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**Investigating EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing Literature Review
of Master Dissertations: Case of Master 2 students of Mohammed
Seddik Ben Yahia University**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of Master in
didactics of foreign languages.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “The Difficulties EFL Master 2 Students encounter When Writing the Literature Review of their Dissertations: The Case of Master 2 students At the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia” is my own work and all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of references. I also certify that I have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, I shall be responsible for the consequences.

Signature

Date

Dedication

“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”

Compassionate, all the praise is due to Allah

I would like to dedicate this humble work: To the most precious people to my heart: my dear mother and beloved father for their endless support, encouragement, tenderness, and understanding, and love may Allah bless them.

To my beloved sisters and brothers for always teasing, motivating and supporting me through my hard times

To all my lovely friends and colleagues, especially the ones I will always be grateful to meet:

Zineb, Anfal, Ashwak, and Anissa.

To my lovely best friend: ‘Ashwak Karawan’ you bright coloured my life thank you

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And my lovely, warm cat ‘Naughty’ for being more of a friend than just a pet. Lastly , I want to thank myself most. I am proud of myself today and I will be prouder in the future with the will of God.

Zina Brahim

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my amazing parents, I'll make you proud for as long as I live. To my brothers Aymen, Nidal, and Dirar, keep up losers, I'm still the favorite child. To my relatives, especially Grandma, Grandpa, and Miyada, for your endless love and support.

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Abstract

This descriptive study aims at identifying the difficulties EFL Master 2 students encounter when writing the literature review. For the sake of reaching the aims of the present study, a questionnaire and an interview were used to gather data at the Department of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. On the one hand, the students' questionnaire was handed to (70) Master 2 students out of a total of (140). It aims at identifying the difficulties encountered by the students when writing their literature review. On the other hand, (10) teachers out of (32) teachers were interviewed to have further data obtained. The results obtained indicated that Master 2 students do struggle with writing their literature review writing. These difficulties consist principally of an inability to locate relevant literature, to identify the gap in previous literature, and to critically evaluate and select the most important sources in previous literature. Based on the findings, some pedagogical recommendations were suggested to overcome these difficulties.

Key words: EFL Master 2 Students- Dissertations- Literature Review.

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

APA: American Psychological Association.

RM: Research Methodology.

List of Tables

Table2.1: Students’ Perception of The Research Methodology Course.....	31
Table 2.2: Students’ Evaluation of their Research Methodology Skills.....	32
Table2.3: The Month Students Started Working on their Dissertation.....	32
Table2.4: How Often Students Meet their Supervisors.....	33
Table2.5: Students’ Literature Review Status.....	34
Table 2.6: Students’ Past Experiences in Writing a Literature Review.....	34
Table2.7: Sources of Students’ Support.....	35
Table2.8: Supervisors’ Feedback to Students.....	37
Table 2.9: Students’ Perceptions.....	38
Table 2.10: Students Training in Writing the Literature Review.....	39
Table 2.11: Students' Perceptions Towards the Effectiveness of the Literature Review Training.....	39
Table 2.12: Resource and Support Tools Used by Students to Write the Literature Review..	41
Table 2.13: The Difficulty Level of The Literature Review According to Students.....	42
Table 2.15: Most Challenging Part of the Literature Review According to Students.....	43
Table 2.16: Students' Challenges in Writing the Literature Review.....	45
Table 2.17: Reasons Behind these Difficulties.....	51

Content

Declaration	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgement.....	IV
Abstract	V
List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols	VI
List of Tables	VII
Content	VIII
General Introduction	
1. Background of the Study	2
2. Statement of the Problem	3
3. Aims of the Study	3
4. Research Questions	3
5. Research Assumption	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
6. Tools of Research	3
7. Structure of the Study	4
Chapter One: Theoretical Framework	
Section One: Academic Writing	6
Introduction.....	6

1.1. Definition of Writing	6
1.2. Definition of Academic Writing	6
1.3. The Importance of Academic Writing	8
1.4. The Academic Writing Stages	8
1.4.1. The Pre-Writing Stage	9
1.4.2. The Drafting Stage.....	9
1.4.3. The Revising and Editing Stage	9
1.4.4. Publishing Stage	10
1.5. Characteristics of Academic Writing.....	10
1.5.1. Complexity	10
1.5.2. Formality	11
1.5.3. Coherence and Cohesion	11
1.5.4. Objectivity	12
1.5.5 Explicitness.....	12
1.5.6. Hedging	12
1.5.7. Responsibility	13
Conclusion	13
Section Two: The Literature Review.....	14
Introduction.....	14

