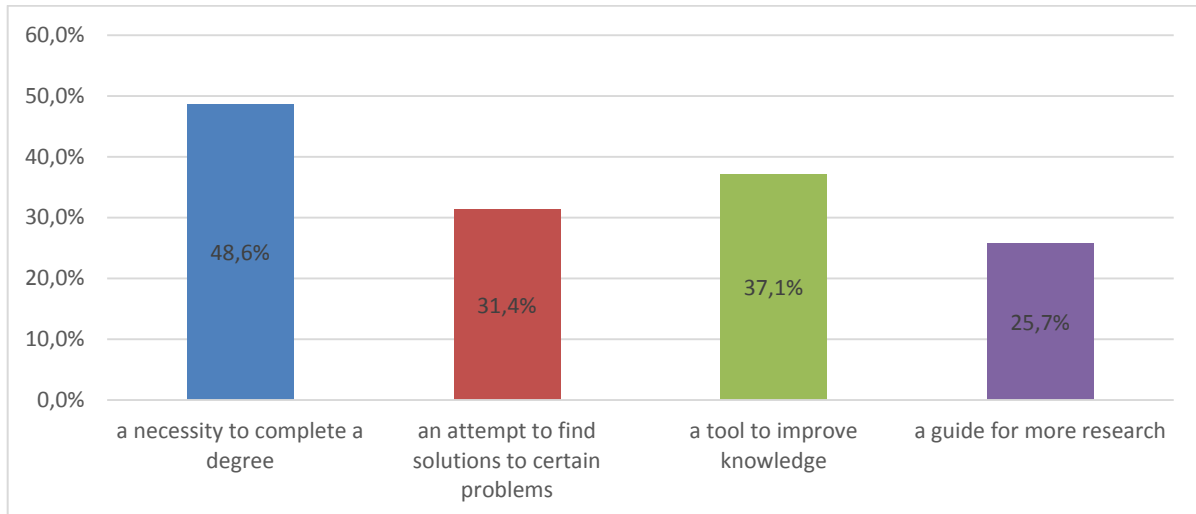


Figure 1. Students' views about writing a dissertation.

The results show that 17 students out of 60 (48, 6%) viewed dissertation as a necessity to complete a degree, and 13 of them (37, 1%) regarded dissertation as a tool to improve knowledge. While 11 students (31, 4%) stated that dissertation is an attempt to find solutions to certain problems. However, the minority of 9 students (25, 7%) considered dissertation as a guide for more research.

It can be concluded that Master two students viewed dissertation just as a tool to get a degree while others believe that it is an opportunity to improve knowledge.

Q2. Is it easy to write a Master dissertation? Explain why?

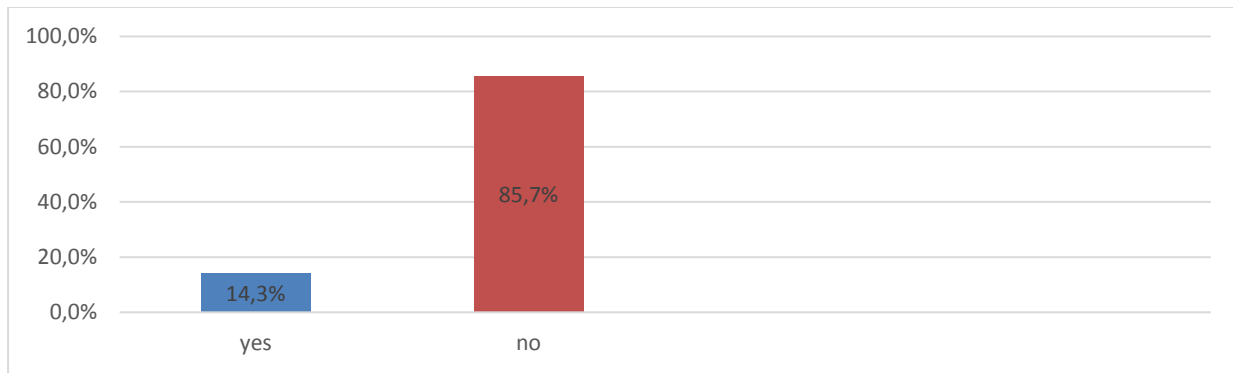


Figure 2. Students' attitudes towards easiness or difficulty of writing a dissertation.

According to the results obtained, it is clear that the majority of 30 students (85, 7%) found the process of writing a dissertation difficult, while only 5 students (14, 3%) regarded it an easy task. Students who responded 'no' mentioned some reasons:

- It is the first experience to write an academic research, which requires concentration, creation and certain skills to achieve the purpose of the research.
- Lack of knowledge about the basics and standard of writing a piece of research
- Finding the appropriate resources is time consuming.

Q3. How did you find choosing the topic for your Master dissertation?

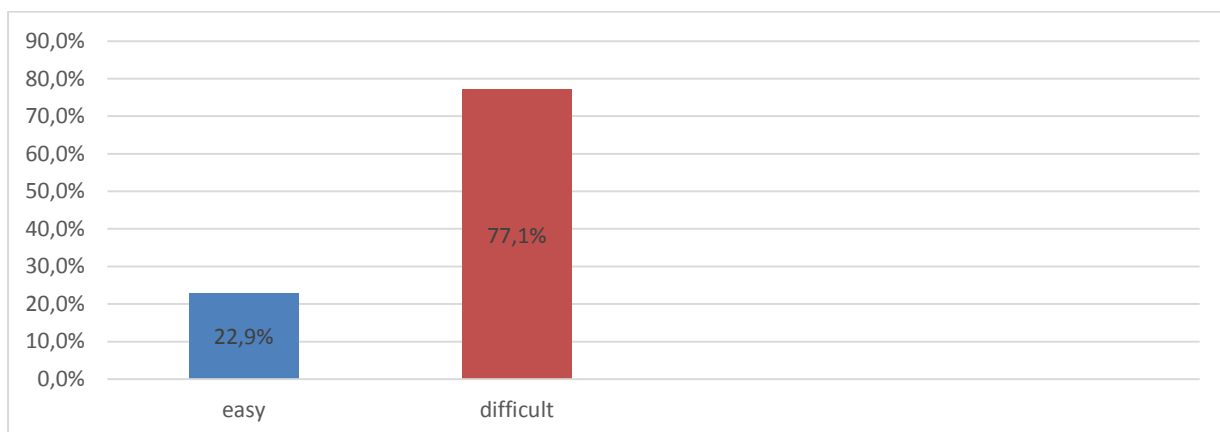


Figure3. Students' attitudes towards easiness or difficulty in choosing a topic.

The results above indicate that the majority of 27 students (77.14%) affirmed that it is difficult to decide on the topic, whereas 8 students (22, 86%) consider it an easy task.

According to the aforementioned results, it is obvious that choosing a topic is a challenging task for students. This is possibly due to the lack of reading or due to the constraints of bringing an original topic.

Q4. Which difficulties did you encounter when selecting your research topic?

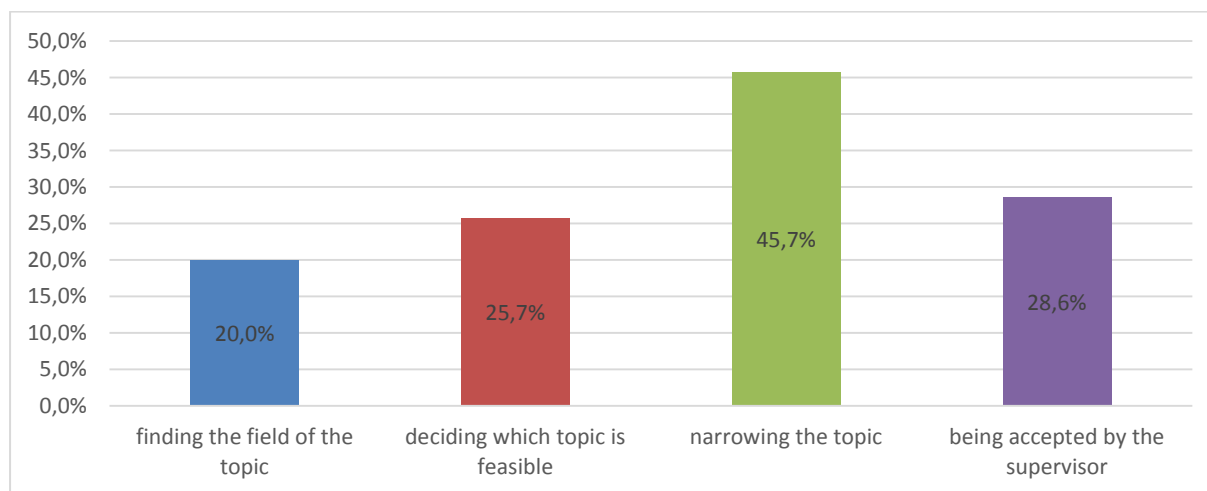


Figure 4. Hindrances in choosing a research topic.

This question has a relation with the previous one, which aims at finding the difficulties students encountered when choosing their research topic. 16 students (45, 7 %) found that narrowing the topic is the most difficult stage, while 10 respondents (28, 6 %) viewed that the obstacle is whether the theme will be accepted by the supervisor or not. Only 9 students (25, 7 %) answered that the difficulty lies in the fact of deciding whether the topic is feasible or not. The minority of 7 students (20%) viewed the problem of finding the field of the topic as the major problem. Some students added other difficulties:

- Finding related resources, and previous research to rely on.
- Some students found themselves working on topic out of their interests.

From the analysis of this question, it seems that students face obstacles from the beginning of their writing. Making a decision about the topic is a challenging departure where students should be attentive in their selection.

Q5. What difficulties did you face when planning the research?

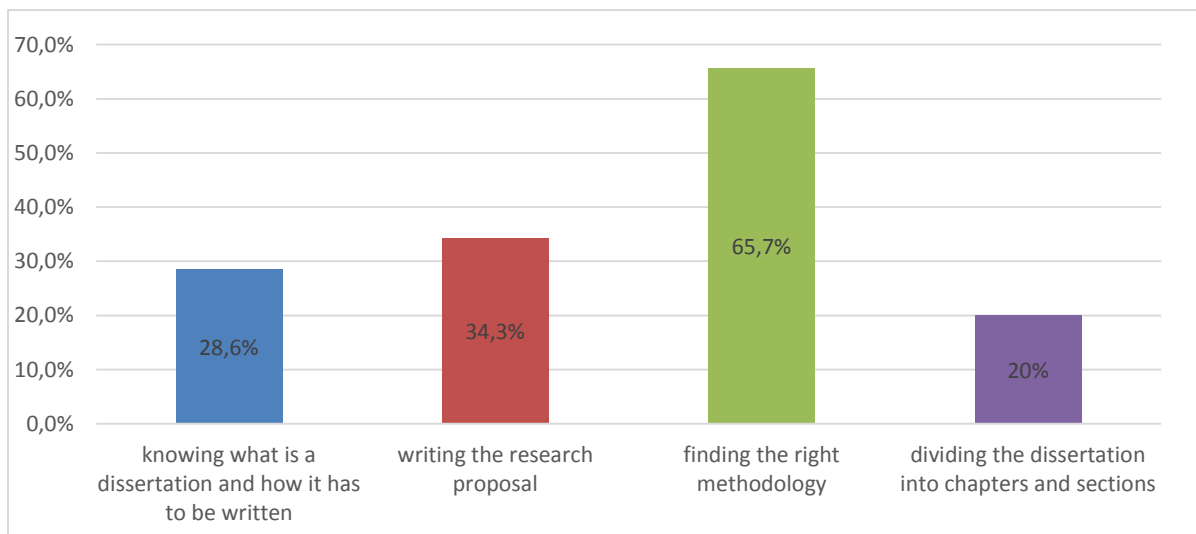


Figure 5. Difficulties encountered when planning the research.

The results obtained show that the majority of 23 students (65, 7%) have problem with deciding on choosing the right methodology. Whereas, 12 students (34, 3%), consider writing the whole research proposal as an obstacle, in addition, knowing what is a dissertation and how it has to be written was a hindrance for 10 students (28, 6%), while the minority of 7 respondents (20%) find dividing the dissertation into chapters and sections the least difficult. it can be noticed that, students face difficulties to deal the basic stages in dissertation. More specifically, issues to decide on the right methodology, which guides the students in this process.

Q6. Did you write your research proposal?

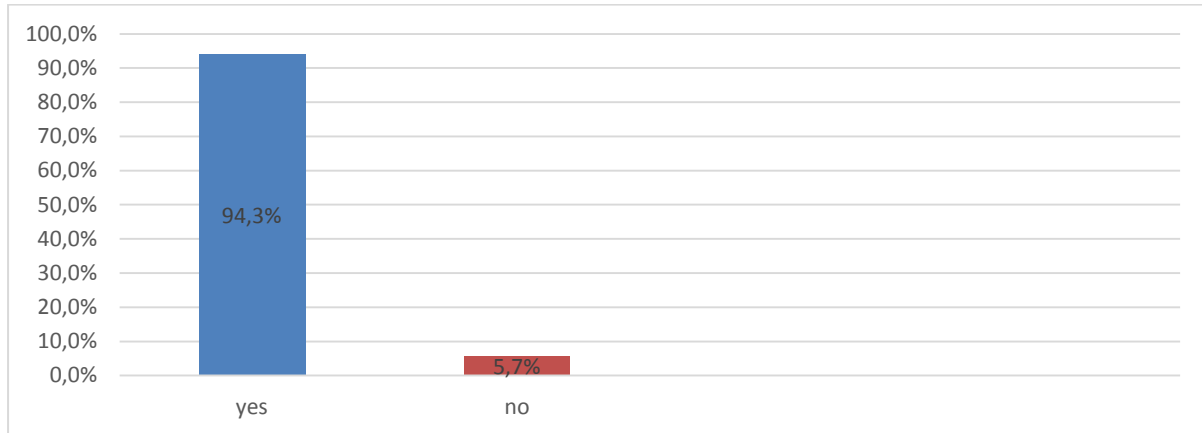


Figure 6. Writing a research proposal.

The results obtained show that the major numbers of 33 students (94, 3%) students have written their research proposal whereas; only 2 students (5, 7%) did not write it.

Q7. If yes, which difficulties did you face when writing your research proposal?

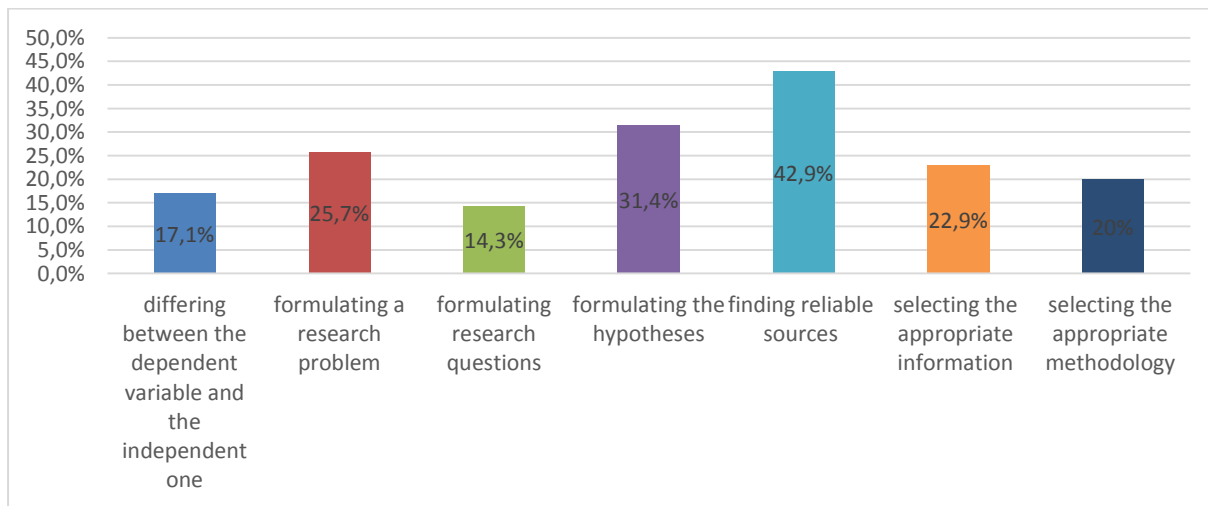


Figure 7. Students' difficulties when writing research proposal.

This question aims to figure out the difficulties students face when writing their research proposal, the results show that 15 Master tow students (42,9%) considered finding reliable sources the most difficult, 11 respondents (31,4%) choose formulating the hypothesis, while 9 students (25,7 %) regarded formulating a research problem as difficulty. the others mentioned

difficulties has little percentage, 8 students (22,9%) chose the hindrance of selecting the appropriate information, while, only 7 students (20%) view selecting the appropriate methodology a hindrance. Another difficulty is differing between the dependent variable and the independent variable answered by 6 students (17, 1%). The last difficulty is formulating research question, only 5 students (14, 3%) considers it as an obstacle.

There is a likeness in the statistics between the different problems that students face when writing a research proposal; it is obvious that students share various hindrances when writing their research proposal.

Q8. Did you face difficulties in the theoretical part?

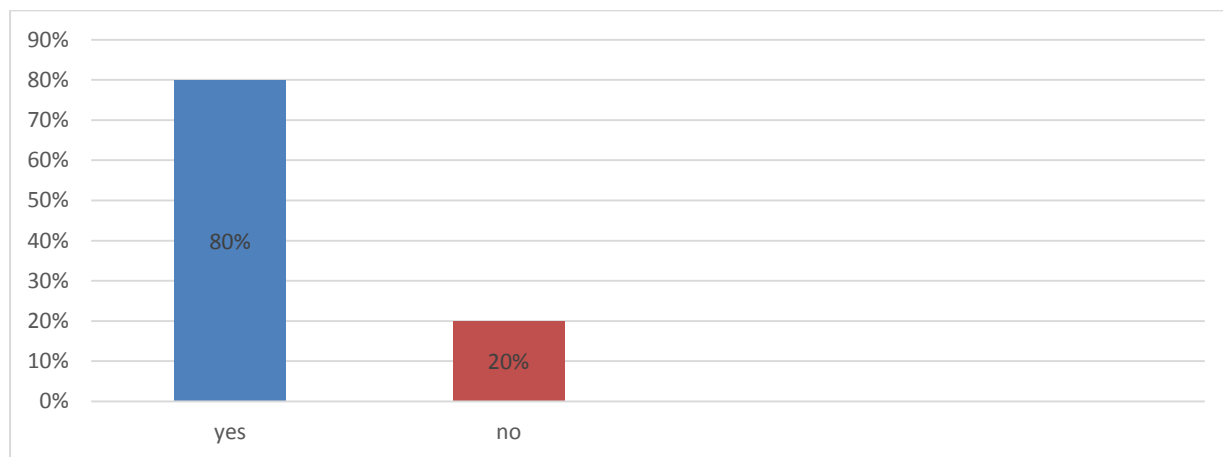


Figure 8. Problems related to the theoretical part.

Concerning this question is about the hindrances faced in the theoretical part, it is clear that the majority of 28 students (80%) face difficulties in this part, whereas just 7 respondents (20%) do not.

Q9. Specify the problems you faced among these:

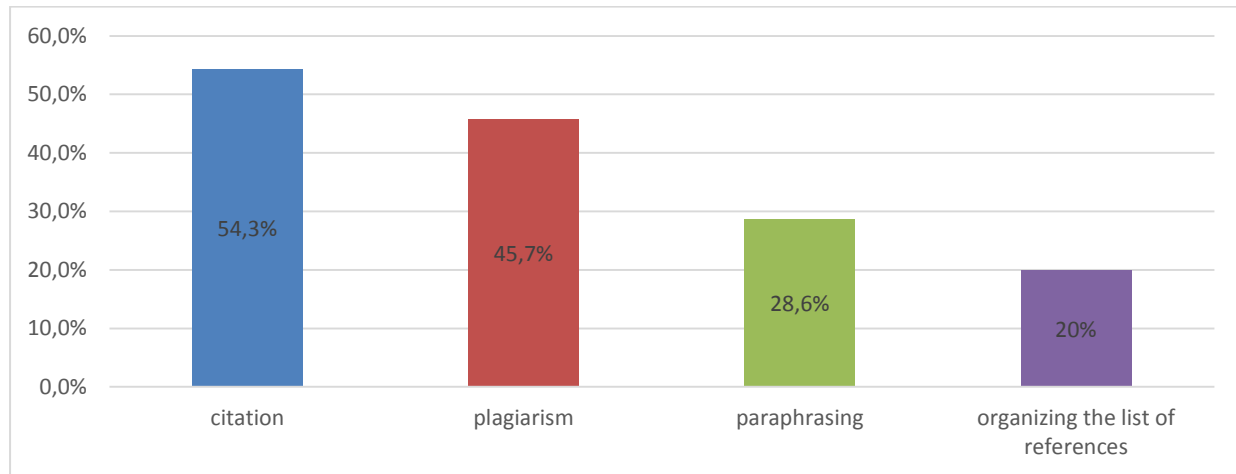


Figure 9. Problems faced in the theoretical part.

This questions aims to find the difficulties that students faced in the theoretical part. The results indicate that 19 students (54,3%) have problems with citation 16 of them (45,7%) choose plagiarism as a difficulty. whereas,10 participants (28,6%) considered paraphrasing as a difficult task, to finish with, only 7 students (20%) consider organizing the list of references difficult.

The results revealed that undergraduate students face obstacles when writing the theoretical part. This can be justified by failure in applying the knowledge they acquired in their instruction concerning research methodology.

Q10. Citation is challenging for you because of:

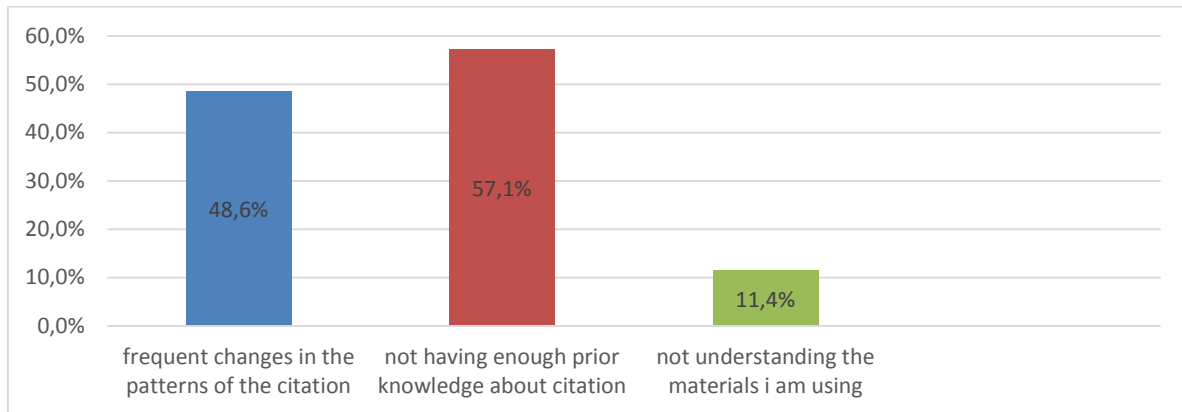


Figure 10. The reasons behind the challenges in citations.

The results obtained denote that 20 Master two students (57, 1%) find that citation is challenging because of not having enough prior knowledge about citation, 17 of them (48,57%) consider the problem of frequent changes in the patterns of the citations, and only 4 responds (11,42%) to the issue of not understanding the material that are used.

From the statistics above, it can be noticed that students do not have enough knowledge concerning citation.

Q11. Did you face problems in the practical part?

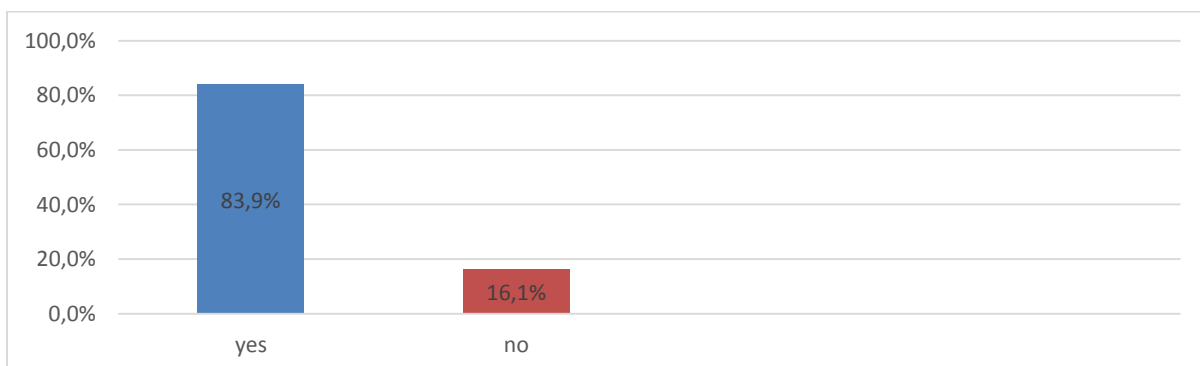


Figure 11. Problems related to the practical part.

The results show that the majority of 26 undergraduate students (83, 9%) face difficulties with the practical part, while only 5 of them (16, 1%) do not find any difficult.

Q12. Specify the problems you faced among these



Figure 12. Students' problems in the practical part.

This questionnaire aims to know the pitfalls students face in the practical part. From the chart above, the results show that analyzing data is the most difficult part for 20 participants (57, 1%). After that, discussing these results in which 18 students (51, 4) consider it as a hindrance. While presenting the data answered by 6 of them (17, 1%), finally, deducing the conclusion is the least difficult for 2 students (5, 7%).