2.1. Definition of Research.....	14
2.2. Dissertations and Thesis	15
2.3. Elements of the Dissertation.....	15
2.4. Definition of Literature Review	16
2.5. The Purpose of the Literature Review	17
2.6. The Structure of the Literature Review	18
2.7. Steps of Writing a Literature Review	19
2.7.1. Identifying Key Terms	19
2.7.2. Locating Literature	20
2.7.3. Critically Evaluating and Selecting the Literature	20
2.7.4. Organising the Literature.....	20
2.7.5. Writing the Literature Review	21
2.8. Characteristics of a Good Researcher.....	22
2.8.1. Critical Reading.....	22
2.8.2. Critical Reading.....	23
2.9. Ways of Reporting Information while Avoiding Plagiarism	23
2.9.1. Referencing.....	24
2.9.2. Paraphrasing	24
2.9.3. Summarising.....	25

2.9.4. Direct Quoting	25
Conclusion	26
 Chapter Two: The Practical Part	
Introduction.....	27
2.1. Research Method	29
2.2. Population and Sampling.....	29
2.3. Data Collection Tools	30
2.4. Description and Administration of the Research Tools	30
2.4.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire	30
2.4.2. Description of Supervisors' Interview	31
2.5. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results.....	31
2.5.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire.....	31
• Identifying Key Terms.....	46
• Locating relevant literature	46
• Critically evaluating and selecting relevant literature.....	47
• Outlining the structure	47
• Determining the scope and focus	47
• Identifying the gap in previous literature	48
• Integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources.....	48

• Using Other Writers Ideas to Support One’s Own	48
• Paraphrasing Information.....	49
• Summarising information.....	49
• Appropriately using the APA style	49
• Quoting.....	50
• Writing Coherently and in an Organised Manner	50
• Connecting ideas together by using transitional words.....	50
• Using Correct Verb Tense When Writing.....	50
2.5.2. Discussion of Students’ Questionnaire	54
2.5.3. Supervisors’ Interview Analysis	57
2.5.4. Discussion of Supervisors’ Interview	68
2.5.5. Discussion of the Overall Result	69
2.6. Limitations of the Study	71
2.7. Pedagogical Recommendations	71
Conclusion	72
General Conclusion	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
General Conclusion	70
List of References.....	72
Appendices	77

Résumé.....	85
المخلص	27

General Introduction

1.	Background of the Study	2
2.	Statement of the Problem	3
3.	Aims of the Study	3
4.	Research Questions	3
6.	Tools of Research	3
7.	Structure of the Study	4

1. Background of the Study

Research is essential in various fields, including science, social sciences, arts, humanities, and business, among others. It helps to answer questions, solve problems and make informed decisions. In an academic educational context, Neil Murray and Geraldine Hughes (2008) claimed that the term research refers to the “Component of a degree programme which requires you, the student, to successfully design, conduct and write up a piece of research as a condition of being awarded the degree. In the vast majority of cases that research will form either a dissertation or a thesis”. (p.119)

These dissertations and theses are made up of several elements such as the introduction, the literature review, and the methodology. The literature review is an essential component of the dissertation or thesis, in which writers use their research skills. According to Onwuegbuzie et al (2010), a literature review is “... an interpretation of a selection of published and/or unpublished documents available from various sources on a specific topic that optimally involves summarization, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of the documents” (p. 173). This means that when writing a literature review, the writer needs not only to read previous literature but also interpret and criticize other authors’ works using various skills such as summarizing and synthesizing.

English as foreign language learners (EFL) who prepare a research project usually face difficulties when writing literature reviews. Many studies have been conducted to investigate these difficulties. A study conducted by Peng (2018) at a Chinese university supported the idea that the literature review is one of the most challenging portions to write. The study looked into the viewpoints of supervisors regarding the challenges graduate students face when writing their dissertations. Supervisors pointed out throughout the interview that this part had numerous flaws. The reviews of the candidates were merely summaries of earlier works without any attempt to examine similarities and differences

between them and how they were related to their (i.e., students') own research the students' inability to synthesize prior research and establish theoretical frameworks. Supervisors also cited the lack of a critical assessment of earlier studies as a problem, which led to a subpar research design. The study by Peng (2018) found that the students' poor English language skills were a major factor in the challenges encountered when writing the literature review chapter; there were numerous grammatical, spelling, and formality errors here.