In a nutshell, it seems that students do not only encounter problems in the theoretical part, but also in the practical part, in terms of dealing with the data.

Q13. Which elements of the dissertation do you find most challenging to write?

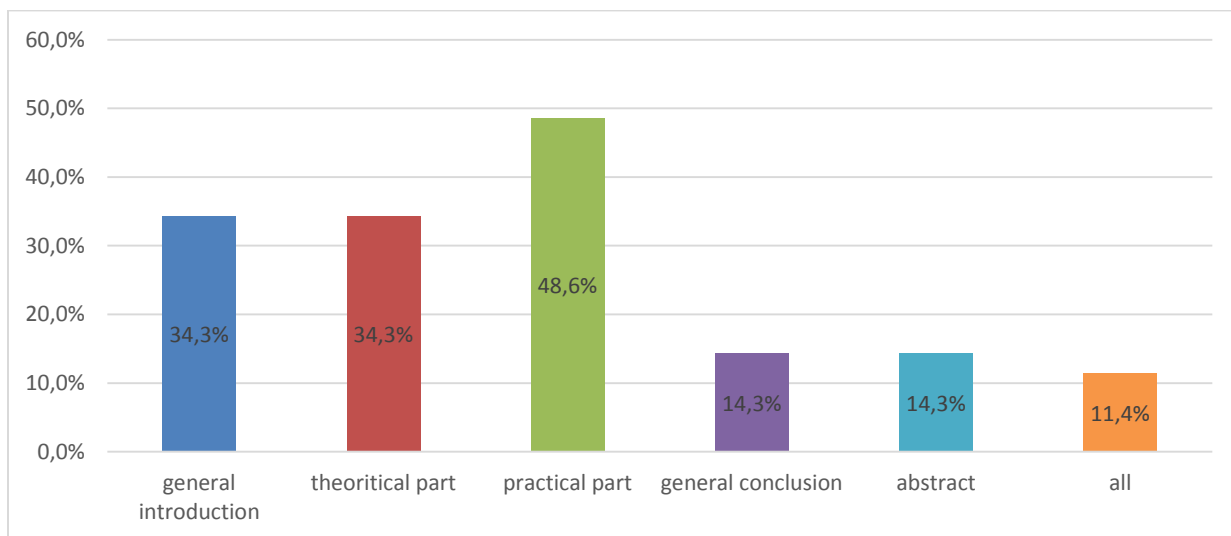


Figure 13. Main challenges encountered by students.

This question aims to know the elements that obstacle the process of writing dissertation, 17 students (48, 6%) affirmed that dealing with the practical part is the most challenging task. whereas, the theoretical part and general introduction have the same percentage of answers (34, 3%), writing general conclusion and the abstract is a challenging task for (14, 3%) students, only (11, 4%).

This indicates that students face enormous challenges in this process, particularly in the practical part. Of course, this does not mean that they do not face problems in the other parts. They lack knowledge about the process of writing a dissertation as a whole.

Q14. Rank these steps from the most difficult to the least difficult.

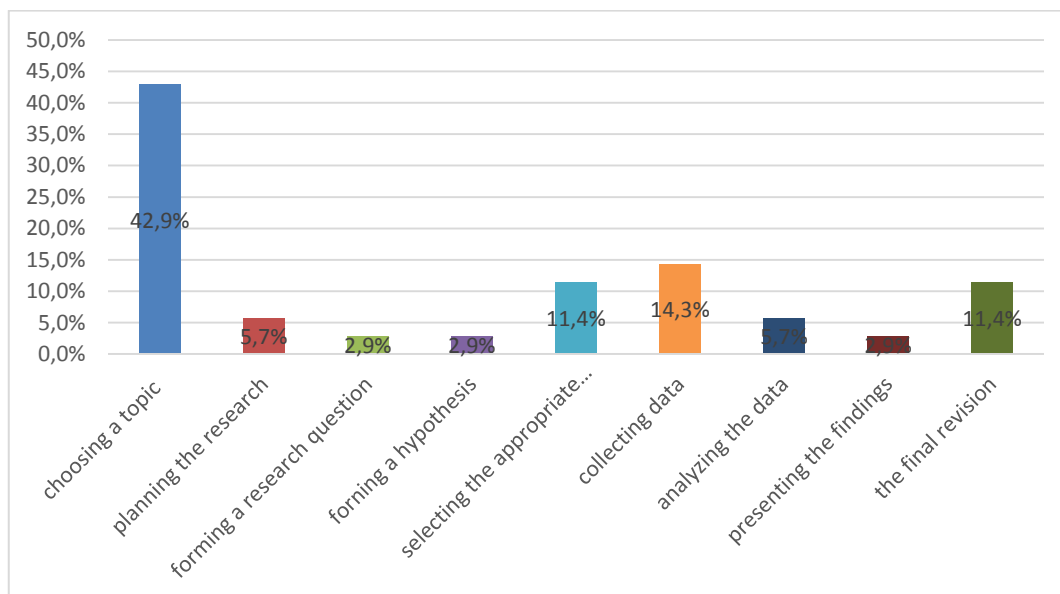


Figure 14. Students' most difficult steps in research.

The aim behind this question is to know the main difficulties that students usually encounter during the process of writing their dissertations. The majority of students (42,9%) found that choosing a topic is the most difficult step, 14,3% considered collecting data as the second challenging step, while selecting the appropriate methodology and the final revision consider as third difficult one (11,4%), planning the research and analyzing the data came as the fourth difficulty (5,7%), finally forming a research question, forming a hypothesis and presenting the findings are considered the least difficult ones (2,9%).

It can be concluded that the majority of students found that choosing the topic is the most difficult step. Even, they face other difficulties along the journey of writing their dissertation. From the starting point of their writing process, they are suffering.

Q15. In your view, what could be the reasons behind these writing difficulties.



Figure 15. The reasons behind the difficulties faced when writing a dissertation.

From the chart above the results show that, 23 of students (65,7%) view the reasons behind these writing difficulties is due to the lack of practice in research methodology, 21 of them (60%) considered the problem of not having experience in writing research papers. 12 respondents (34,3%) find the reason of not having enough resources. whereas, 16 students (22,9%) find that lack of feedback and ignorance of methodological problems are the causes of these writing difficulties.

It is concluded that students lack practice in research methodology, there is no prior experience to write at least a research proposal or any other research paper.

Others

Q16. What are the other methodological challenges that you have faced when writing your dissertation?

This question aims to give undergraduate students the opportunity to talk about their dissertations challenges, mainly the methodological ones, many students add other challenges: analyzing and discussing data, particularly in the reliability and validity.

- Analyzing and discussing data, particularly in the reliability and validity sides.
- No enough information due to the topic (new topic)
- Finding the specific titles in the theoretical part and also know to make combination between the theoretical and practical part
- The research method that I am going to depend on and discussion of the obtained results.
- The order of subtitles confused the students and it was difficult to decide which information should be included
- Lack of reliable resources
- Lack of communication with supervisor
- Not having prior knowledge about how to write dissertation

Section Two: Research Methodology Instruction

Q17. How would you evaluate your level in the research methodology instruction?

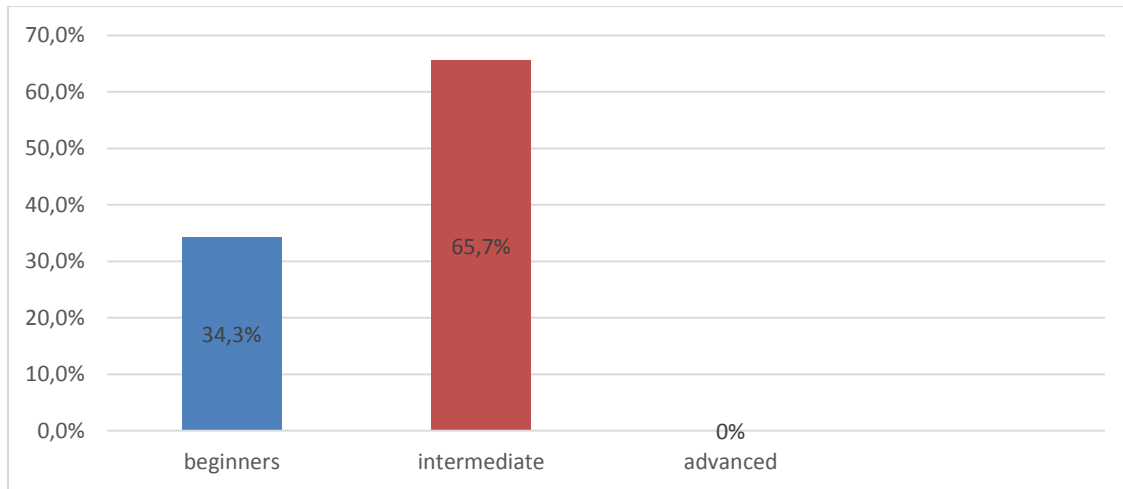


Figure 16. The students' level in Research Methodology.

From the chart above, the majority of students (65, 7%) stated that their level in research methodology is intermediate, while 34, 3% of them evaluate their level as beginners, and no one from the respondents who selected advanced level.

It is noticeable that the majority of students consider their level intermediate.

Q18. Do you consider research methodology an important subject in your instruction, i.e., studying English for academic purposes? Why?

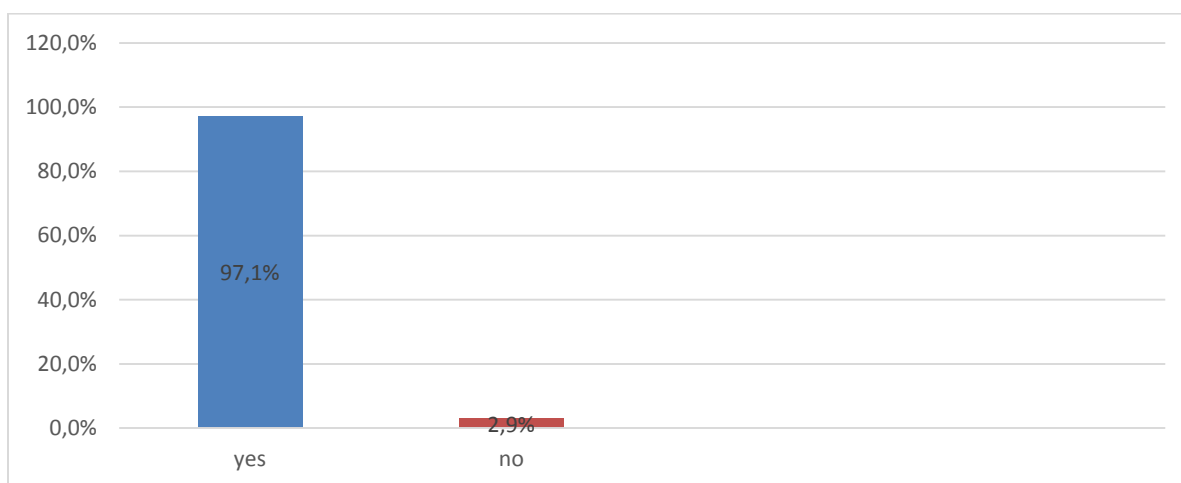


Figure 17. The Importance of Research Methodology in the Students' instruction.

From the results obtained, the majority (97,1%) of students consider research methodology an important subject during their academic studies, and only 1 student (2, 9%) views the course uninteresting.

This reveals that students are aware of the importance of research methodology during their academic studies. They know that it will help them in any research work.

Q19. Have you ever been trained to write a piece of research paper in classroom courses (study skills, research methodology and classroom research)?

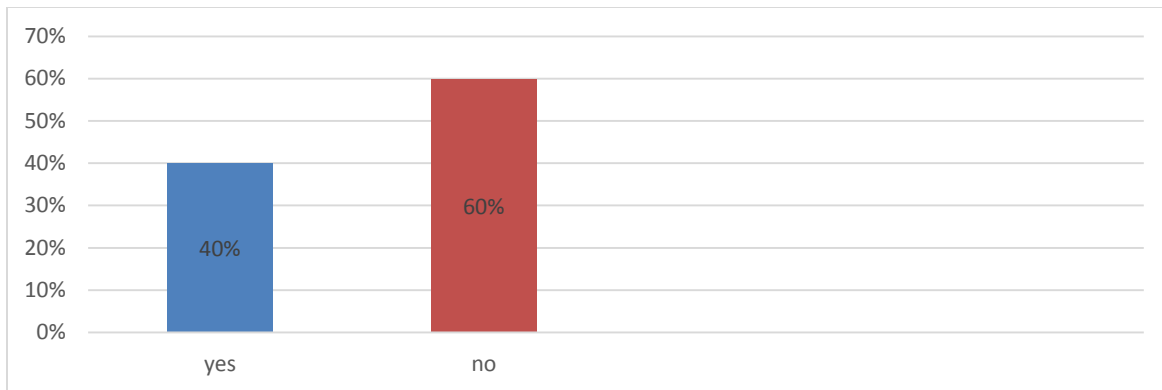


Figure 18. The Students' training in writing a piece of research paper.

As it is seen in the table, the majority of 21 students (60%) stated that they do not have experience in writing research proposal, whereas, 14 of them (40%) claimed that they have experience in this process.

It can be noticed that there is equivalence in the results, some students have experience others do not; it depends on the method followed by teachers in teaching this course.

Q20. Have you already made a research project respecting the APA style?

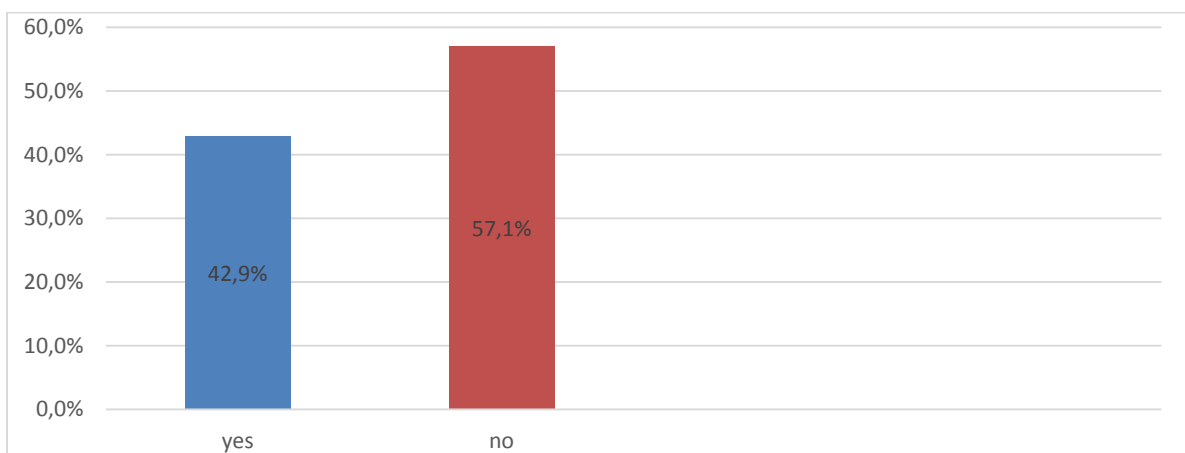


Figure19. Doing Research Project Respecting the APA Style.

From the table above, there is similarities in the results, 20 students (57, 1%) have made projects respecting the APA style while, 15 students 42, 9% have not dealt with such project. This also can refer to the teachers' methods used when teaching.

Q21. Do you know how to design?

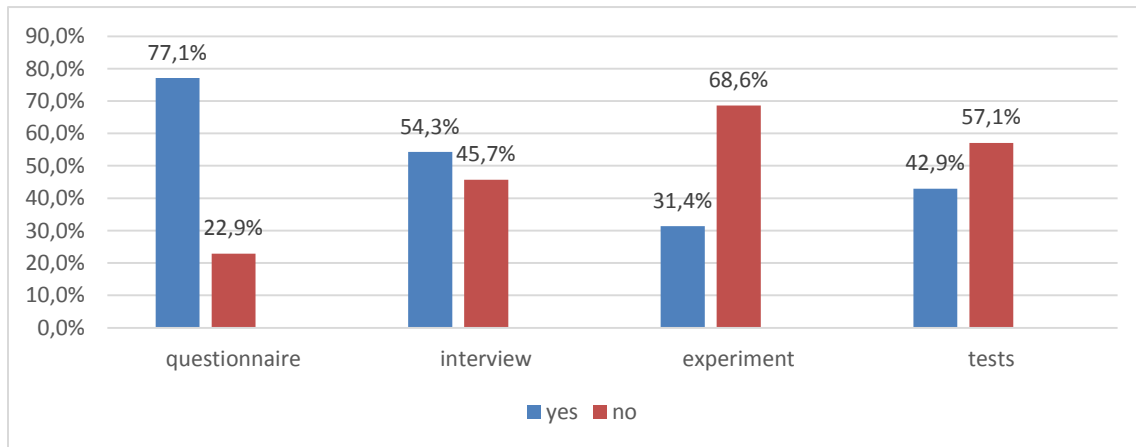


Figure 20. Difficulties in designing Research Tools.

From the obtained results, it can be noticed that there is a considerable number of Master two students who face problems in designing data collection tools. 77,1% of students know how to design a questionnaire and only 8 answered (22,9%) no. Concerning the interview, there are similarities in the statistics, 19 respondent (54,3%) know how to design an interview, while 16 of them (45,7%) do not .On the other hand,11 students (42,9%) are able to design tests, whereas 20 undergraduate students (57,1%) have no idea about it. The last research tool, is designing an experiment, in which only 11 students (31,4%) know how to design it, while 24 (68,6%) of them are lacking the knowledge of how to deal with it.

It can be concluded that students face big problems in designing data tools, specially dealing with experiments and tests. Undergraduate students lack practice in different data collection methods (questionnaires, interviews, experiments and tests).

Q22. Do you know how to analyze?

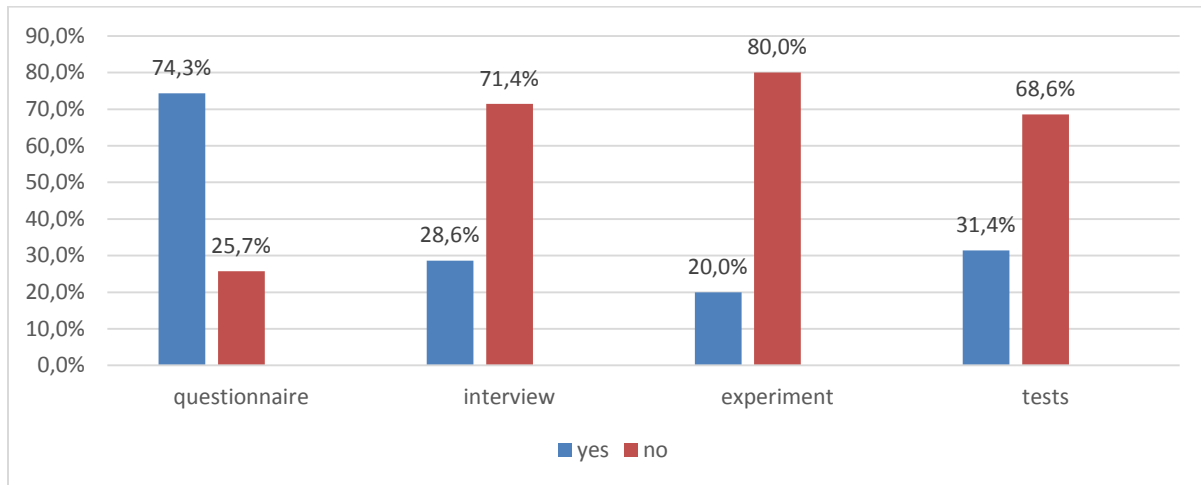


Figure 21. Data analysis difficulties.

Based on the obtained results, the majority (74, 3%) of students do not know how to analyze an interview and only 29% of them do. Also, analyzing an interview is a problem for 80% of students and just 20% of them stated that they know how to deal with it. Concerning tests, 69% of students do not have knowledge how to analyze them and only 31% answered with yes. The last research tool, is analyzing a questionnaire, in which 74% of students answered they know how to do it and only 26% mentioned no.

It is clear that students do really have difficulties in designing different data collection methods, but also in analyzing them, especially interviews and tests.

Q23. Was the instruction in research methodology successful?

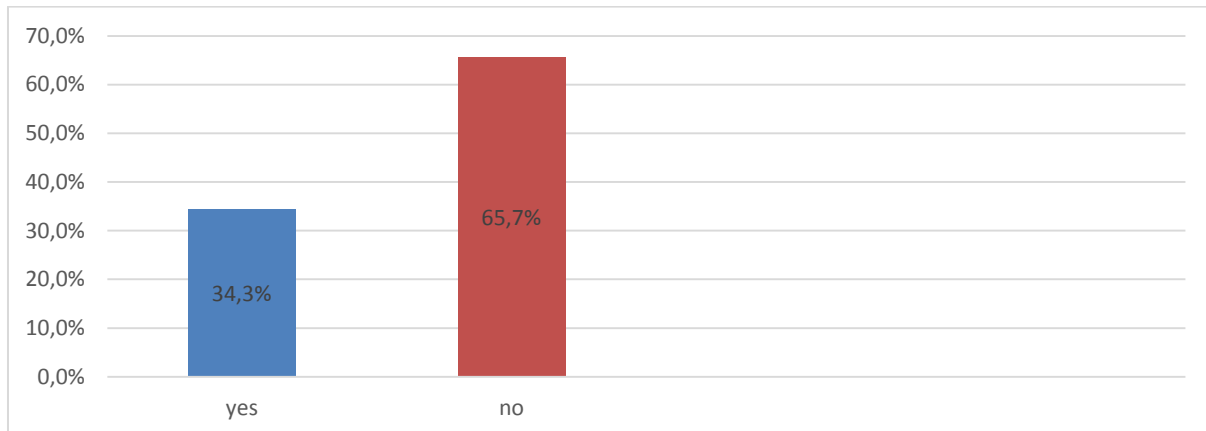


Figure22. The students' view concerning the successfulness of Research Methodology instruction.

The findings show that 23 students (65, 7%) claimed that the instruction of research methodology is not really successful, while 12 respondents (34, 3%) considered it helpful during their studies.

These results imply that there is a problem of content selection, gradation and coverage.

Q24. If no, was the problem related to

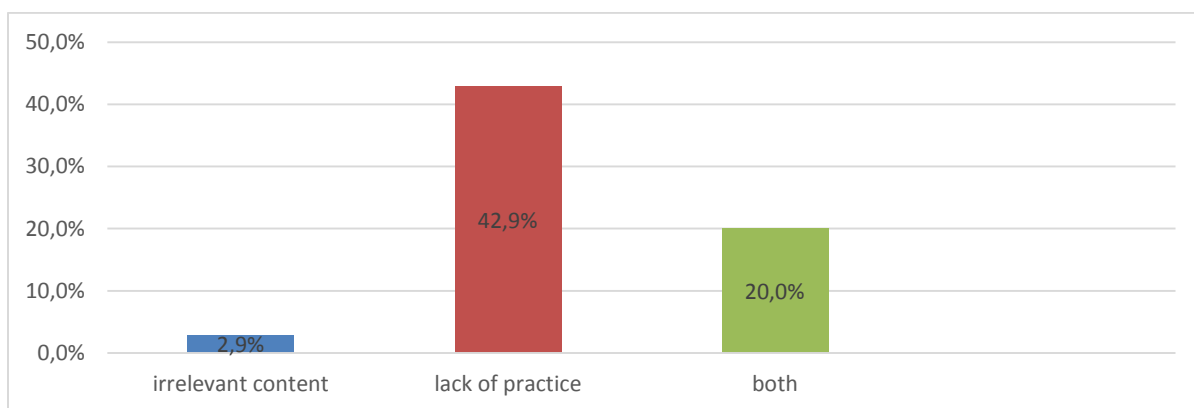


Figure 23. Problems in Research Methodology course.

From the chart above, 15 students (42, 9%) selected lack of practice as the major problem of the research methodology course. 7 participants (20%) chose both the reasons of irrelevant content and lack of practice. Only one student (2, 9%) viewed irrelevant content as a problem.

Based on the students' answers, the main reasons which led to the unsuccessfulness of the research methodology course is the lack of practice and the irrelevant content.

Q25. As a graduate student, what are the other challenges that you have faced when studying research methodology?

The aim behind this question is to give the opportunity to undergraduate students to talk about the other methodological problems encountered. The other mentioned challenges are:

- We did not have enough practice, so it was difficult to choose the appropriate research methodology and organize the dissertation according to it.
- References in the APA style
- Citation more specifically
- Difficulty in deciding the topic for research, lack of knowledge concerning methodology.
- Lack of information and explanation of the lessons
- How to write references, paraphrasing, how to analyze data.
- The content we tackled did not prepare us well to write dissertation. I faced lot of issues, avoiding plagiarism, reading about experimental design.

It seems that Master two students faced different methodological problems when writing their dissertation.

From the students' answers, it is clear that undergraduate students have faced enormous hindrances related to research methodology subject.

2.7. Teacher questionnaire

2.7.1. Administration of the Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was addressed to ten teachers of research methodology through email using Google form, due to the lack of the presence of teachers in the period of exams, in addition to the limited time.

2.7.2. Description of the Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire is composed of 18 questions that are related to their career as research methodology teachers. Those questions aims to investigate the type of knowledge the teacher is expected to provide students with, and the methods used to do so.