Furthermore, Yeh (2010) conducted a qualitative interview-based study at a Taiwanese university with a group of graduate students who were interviewed in their mother tongue with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the student's experiences with research writing and the difficulties they encountered during their research process (Mandarin Chinese). The interview's findings showed that one of the most difficult tasks for graduate students was researching relevant literature. Students disclosed that they were inexperienced researchers who had just begun their careers in academic writing and scientific research. As a result, writing reviews of the literature was difficult for them given that they had no experience finding sources and assessing their value. Moreover, they mentioned that they had trouble using appropriate terminology and academic formal language as well as rephrasing the thoughts of others in their own words.

Regarding the reasons for the difficulties EFL students may encounter in writing their literature reviews, Benbella (2021) interviewed 10 Master's students selected out of a population of 53, according to her the interview, the results revealed the following reasons: lack of practice in writing the literature review, confusion of rules of in-text citations, and the fact of working in pairs.

2. Statement of the Problem

According to discussions with teachers at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel, one of the most challenging tasks for Master two students working on their dissertations is the process of writing a literature review.

Previous studies mainly focused on studying these issues from students' points of view without regard to the important role that their teachers' help and experience play in the process. Therefore, a careful investigation and identification of these challenges from teachers' and learners' points of view can provide enough insight into what can be done to avoid disruption and find solutions to such problems.

3. Aims of the Study

The main aim of this study is to identify the difficulties that master two students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, face when writing the literature review of their dissertations. Two aims are to find the causes on the one hand, and the solutions to overcome these problems, on the other hand.

4. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the difficulties and the reasons behind the difficulties, EFL Master 2 students encounter when writing their literature review?
- What are teachers' points of view regarding the difficulties their students encounter when writing their literature review?

5. Tools of Research

This study will be conducted at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel, to investigate the difficulties EFL Master 2 students face when writing their literature

reviews. The methodology used for this study is both qualitative and quantitative. To answer the research questions, two research instruments will be used; namely an interview, and a questionnaire. On the one hand, a questionnaire will be administered to all (140) Master two students to identify the difficulties they encounter when writing their literature reviews; As well as identifying possible reasons and solutions to these problems, (10) supervisors will be interviewed to gain insight into their viewpoints and experience working with Master 2 students. This will help to understand the obstacles that students face and determine how contributions can be made to help overcome them.

6. Structure of the Study

The current study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical part and it has two sections. The first section presents a definition of writing alongside a general overview of academic writing and its importance, stages and Characteristics. The second section provides a definition of research, as well as a definition of dissertations and theses and their elements. It focuses on presenting a definition of the literature review and its purpose, structure, and the steps of writing it. It also highlights the characteristics of a good researcher and ways of reporting information while avoiding plagiarism.

The second chapter is devoted to the practical part. It describes the sample of the study and the research tools used. It also presents the different findings by analysing and interpreting the results of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview, as well as the discussion of the results. The chapter ends with possible solutions and pedagogical recommendations. The chapter concludes by offering potential solutions and pedagogical suggestions.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Section One: Academic Writing	6
Introduction.....	6
1.1. Definition of Writing	6
1.2. Definition of Academic Writing	6
1.3. The Importance of Academic Writing	8
1.4. The Academic Writing Stages	8
1.4.1. The Pre-Writing Stage	9
1.4.2. The Drafting Stage.....	9
1.4.3. The Revising and Editing Stage	9
1.4.4. Publishing Stage	10
1.5. Characteristics of Academic Writing.....	10
1.5.1. Complexity	10
1.5.2. Formality	11
1.5.3. Coherence and Cohesion	11
1.5.4. Objectivity	12
1.5.5 Explicitness.....	12
1.5.6. Hedging	12
1.5.7. Responsibility	13

Conclusion	13
Section Two: The Literature Review.....	14
Introduction.....	14
2.1. Definition of Research.....	14
2.2. Dissertations and Thesis	15
2.3. Elements of the Dissertation.....	15
2.4. Definition of Literature Review	16
2.5. The Purpose of the Literature Review	17
2.6. The Structure of the Literature Review	18
2.7. Steps of Writing a Literature Review	19
2.7.1. Identifying Key Terms	19
2.7.2. Locating Literature	20
2.7.3. Critically Evaluating and Selecting the Literature	20
2.7.4. Organising the Literature.....	20
2.7.5. Writing the Literature Review	21
2.8. Characteristics of a Good Researcher.....	22
2.8.1. Critical Reading.....	22
2.8.2. Critical Reading	23
2.9. Ways of Reporting Information while Avoiding Plagiarism	23

2.9.1. Referencing.....	24
2.9.2. Paraphrasing	24
2.9.3. Summarising.....	25
2.9.4. Direct Quoting	25
Conclusion	26

Section One: Academic Writing

Introduction

Academic writing is a crucial aspect of higher education, actively contributing to students' intellectual development by requiring them to write a number of different types and genres of academic works throughout their academic careers.

This section provides an overview of what is writing in general, and academic writing in particular. It provides a definition of academic writing and its importance, as well as its different aspects including the academic writing stages, characteristics, and genres.

1.1. Definition of Writing

Writing is a device that people use to communicate ideas and express viewpoints with one another. According to White (1986), “writing is the process of expressing the ideas, information, knowledge, or experience and understanding the writing to acquire the knowledge or some information to share and learn ” (p. 10). Furthermore, according to Gillett, Hammond, and Martalla (2009), “Writing is also indirectly encouraging you to read widely, think critically, improve your communication skills and develop a certain level of competence and professionalism needed for your future career” (p. xix). Therefore, writing is one of the most important skills students should possess; it is a talent that is necessary for academic, personal, and professional development. Writing is also a vital tool for critical thinking and problem-solving because it enables students to express their ideas clearly and persuasively.

1.2. Definition of Academic Writing

It is almost impossible to find a definition of academic writing that encompasses all the different aspects and facets of academic disciplines. Godev (1997) explained that “The term academic writing seems to escape any definition that may try to encompass every writing task likely to be encountered in any of the academic disciplines.” (p. 636). Thus, any definition that claims to be comprehensive still leaves out some elements or aspects of at least one or two academic disciplines.

However, some scholars have come close to giving a comprehensive definition. Academic writing is generally considered a tool for students to prove their abilities as independent thinkers and researchers. Jordan (1999) maintained that “In a broad sense academic writing refers to a formal style of writing that is produced in an academic setting” (p.42). This means that Academic writing is utilized by professors, researchers, and students to explain concepts, support ideas, and hold intellectual discussions across a wide range of academic disciplines. It is also used by teachers as a device for the assessment of their students' skills. Gillett, Hammond, and Martalla (2009) stated that “When you are a student, you will find that your tutors use your writing to gauge how much you have learned and understood about a particular subject and to judge the quality of your thinking” (p. xix). Therefore, academic writing is a tool that different types of individuals in an academic discipline can benefit from.

In a language learning context, students are taught that writing is a way to communicate with people in different contexts. Aydın and Baysan (2018, p.214) stated that “Academic writing is, first and foremost, an activity to be realised by individuals who have gained a high level of language awareness to organise their knowledge and experience through mental processes”. This means that academic writing is an intellectually challenging process that requires an individual's utmost focus, this challenge is doubled in

the case of English as foreign language (EFL) learners who may face obstacles due to the language barrier.

1.3. The Importance of Academic Writing

Academic writing is a purposeful process where the writer is given a chance to express and communicate their ideas effectively to their readers. Gillett, Hammond, and Martalla (2009) maintained that “Academic writing is a social practice. This means that you always write with a readership in mind and you always write with a purpose” (p. xix). It further allows individuals to share their research findings with a wider audience that serves the advancement of knowledge in their field of study.

Writing academic work can be a tricky process as oftentimes students can be overwhelmed by the amount of information that can be used in their work. However, Whitaker (2009) stated that the objective of academic writing “is not to show off everything that you know about your topic, but rather to show that you understand and can think critically about your topic” (p.2). This entails that academic writing is a very helpful tool for students to master the use of their critical thinking skills to recognize and pinpoint the more relevant ideas from the rather irrelevant ones in a topic enabling them to prioritize only ideas that are important to their work.

1.4. The Academic Writing Stages

Although there are various forms of writing, with each one having its own content and purposes, they all still follow the same process. Singleton-Jackson (2003) referred to writing as “...a mystery to researchers with regard to how the process of writing occurs and what makes it proficient” (p.11). In other words, the complexity of the writing process and the factors that contribute to writing proficiency are not fully understood by researchers. However, a number of researchers, including Williams (2003), agree on the

four following stages as the main stages of writing, which are: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing, and publishing.