2.7.3. The Analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire

Q1. please, specify your degree

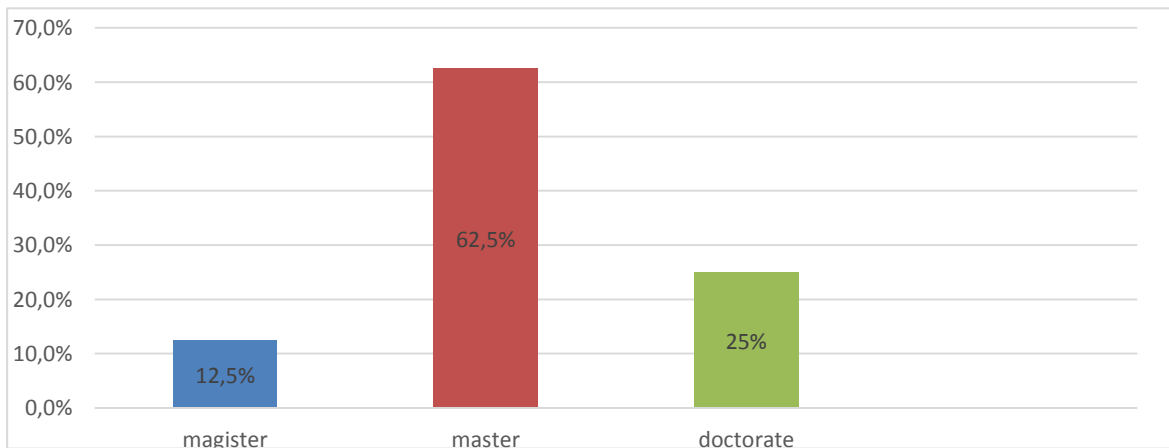


Figure 24. Teachers' degree.

It is clear from the graph above that 62,5% of teachers (five out of eight), who represent the majority have a Master degree, while a quarter (25%) of them (two out of eight) have a Doctorate degree and the remained teacher (12,5%) have a Magister degree.

These results reveal that a considerable number of teachers have Master degree comparing to Doctoral and Magister degrees. This can lead to teachers' disagreements in making decisions concerning the research methodology course.

Q2. How long have you been teaching research methodology at university?

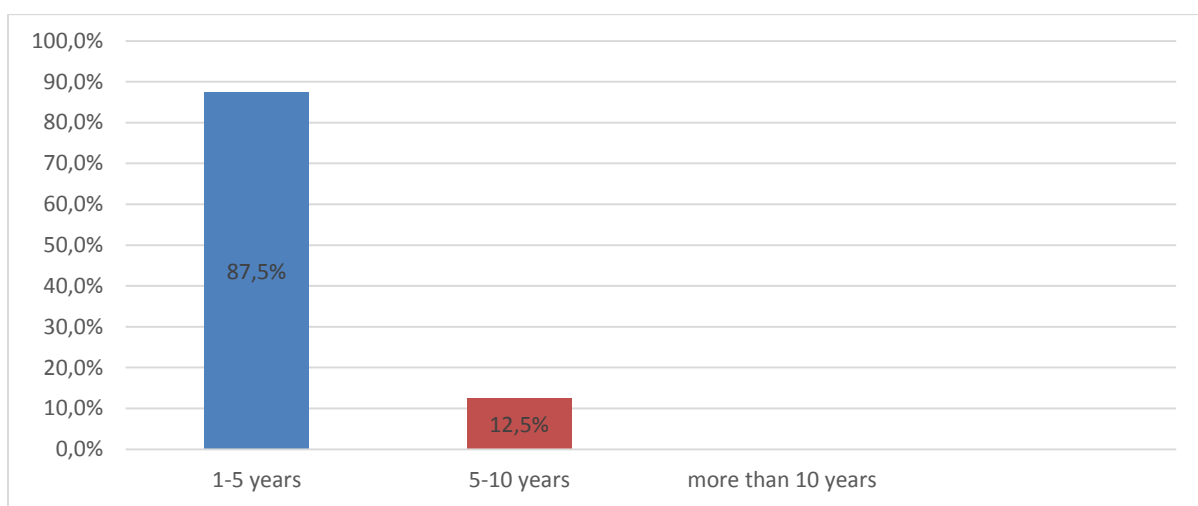


Figure 25. Teaching experience.

From the graph above, it can be noticed that the big majority of research methodology teachers (87,5%) have an experience which ranges between 1 to 5 years at university. Whereas, 12,5% of them have taught research methodology from 5 to 10 years, while no one from the participants have an experience more than 10 years.

It can be concluded that the big majority of teachers have an experience from 1 to 5 years which is considered as insufficient for teachers to give and perform in a professional way in the process of teaching research methodology and to deal proficiently with the students and the curriculum in general.

Q3. Are you teaching research methodology this year?

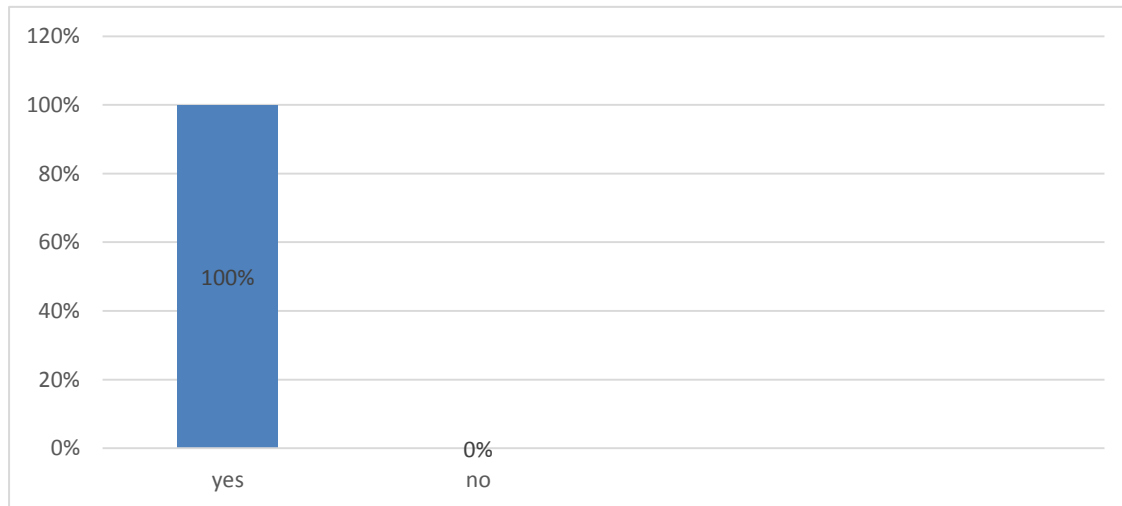


Figure 26. Teaching Research Methodology.

From the obtained results, it is clear that all teachers who participated in this study are teaching research methodology this year at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia.

This implies that teachers are aware about the kind of content that should be presented through the research methodology course, in addition to the way of delivering the content of this subject in the schedule of the different semesters.

Q4. Is the number of sessions in the curriculum enough to construct students' knowledge in research methodology? Justify, please

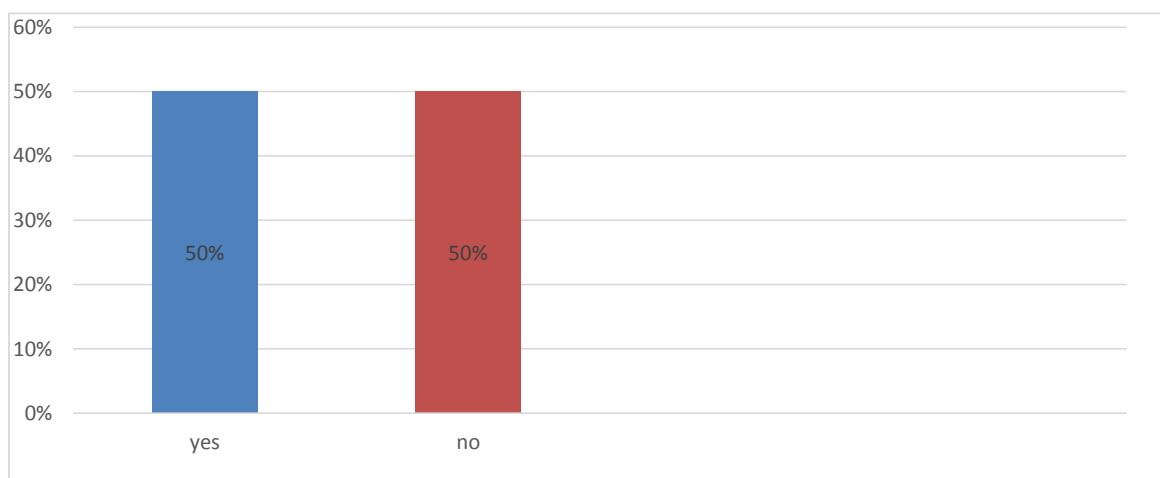


Figure 27. Teachers' View about the Number of Sessions Devoted to Research Methodology.

As it is shown in the graph above, it is clear that the teachers' answers are equally distributed, since 50% of teachers claimed that the number of sessions that are devoted to research methodology module in the curriculum is enough to construct students' knowledge in research methodology since according to some respondents, two hours for second year students are enough. Whereas the other 50% of teachers said the opposite and affirmed that students need extra sessions in order to master research methodology. They claimed that more time and extra sessions are much needed in this module in order to put into practice the theoretical knowledge and concepts they had already learnt. Also they claimed that although in Master, two sessions are devoted for research methodology course may be sufficient, the problem is in the content which can be differ from lectures to TD sessions.

The obtained results imply that teachers are not aware about the sufficiency of the number of sessions for the research methodology subject or not. Their view about whether the number or research methodology sessions is enough or not depends on the year they teach that module.

Thus for the License degree, the number of sessions can be considered as sufficient; however, for Master degree it cannot be considered as enough since students need more practice.

Q5. What types of knowledge and skills you attempt to provide your students with through the research methodology courses?

This question aims at identifying the types of knowledge and skills that teachers are attempted to provide students with through the course of research methodology. From the obtained results we found that teachers try to provide students with:

- All the required information and concepts included in the curriculum.
- More practice to accomplish the students understanding.
- Reading and note taking techniques, basics of research, understanding how to initiate research, finding a research problem and making a research proposal, etc.
- Methods and approaches about how to conduct a research or a report, reading and writing strategies.
- Information about the importance of research methodology subject to pursue their academic career.
- Reading for research purposes, note taking techniques, how to access websites and how to formulate questions, mastering, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting techniques.

This results imply that the majority of teachers when providing students with knowledge, they focus more on the theoretical knowledge and ignore the practice; this is possibly due to the limited time and the insufficient number of sessions that are devoted to the research methodology course.

Q6. Are the current research methodology courses helpful for student to write their dissertations?

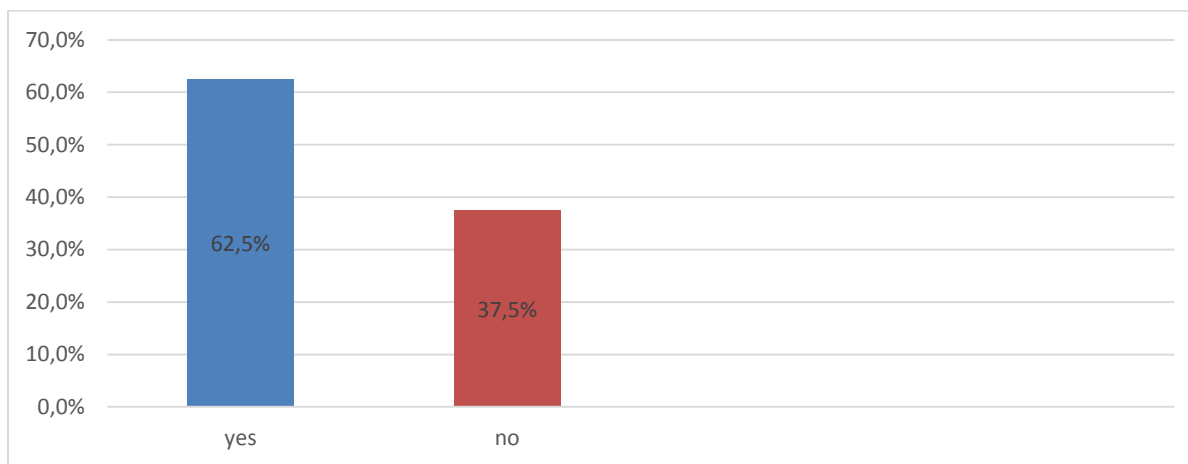


Figure 28. Teachers' view concerning the importance of current research methodology courses in writing a dissertation.