1.4.1. The Pre-Writing Stage

Pre-writing refers to the stage that precedes the actual composition. During this stage, students prepare themselves for the writing process, by thinking and organizing what they want to write. This can be done through a number of steps such as choosing the subject to be discussed, and the audience to be reached; as well as using brainstorming and other activities to activate prior knowledge (Harp & Brewer, 1996). Al-Abed (1992) also stressed that "the pre-writing stage encourages effective writing because it promotes originality, creativity, and personal awareness" (p. 83). In the same vein, Min (2006) considers this stage "a good foundation for the entire writing process" (p.1-2). Therefore, Pre-Writing is an important stage in the writing process that aids writers in maintaining focus and direction as they develop their ideas by using means such as brainstorming and outlining to come up with a plan of what to say in their paper.

1.4.2. The Drafting Stage

Drafting is regarded as the second step in academic writing. In this stage, writers put down their thoughts and ideas into a written form, focusing on the ideas they are trying to get across rather than other factors like grammar and punctuation. This version of their work is considered a first draft of what will later become their final work. However, the students\writers should not expect perfection or even work towards it: the first draft should be considered as a further means of discovering ideas and what one wants to do (Gaber, 2003).

1.4.3. The Revising and Editing Stage

During this step, the writers read through their work to check and make sure that they've dealt with all the points and organized them in the correct manner. This is also done to edit and fix any errors found in their drafts, in order to get their final version of the piece of writing ready for submission. Oshima and Hogue (2007) maintained that in this stage, the writer has to" (p. 18). First, attack the big issues of content and organization (revising). Then work on the smaller issues of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics (editing)". Therefore, this stage is where the writers become serious and meticulous about the details, and may use the help of another individual to proofread their work to assure the correctness of their writing.

1.4.4. Publishing Stage

After the process of editing, a final version of the writer's work should be ready to be presented to the target audience for evaluation (e.g., students' papers). Donohue (2010, p.14) concluded that "The final stage of the writing process includes sharing, reflection, and assessment of the student's writing". Therefore, this version of the writing should be fixed, proofread, refined, free of any errors or mistakes, and most importantly ready to be published.

1.5. Characteristics of Academic Writing

Academic writing has its own distinct qualities and features that differentiate it from other formal types of writing (Jordan, 1986). These qualities and features are necessary to ensure that the writer's ideas are presented clearly, logically, and objectively. Birhan (2017, p.104) identified the following features of academic writing: complexity, formality, cohesion and coherence, objectivity, explicitness, hedging, and responsibility.

1.5.1. Complexity

The first characteristic of academic writing is complexity. According to Birhan (2017, p 104), “Written language is relatively more complex than spoken language. Written language has longer words, it is lexically dense and it has a more varied vocabulary. It uses more noun-based phrases than verb-based phrases.” This means that academic writing involves the use of specialized vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and in-depth examination of concepts and arguments. It calls for meticulous attention to detail and a thorough understanding of the subject matter under discussion.

1.5.2. Formality

In addition to communicating complex ideas and arguments to its target audience, academic writing also adheres to a set of rules. Jordan (1999), asserted that academic writing “is formal in an impersonal or objective style (often using impersonal pronouns and phrases...); cautious language is frequently used in reporting research and making claims; vocabulary appropriate for particular academic contexts is used” (p.88). Therefore, a number of these conventions include appropriate language, correctly citing sources, using a structured format, and avoiding informal language and slang.

1.5.3. Coherence and Cohesion

Coherence in academic writing refers to the way a text's ideas are presented and connected logically, as reported by Birhan (2017) who said that coherence “implies the presence of consistent sense and flow of ideas among paragraphs” (p. 105). Therefore, making it easier for the readers to understand and follow the text. While cohesion can be considered a subset of coherence, as the latter can be accomplished by “using transition expressions, logical order, pronouns, and parallel forms” (Davis & Loss, 2006, p, 14), which are cohesive devices needed to achieve coherence in a text.

1.5.4. Objectivity

The term “objective” is considered something positive that should be adopted while delivering knowledge (Douglas, 2004). This is why in academic writing; writers are expected to be completely transparent and unbiased regardless of their opinion on the subject matter. Hartley (2008, p. 03) stated that academic writing should be “precise, impersonal, and objective”. In other words, academic authors avoid personal perspectives, contractions, and subjectivity by using formal language and referencing to give credibility and validity to their work.