This question seeks to know whether the current research methodology courses are helpful for students in order to write their dissertation. 62, 5% of teachers affirmed that it is beneficial in the fact that they provide students with the essential knowledge and concepts related to the process of writing a dissertation. While, 37,5% of teachers argued that the current research methodology courses cannot be considered as beneficial for students when writing their dissertation since according to them, there is a huge gap between the different courses of the same subject due to the lack of organization across the levels. Also, they added that the sessions devoted to that module are not sufficient to practice and accomplish the students' understanding.

From the figure above, it can be noticed that the majority of teachers (62,5%) stated that the current research methodology courses are important for students when writing their dissertations, since these courses guides the students and provide them with information about the methods and approaches about how to conduct a research.

Q7. Is the content of research methodology relevant and sequenced appropriately according to the students' progress?

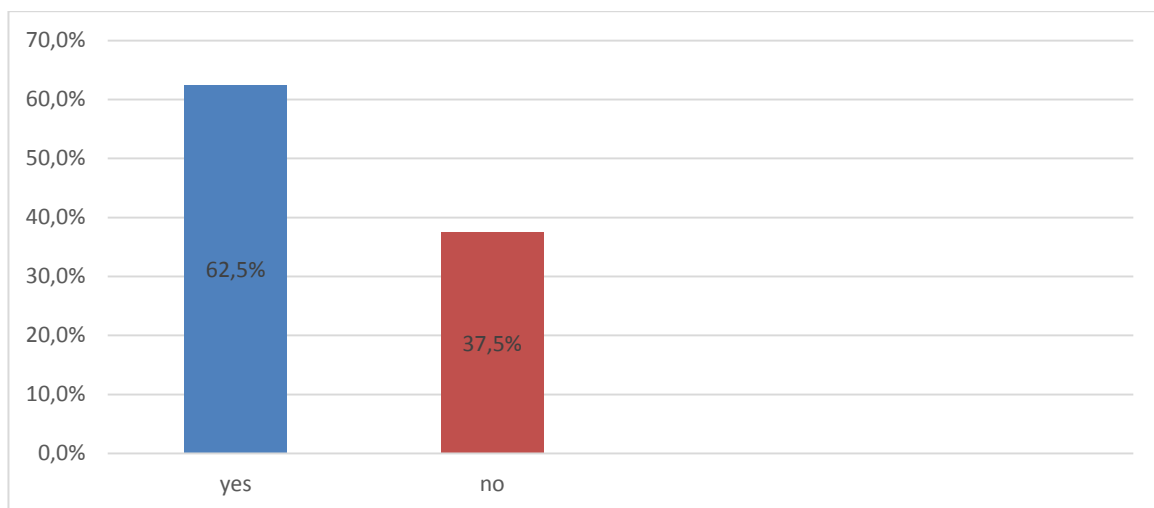


Figure 29. The teachers' view about the adequacy and relevance of the content of Research Methodology.

As it is shown in the graph above, 62,5% of teachers claimed that the content of research methodology is relevant and sequenced appropriately according to the students' progress; whereas, 37,5% of them stated that it is not.

Teachers did not have the same point of view and this is due may be to the fact that teachers did not teach the same academic year, since each year has its specific content. Based on the results above, the majority of research methodology teachers claimed that the content of that course is relevant and sequenced appropriately, this can be due to the fact that it is involves the important knowledge that students are expected to acquired.

Q8. Is the content of research methodology beneficial for students when they reach the phase of writing their dissertation? Explain please:

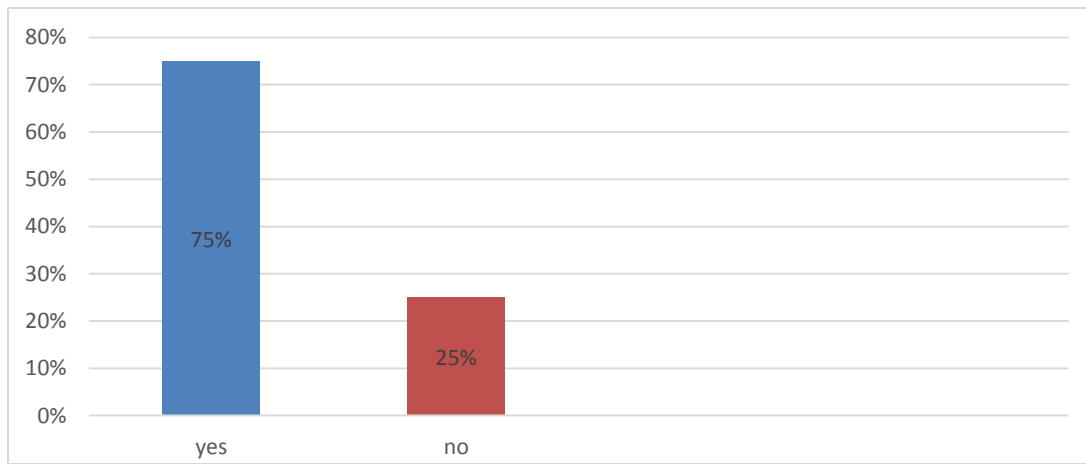


Figure 30. The teachers' view about the value of the content of Research Methodology in writing a dissertation.

From the graph above, we can mark that the big majority of teachers of research methodology (75%) affirmed that the content of research methodology is helpful for students when they reach the phase of writing their dissertation since, it contains the essential and required pieces of knowledge they are supposed to know. While, a quarter of teachers (25%) said that the content of research methodology cannot be considered as beneficial for students when writing their dissertation and they claimed that the content is not linked to real life research work due to the lack of practice.

These results imply that the content of the current research methodology courses itself can be considered as beneficial for students when they reach the phase of writing a dissertation; however, due to the lack of practice some teacher considered it as not beneficial.

Q9. Do you agree that almost all teachers focus more on theory and ignore practice?

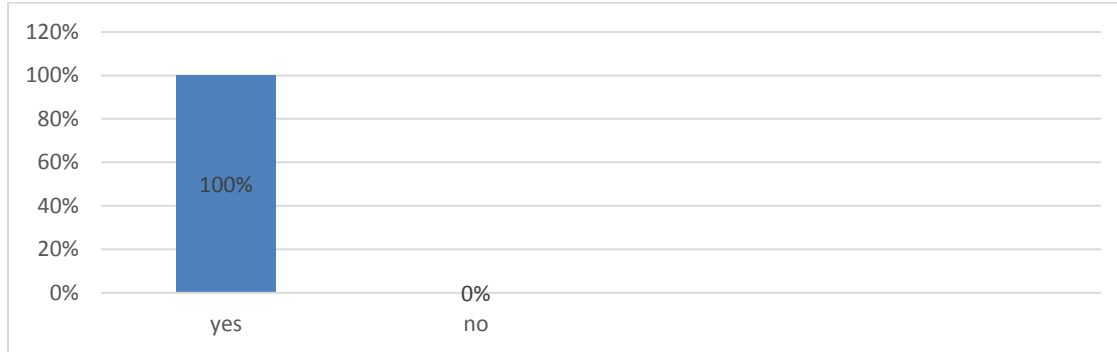


Figure 31. The teachers' view about the focus of teachers in Research Methodology.

The results that are shown in the graph above indicated that all teachers (100%) affirmed that the focus of almost all teachers when teaching research methodology subject is on theory rather than practice.

The obtained results reveal that the focus of research methodology teachers is delivering the theoretical knowledge, dues may be to the insufficient number of sessions that are devoted to teach research methodology courses.

Q 10. What method of teaching do you follow when teaching research methodology?

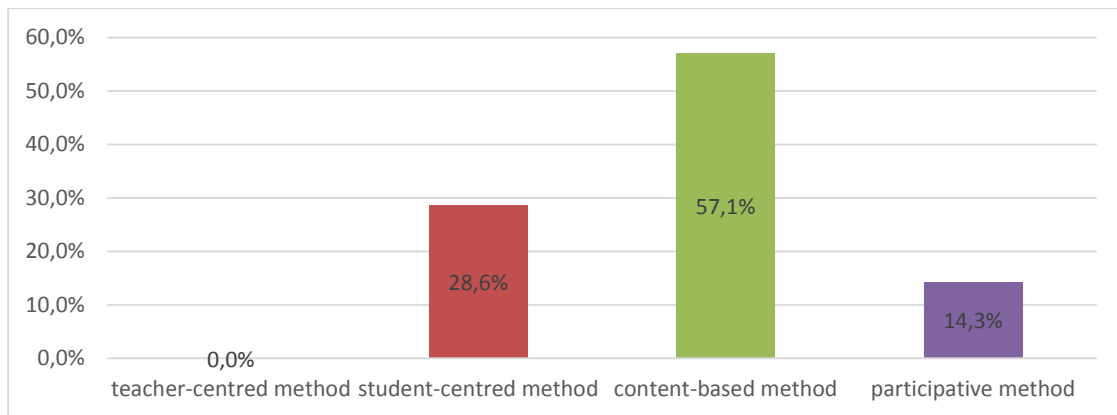


Figure 32. Teaching methods used in Research Methodology.

As it is shown in the graph above, the majority of teachers (57,1%) taught research methodology subject by following the content –based method, 28,6% teachers used student-

based method, while 14,3% of them applied participative method and no one used teacher-centered method.

From the figure above, it can noticed that the common used method is the content-based method, and this as it is mentioned in the question 9 in which the majority of teachers stayed that the focus of research methodology course is on the theoretical knowledge. Hence, students are passively involved in such courses.

Q 11. Don't you agree that almost if not all teachers are following the content-based method?

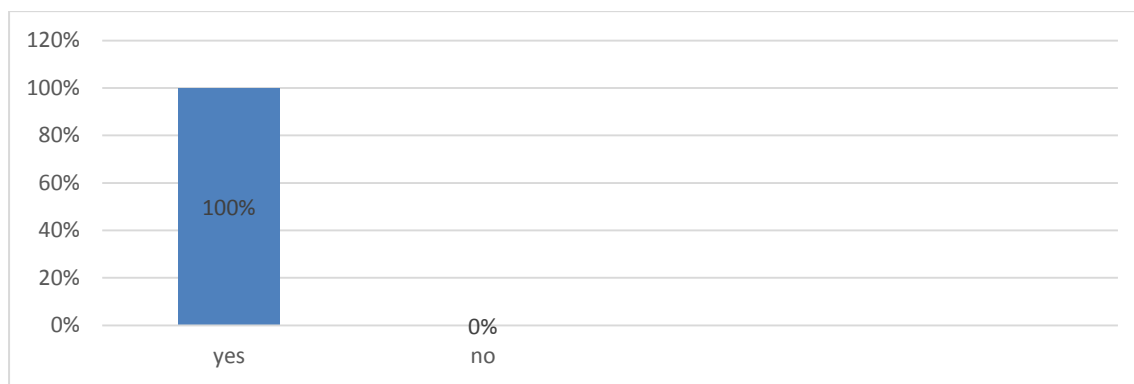


Figure 33. The method followed by teachers.

It is clear from the graph above that all teachers (100%) affirmed that almost all teachers are following the content-based approach in the process of teaching research methodology.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the common method used in teaching research methodology courses is the content-based method where the focus is on the content rather than students' practice. This may lead to some pitfalls concerning the mastery of research skills.

Q12. How often do you assign tasks to your students after each session?

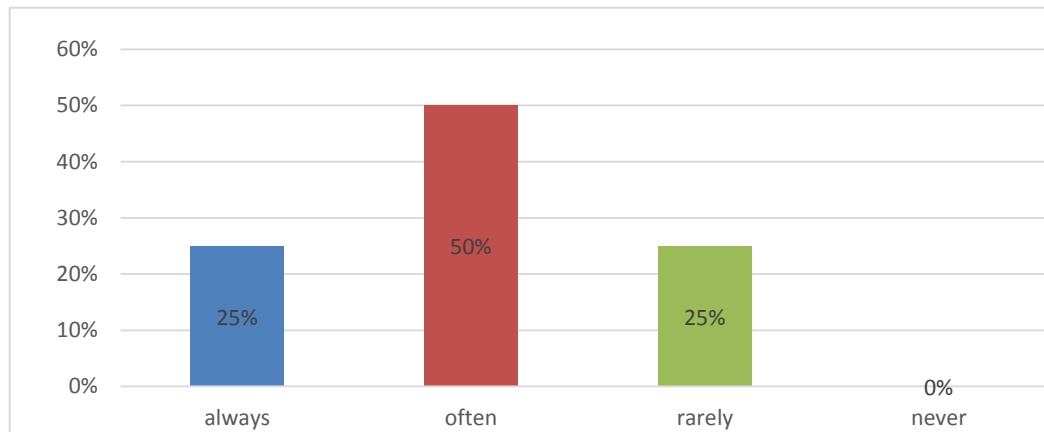


Figure 34. Teachers' assignments after each session.

From the obtained results, half of teachers (50%) stated that they often assigned tasks to their students, while a quarter (25%) of them declared that they are rarely asked their students to do tasks and the remained 25% of teachers said always.

The aforementioned results reveal that, not all teachers always deigned assignment for their students due to the use of content-based method in teaching research methodology, in which delivering the theoretical concepts is the focus of teachers rather than asking students to do tasks.

Q13. How often do you provide feedback for students?

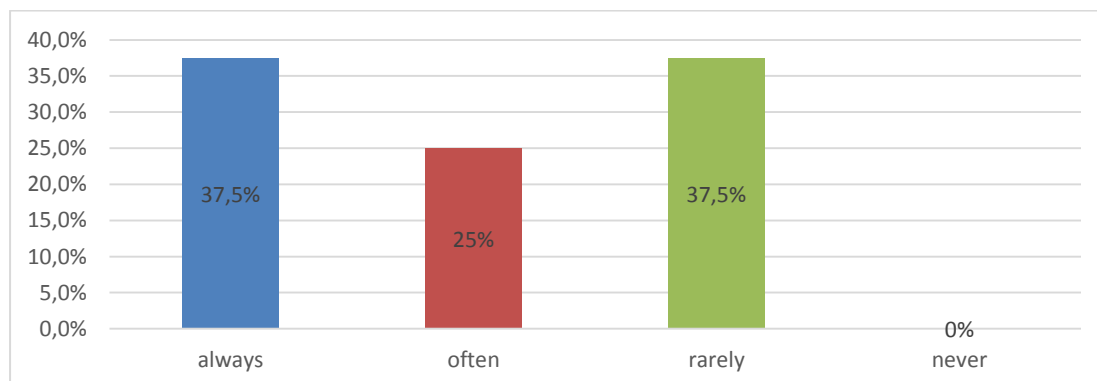


Figure 35. Providing feedback for students.

From the obtained results, we can see that 37,5 of teachers are always provide students with feedback, other 37,5 of them rarely, while a quarter (25%) often.

From these results, not all teachers provide their student with feedback due to the limited time, which is considered as not enough.

Q 14. If you assign tasks, have you ever asked them to write a small piece of research work?

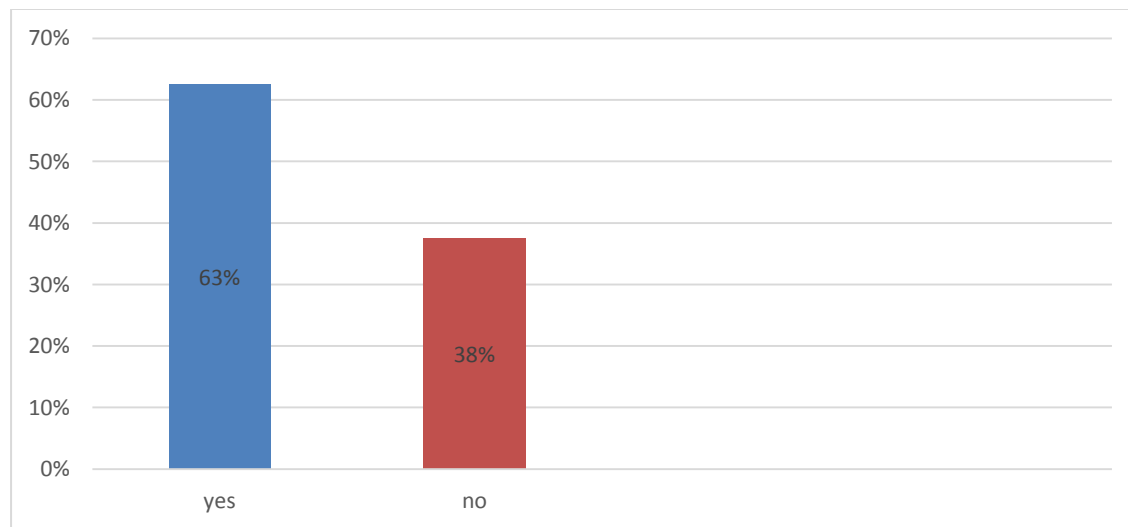


Figure 36. Writing a piece of research work.

As it is mentioned in the graph, the majority of teachers (62,5%) affirmed that they asked the students to write a small piece of research; however, 38% of teachers did not give students assignments about writing small piece of research.

Thus it can be noticed that the majority of participants declared that they assigned tasks for students in order to master and to evaluate the students' understanding of the research methodology course, and check the ability of students to put into practice what they had already studied

Q 15. Do students need practice in order to master research methodology skills?



Figure 37. Teachers' View about Students' Need for Practice.

It is clear from the graph that all teachers agreed on the idea that students need practice in order to master research methodology skills. Since, knowing without doing is not enough to master the research skills and to accomplish the students' understanding.

It implies that practice is important as content is. Thus, providing students with only the theoretical concepts and ignoring the practice may affect negatively on students' understanding of the theoretical concepts which in turn may cause a lot of problems for students.

Q16. In your opinion, what is the effective teaching method in research methodology teaching?

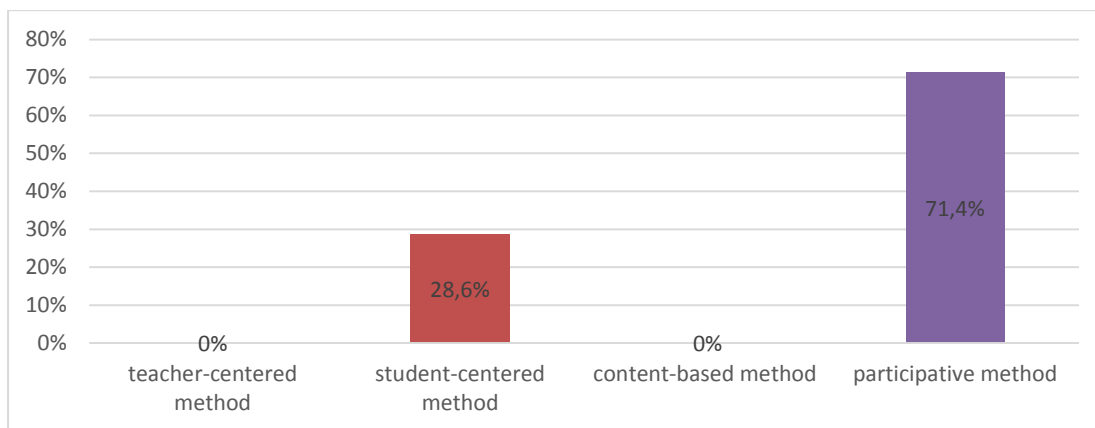


Figure 38. The Effective Teaching Method in Research Methodology Teaching.

It is clear that the majority of teachers (71,4%) chose participative method as the effective method to teach research methodology module, 28,6% of teachers selected students- centred method as the appropriate one, while no one of the teacher considered either teacher-based method nor content-based method as effective methods to teach research methodology.

Comparing these results to the once in the figure 32, it can be concluded that the most common methods used by teachers, which they are content-based method and teacher- centered method, in teaching research methodology are not considered as effective methods since both of them focus on theoretical concept and ignore practice. .so that, they ca be replaced by students- centered method and participative method in order to make the students more active and provide students with more practice.

Q17. Writing a dissertation does not require only mastery of the writing skills; it demands other skills, what solutions can you suggest in order to minimize students' challenges when writing their dissertations?

This question aims at finding some solutions to students' challenges when writing their dissertations. The teachers' suggestions were as follow:

- Raising the students' awareness about the importance of research methodology courses and designing effective group activities.
- Adding extra sessions in research methodology course since students are really in need for practice in order to master the different skills of this subject. Also in the other hand, students have to discuss the problematic issues they may face in understanding the content with their teachers, so that they must be active in order to minimize the challenges.

- Providing students with sufficient knowledge about what is a research and its types, methods of conducting a research, data collection tools, etc.
- Organizing workshops and practice sessions for learners to practice the theoretical knowledge they learned.
- Assign mini research work after each unit and analyze previously conducted research work.
- Students must get to know reading strategies to facilitate reading books.

The answers of teachers reveal that most teachers suggested to add extra sessions in order to provide students with more practice, thus it can be concluded that the lack of practice is one of the main reasons behind the students' methodological problems when writing their dissertations.

2.7.4. Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Student Questionnaire

Based on the analysis of the first section in the student questionnaire, it is found that the majority (85.7) of students consider the process of writing a dissertation hard (see question 2). This implies that the students face different problems when writing their dissertation. First and from the first stage, they admitted in their answers to question 3 that the selection of the topic was not easy for them due to different reasons (see question 4), which are narrowing the topic, being accepted by the supervisor, deciding which topic is feasible and finding the field of the topic.

The fifth question indicated in detail the difficulties encountered when planning the research. The students stated that they struggle with finding the appropriate methodology, writing the research proposal (question 6 and 7) and dividing the dissertation into chapters and sections.

Moreover, it has been noticed that students have problems with the theoretical part (see question 8 and 9), concerning citation, paraphrasing and plagiarism.

In addition, the eleventh question revealed that students encountered hindrances in the practical part (question 11 and 12), such as designing and analyzing a questionnaire or an interview and also obstacles in presenting and analyzing the data. The fifteenth question indicates the reasons behind these writing difficulties. The majority of students viewed that the reasons are the lack of practice in research methodology, no prior experience in writing research papers and lack of resources and feedback.

On the other hand, when referring to the second section which is about research methodology instruction, the eighteenth question show that master two students consider research methodology an important subject; The nineteenth and twentieth questions reveal that undergraduate students do not have previous experience in writing a piece of research paper or a project respecting the APA style. Question 23 shows that the instruction of research methodology is not really successful due to the lack of practice and the irrelevant content.

To sum up, Master two students are really facing obstacles when writing their dissertation; the majority of them consider it a difficult task due to the lack of experience in writing a research paper, also the ignorance of the basics related to research methodology, in addition to other challenges such as: difficulties when communicating with supervisors, lack of available resources and lack of practice.

2.7.5. Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire aims at collecting information about the research methodology course, the types of knowledge that teachers provide students with, and the method used in teaching such course.

From the obtained results, it can be noticed that the research methodology course is very important for students (question 6). It helps them in writing their dissertations because as it is mentioned in question 8, the content of that module is beneficial since it provides students with the principle theoretical concepts related to the process of writing a dissertation.

In addition, from the results of questions 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12, it is clear that the purpose of teaching research methodology is to provide students with the theoretical knowledge through following the content-based methodology and ignore practice. As a result, students may face some methodological problems when reaching the phase of writing their dissertation. Therefore, practice is very needed for students (as it can be noticed from question 15) to construct their understanding of the theoretical concepts acquired from that research methodology course. This can be achieved through applying the participative method and students-centered methods rather than content-based method and teacher-centered method (question 16) in the fact teachers considered the first two methods as the most effective ones to engage students and provide them with more practice.

2.8 General Discussion

Based on the results obtained from the students questionnaire, it is concluded that Master two students in the Department of English at University Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia encounter various hindrances related to research methodology when writing their dissertation. The students' answers also indicated that the reasons behind these difficulties are mainly due to the lack of practice and the absence of experience in writing such a research paper in their studies. This was supported by the teachers' answers who focus more on the importance of practicing in Research Methodology as a course for students to construct their understanding of the theoretical knowledge, thus to minimize the difficulties encountered.

2.9.Limitations of the Study

When conducting this piece of research work, some difficulties were encountered. They are subsequently listed as follows:

- Lack of sources related to the topic especially the unavailability of books in the university library.
- It might be better to use an interview with teachers along with the student questionnaire.
- The teacher questionnaire was administrated to teachers during the examination period, thus some of them did not answer to the question.
- The few number of Master two students at the university lead to make the sample limited.

2.9. Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the research results and discussion, several pedagogical implications and recommendations can be suggested for both teachers and students.

- **For Students**

They should be aware of the importance of research methodology, and they should be motivated to study it, because it provides the students with the basic elements of research methodology, and it guides them through the process of writing their dissertation.

- **For Teachers**

Teachers need to make a shift in their teaching method. They have to focus more on practice by applying the participative method in teaching the research methodology course. They should give students tasks and assignments and provide them with feedback so that they can

know their mistakes and learn from them. Moreover, it is suggested to add extra sessions in the programme as an opportunity to provide students with the needed knowledge and thus providing them with more time for practice in order to construct their understanding.

2.10. Suggestions for Further Research

From the results obtained, the researchers of this paper can suggest some points that they wish they included in their dissertation. If they had this opportunity, they would add extra information concerning the theoretical part, because there are some titles that can be divided to subtitles, but unfortunately they did not include them due to the limited number of pages. In addition to the methodology used, it would be better if they chose the interview with teachers, so that to capture all the information and details about the research methodology course. Concerning the numbers of students, it would be also better to have more, but Master two students were busy with their own dissertation.