1.5.5 Explicitness

In academic writing, the organization of the text is one of the essential parts of the process. An academic paper should contain three sections: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, with the introduction having a clear and concise statement that captures the reader's interest and paves the way for the rest of the paper (Anderson & Poole, 2001). Moreover, Birhan (2017), pointed out that writers should use accurate vocabulary by having “high standards of grammar, word choice, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation” (p.105) to write an accurate and precise academic paper.

1.5.6. Hedging

Speakers or writers use language that is not too direct or overly assertive to avoid making absolute statements or overly confident remarks. Singh and Lukkarila (2017), defined hedging as “the act of expressing your attitude or ideas in tentative or cautious ways” (p. 101). Similarly, Birhan (2017) explained that hedging is “used here to describe any linguistic item or strategy employed to indicate either a lack of commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition or a desire not to express that commitment categorically” (p. 106). These linguistic items can be helpful in expressing opinions in academic writing, as one of the main aims of academic writing is to convey information rather than try to force one's perspectives on the readers.

1.5.7. Responsibility

When writing a piece of academic writing, students are often relying on research and reading texts related to the subject matter of their work. Spack (1988), asserted that the most important skill a student can engage in is the “complex activity to write from other texts” (p. 22), this is because it is only logical for students to pick up ideas and arguments from other authors and use them in their own work. However, the use of another person’s work and claiming it as one’s own is considered plagiarism, that is why Birhan (2017), argued that “the writers have the responsibility of paraphrasing and summarizing the ideas that they read, and should acknowledge the sources of the information or the system of citation” (p.109). Therefore, measures such as quotations, citations, referencing, paraphrasing, and summarizing are used to assure that all authors' works are protected and credited rightfully.

Conclusion

In conclusion, writing skills are crucial for personal, academic, and professional development, with academic writing being a fundamental aspect of higher education. Academic writing is a complex process that includes different stages such as pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing, and publishing. It has distinctive qualities and features including complexity, formality, coherence and cohesion, objectivity, explicitness, hedging, and responsibility. Mastering academic writing skills requires practice, persistence, and dedication, but it is an essential skill that will prepare students for their future academic and professional endeavours. As such, it is paramount for educators to emphasise the importance of academic writing and provide students with appropriate resources and support to develop their writing skills.

Section Two: The Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review is a critical component of any academic research project and serves as a comprehensive summary and evaluation of existing literature relevant to the research topic. The literature review provides a foundation for the theoretical framework and analysis methods and helps researchers develop a deeper understanding of the research problem, clarify research objectives, and develop hypotheses. In essence, the literature review serves as the backbone of any research project, providing a solid basis for the following analysis and conclusions.

This chapter starts off with a definition of research, dissertations and theses, and the elements of a dissertation. An overview of the literature review, its purpose, structure, steps, characteristics of a good researcher, and ways of reporting information while avoiding plagiarism

2.1. Definition of Research

In a way, all individuals do some type of research in their lives. Research, therefore, has a number of definitions that are different from each other depending on the disciplines at hand. For instance, Walliman (2001) defined research as "a term loosely used in everyday speech to describe a multitude of activities, such as collecting masses of information, delving into esoteric theories, and producing wonderful new products"(p. 6). However, from an academic point of view, Bassey (1999) defined research as a "systematic, critical and self-critical inquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom" (p. 38). Bassey's definition highlights the importance of critical thinking and self-reflection in the research process, emphasizing the need for

researchers to be aware of their own biases and assumptions. This means that research is essential to advancing people's understanding of the world around them, whether through developing new theories or testing existing ones, as well as developing new knowledge that can be used to improve their lives.

2.2. Dissertations and Thesis

The terms dissertation and thesis are often used interchangeably to refer to a long piece of academic writing. According to Kemp (2007), "The purpose of the dissertation or thesis is to show the ability to effectively communicate the information on a given topic on a professional level. Unlike other forms of scholarly writing, the audience is that of a professor, department of the college" (p. 29). In other words, a dissertation or thesis is an academic document that is written by students about a specific topic for the purpose of showing their abilities as independent researchers. Writing this document is considered to be one of the most important and challenging pieces of writing in a student's academic career. This is because it is usually required as a final project for them to achieve their educational degrees such as master's and doctoral dissertations.