Conclusion

This chapter, which is entitled ‘the field work’, is devoted to discuss the main results obtained from both the student and teacher questionnaires. Therefore, this part deals with the methodological concerns of the study since it begins by presenting first the research method, data gathering tools, the sample of the study and setting. Then, it provides the readers with a description of both the student and teacher questionnaires followed by an analysis and an interpretation of the data. After that, it discusses the main results and provides some implications for both students and teachers. Finally, it ends by mentioning the obstacles faced when conducting this research. As it is revealed from the obtained results from both questionnaires, it can be noticed that students encounter enormous problems from the beginning to the end of the

process of writing their dissertations and this is mainly due to the lack of practice in the research methodology course as well as the problem off the selection and gradation of content.

General Conclusion

This research paper aims at exploring the methodological problems that Master two students encounter when writing their dissertations and finding ways to overcome those problems. In this context, it was hypothesized that providing EFL students with more practice in research methodology will help students to overcome the methodological problems

This research paper consists of two chapters, the first chapter is about the literature review and it has two sections the first is about writing a dissertation. The other one concerns the research methodology subject. The second chapter is the field work, an analysis of the students and teachers questionnaire.

Based on the analysis of students' questionnaire, almost all of them encounter hindrances from the early stages of their writing to the end. They face problems when choosing a topic, when writing the elements of the research proposal, when writing the literature review and when looking for the appropriate methodology to be used. There are other problems that are related to citation, paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism, besides lack of available resources. It seems that students have faced enormous hindrances concerning both the theoretical part and practical part.

Moreover, the answers of the second section which were about the research methodology instruction, students declared that this subject is crucial and it guides them when writing their dissertation, however students complains of the lack of knowledge and practice concerning different methodological norms. Based on the results from both student and teacher questionnaires, the hypothesis is confirmed and thus the emphasis is on providing more practice as an effective way to minimize the methodological hindrances as well as the necessary selection and gradation of an appropriate content.

List of references

- Anderson, G., & Arsenault, N. (2005). *Fundamentals of educational research*. Routledge.
- Ang, Z. Y. Y., & Nather, A. (2015). Writing a Thesis or Dissertation. *Planning Your Research and How to Write It*, 273.
- Barraket, J. (2005). Teaching research method using a student-centred approach? Critical reflections on practice. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 2(2), 17-27.
- Bayram-Jacobs, D., & Hayırsever, F. (2016). Student-centred learning: How does it work in practice. *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science*, 18(3), 1-15.
- Biggam, J. (2011). succeeding with your master's dissertation: a step-by-step handbook.
- Ekmekci, O., Hancock, A. B., & Swayze, S. (2012). Teaching Statistical Research Methods to Graduate Students: Lessons Learned from Three Different Degree Programs. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 24(2), 272-279.
- George, T. Published on May 19, 2022 and revised on September 14, 2022. Definition of title page retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/title-page/>
- How to Develop a Good Research Hypothesis, (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.enago.com/academy/how-to-develop-a-good-research-hypothesis/>
- John, B. (2011). *Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: A step-by-step handbook*.
- Kathleen, M., & Weyers, J. (2007). How to write dissertations and Project report.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International.
- M, A. (2017). Teaching research methodology in EFL classrooms: The case of study: of Master (2) English Students.(Master Thesis). University of Mostaganem.

- McCombes, Sh. Published on April 4, 2019 and revised on January 13, 2020. Choosing a Dissertation Topic. Retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com/author/shona/page/4/>
- McGregor, S. L., & Murnane, J. A. (2010). Paradigm, methodology and method: Intellectual integrity in consumer scholarship. *International journal of consumer studies*, 34(4), 419-427.
- McMillan, K., & Weyers, J. (2007). *How to write dissertations & project reports*. Pearson Education.
- Murray, N., & Hughes, G. (2008). *Writing up your university assignments and research projects: A practical handbook*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Naoum, S. G. (2007). *Dissertation research and writing for construction students*. (second edition)
- Qasem, F. A. A., & Zayid, E. I. M. (2019). The challenges and problems faced by students in the early stage of writing research projects in L2, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. *European Journal of Special Education Research*.
- Richer, S. (2013). *Writing a Dissertation: The Essential Guide*.
- Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2019). *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*.
- Rock, A. J., Coventry, W. L., Morgan, M. I., & Loi, N. M. (2016). Teaching research methods and statistics in eLearning environments: Pedagogy, practical examples, and possible futures. *Frontiers in psychology*, 7, 339.
- Stages of the dissertation writing Retrieved from <https://www.opentech2013.org/seven-stages-of-academic-dissertation-writing-process>.

Swaen, B. published on October 27, 2016 and revised on May 20, 2021 by McCombes, Sh.

Retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/results/>

Teaching methods. (2022, august).retrieved from <https://teach.com/what/teachers-know/teaching-methods/>

Tiwari, H. P. (2019). Writing thesis in English education: Challenges faced by students. Journal of NELTA Gandaki, 1, 45-52.

Tuckman, B. W., & Harper, B. E. (2012). *Conducting educational research*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Villalobos, O. B. (2013). Content-based instruction: A relevant approach of language teaching. *Innovaciones educativas*, 15(20), 71-83.

Walliman, N. (2022). *Research methods: The basics*. Routledge.

Winstanley, C. (2010). *Writing a dissertation for dummies*. John Wiley & Sons.

Yusuf, M. (2013), students Problems in Writing Research Proposal : A Case Study of the Fifth 3Semseter Students of English Education Department, State Institute for Islamic studies Sunan Ample Surabaya(Doctral dissertation, UN Sunan Ample Surabaya).

Appendices

Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of a Master piece of research work that aims at exploring the methodological problems that EFL Master two students encounter when writing their dissertations. It seeks to find the reasons behind these methodological problems and ends by suggesting some solutions to overcome those problems. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions by putting a tick (✓) on the appropriate box. You may choose more than one answer and add comments when necessary.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section 1: Writing a Dissertation

1) How do you consider writing a dissertation?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| a. A necessity to complete a degree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. An attempt to find solutions to certain problems | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. A tool to improve knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. A guide for more research | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2) Is it easy to write a Master dissertation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Explain why?

.....

.....

3) How did you find choosing the topic for your Master dissertation?

Easy ☐

Difficult ☐

4) Which difficulties did you encounter when searching for your research topic?

a. Finding the field of the topic ☐

b. Deciding which topic is feasible ☐

c. Narrowing the topic ☐

d. Being accepted by the supervisor ☐

Others:
.....

5) What difficulties did you face when planning the research?

a. Knowing what is a dissertation and how it has to be written ☐

b. Writing the research proposal ☐

c. Finding the right methodology ☐

d. Dividing the dissertation into chapters and sections ☐

Others:

6) Did you write your research proposal?

Yes ☐

No ☐

7) If yes, which difficulties did you face when writing your research proposal?

a. Differing between the dependant variable and the independent one ☐

b. Formulating a research problem ☐

c. Formulating research questions ☐

d. Formulating the hypotheses ☐

☐

e. Finding reliable sources

g. Selecting the appropriate information

e. Selecting the appropriate methodology

Other(s):

8) Did you face difficulties in the theoretical part?

Yes

No

9) Specify the problems you faced among these:

a. Citation

b. Plagiarism

c. Paraphrasing

d. Organizing the list of references

Other(s):.....

10) Citation is challenging for you because of:

a. Frequent changes in the patterns of the citations

b. Not having enough prior knowledge about citation

c. Not understanding the material I am using

Other(s), specify:

.....

11) Did you face problems in the practical part?

Yes

No

12) Specify the problems you faced among these:

a. Presenting the data

b. Analyzing the data

c. Discussing the results

d. Deducing the conclusion

Other(s):

13) Which elements of the dissertation do you find most challenging to write?

a. General introduction

b. Theoretical part

c. Practical part

d. General conclusion

e. Abstract

f. All

14) Rank these steps from the most difficult to the least difficult

a. Choosing a topic

b. Planning the research

c. Forming a research question

d. Forming a hypothesis

e. Selecting the appropriate methodology

f. Collecting data

g. Analyzing the data

h. Presenting the findings

i. The final revision

15) In your view, what could be the reasons behind these writing difficulties?

a. Lack of resources

b. Lack of feedback

- c. Lack of practice in research methodology ☐
- d. No experience in writing research papers ☐
- e. Ignorance of methodological norms ☐

Other(s).....

16) What are the other methodological challenges that you have faced when writing your dissertation?.....

Section Two: Research Methodology Instruction

17) How would you evaluate your level in the research methodology instruction?

- a. Beginner ☐
- b. Intermediate ☐
- c. Advanced ☐

18) Do you consider research methodology an important subject in your instruction, i.e., studying English for academic purposes?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Why?

19) Have you ever been trained to write a piece of research paper in classroom courses (study skills, research methodology and classroom research)

Yes ☐ No ☐

20) Have you already made a research project respecting the APA style?

Yes ☐ No ☐

21) Do you know how to design?

a. A questionnaire	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Interview	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Experiment	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Tests	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

22) Do you know how to analyze?

a. Questionnaire	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Interview	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Experiment	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Tests	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

23) Was the instruction in research methodology successful?

Yes ☐ No ☐

24) If no, was the problem related to:

a. Irrelevant content	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Lack of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Other(s):

25) As a graduate student, what are the other challenges that you have faced when studying research methodology?

.....

Thanks you for your time and collaboration.

Appendix B

Teacher Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a Master piece of research work that aims at exploring the methodological problems that EFL Master two students encounter when writing their dissertations. It seeks to find the reasons behind these methodological problems and ends by suggesting some solutions to overcome those problems. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions by putting a tick (✓) on the appropriate box. You may choose more than one answer and add comments when necessary.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

1) Please, specify your degree :

- a- Magister ☐
- b- Master ☐
- c- Doctorate ☐

2) How long have you been teaching research methodology at university?

- a. 1-5 years ☐
- b. 5-10 years ☐
- c. More than 10 ☐

3) Are you teaching methodology this year?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4) Is the number of sessions in the curriculum enough to construct students' knowledge in research methodology?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Why?

.....

- 5) What types of knowledge and skills you attempt to provide your students with through the research methodology course?

.....

.....

- 6) Are the current research methodology courses helpful for students to write their dissertations?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Explain please?

.....

.....

- 7) Is the content of research methodology relevant and sequenced appropriately according to the students' progress?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- 8) Is the content of research methodology beneficial for students when they reach the phase of writing their dissertation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Explain why?

.....

.....

9) Do you agree that almost all teachers focus more on theory and ignore practice?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10) What method of teaching do you follow when teaching research methodology?

- a) Teacher-centered method ☐
- b) Learner-centered method ☐
- c) Content-based method ☐
- d) Participative method ☐

11) Don't you agree that almost if not all teachers are following the content-based approach? Yes ☐ No ☐

12) How often do you assign tasks to your students after each session?

a) Always ☐ b) Often ☐ c) Rarely ☐ d) Never ☐

13) How often do you provide feedback for students?

a) Always ☐ b) Often ☐ c) Rarely ☐ d) Never ☐

14) If you assign tasks, have you ever asked them to write a small piece of research work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

15) Do students need practice in order to master research methodology skills?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16) In your opinion, what is the effective teaching method in research methodology teaching?

- a- Learner-centered ☐
- b- Teacher-centered ☐
- c- Content-based method ☐
- d- Participative method ☐

17) Writing a dissertation does not require only mastery of the writing skills; it demands other skills, what solutions can you suggest in order to minimize students' challenges when writing their dissertations?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you so much for your time and collaboration.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العوائق والتحديات التي يواجهها طلاب الماستر 2 خلال تجربتهم في كتابة أطروحة الماستر، الخاصة بهم والتي تعتبر من أصعب أنواع الكتابات الأكاديمية. لقد تم استخدام كل من الأسلوبين الكمي والنوعي لتأكيد الفرضية المقترحة من خلال توزيع استبيانين لكل من طلاب الماستر 2 والأساتذة في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بكلية اللغات، فيما يخص هذا الاستبيان الموجه للطلبة بغرض معرفة وجهة نظرهم اتجاه عملية كتابة الأطروحة ، إضافة إلى معرفة ما إذا كان تدريس منهجية البحث فعالاً أم لا.

فيما يخص الاستبيان الموجه للأساتذة فهو موجه من اجل تقييم هذه المادة، وتشير النتائج المتحصل عليها من استبيان الطلاب إلى أنهم يواجهون مشاكل من بداية عملية كتابتهم للأطروحة ، وذلك راجع إلى عدم تطلعهم على مبادئ هذه العملية إضافة إلى نقص الجانب التطبيقي، ومن جهة أخرى فان النتائج المتحصل عليها من خلال الاستبيان الموجه للأساتذة يشير إلى أنه على الرغم من دور مادة منهجية البحث للطلاب في عملية كتابة الأطروحة، إلا أن هناك بعض المشاكل المتعلقة بمحتوى المادة و بطريقة تقديم الدروس، وقلة الممارسة وهذا ما يؤثر سلباً على الطلاب خلال كتابة الأطروحة.