2.3. Elements of the Dissertation

The structure of a dissertation can vary depending on the discipline and the topic being researched. However, there are some common elements that are typically included in a dissertation. Murray and Hughes (2008) presented these elements in the form of three sections. First, a preliminary section that contains the title page, abstract acknowledgments, list of contents, list of tables, and figures and illustrations. This section is where the researcher presents the basic information about the dissertation and its content. The second section, which is the body of the work, contains the introduction, literature review, main body/descriptive section, results (if the research is empirically based), discussion, and

conclusion, this section is where the researcher presents findings and analyses in detail. Lastly, the supporting section is where the bibliography and appendices are presented.

2.4. Definition of Literature Review

When writing a dissertation or a thesis, one of the most important sections to work on is the literature review. Bruce (1994) asserted that “Typically, the literature review forms an important chapter in the thesis, where its purpose is to provide the background to and justification for the research undertaken” (p.218). The importance of the literature review was further highlighted by Boote and Beile (2005) who also stated that “A thorough, sophisticated literature review is the foundation and inspiration for substantial, useful research. The complex nature of education research demands such thorough, sophisticated reviews” (p. 3). Cooper (1988, gave a more detailed description that is closest to providing a definition that covers all styles of literature review:

First, a literature review uses as its database reports of primary or original scholarship, and does not report new primary scholarship itself. The primary reports used in the literature may be verbal, but in the vast majority of cases, reports are written documents. The types of scholarship may be empirical, theoretical, critical/analytic, or methodological in nature. Second, a literature review seeks to describe, summarise, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the content of primary reports. (p. 107)

Cooper (1988) further outlined a taxonomy according to which literature reviews may be defined in terms of their focus, goals, perspectives, coverage, organization, and audience. Moreover, Merriam (1988) referred to the literature review as “An interpretation and synthesis of published research.” (p. 6). This highlights the active role of the writers in interpreting and synthesizing previous research, on the one hand, and this helps test the researchers’ understanding and knowledge of their subject matter and the literature, on the other hand.

Moreover, one of the most important things writers do in their literature review is to identify gaps in previous research. Churchill and Sanders (2007) maintained that “Whether you are inductively or deductively generating your focal research questions, getting to know previous research in your area will help you to identify gaps in prevailing knowledge.” (p. 24). Ridley (2012) further explained that a literature review is an “ongoing activity which begins when you pick up the first book or article related to your research and continue until the day you finish the final draft” (p.3). This means that conducting a literature review is not a onetime task but a rather long, continuous, and repetitive process that requires time and effort.

2.5. The Purpose of the Literature Review

In addition to the aim of providing a general overview of previous similar studies, a literature review in a dissertation or an academic work serves a number of different purposes. The purpose of a literature review is to acquaint readers with key findings from several studies. It is intended to provide the reader with the contextual knowledge they will need to understand your findings and their significance; the literature review allows you to enter into discussions about a topic in your field by becoming acquainted with what others are saying so you may stretch the conversation they started (Foss, 2017). In the same context, Reidly (2012, p .24) presented the following purposes of conducting a literature review:

- It provides a historical background for your research;
- It gives an overview of the current context in which your research is situated by referring to contemporary debates, issues and questions in the field;
- It includes a discussion of relevant theories and concepts which underpin your research;

- It introduces relevant terminology and provides definitions to clarify how terms are being used in the context of your own work;
- It describes related research in the field and shows how your work extends or challenges this, or addresses a gap in work in the field;
- It provides supporting evidence for a practical problem or issue which your research is addressing, thereby underlining its significance.

In general, the purpose of a literature review is to be provided with an understanding of relevant research and debates related to a specific subject or field of study. It helps develop knowledge in the field, introduces key concepts, research methods, and experimental techniques utilized in the field, and further provides an insight into the application of such concepts to real-world issues.

2.6. The Structure of the Literature Review

The literature review, just like any other form of academic writing, is not written and constructed in a random manner, but rather follows an organized and fixed structure. This structure generally consists of three sections. First, an introduction that includes the research questions the author hopes to address. Second, the body, which can be structured in different ways: chronologically to highlight trends, thematically to identify the scope and themes of groups of studies, or methodologically to identify the types of research methods used. Lastly, the conclusion, which includes a critique outlining weaknesses and gaps in the literature to support the author's own work (Cooper, 1988).

Another structure of the literature review was suggested by Ridley (2012) who stated that a literature review can be seen as two related parts, the first part “presents the current state of knowledge in the field where your research is situated (including differing perspectives of pertinent theories and concepts)” (p. 102). This means that writers

summarize and present previous researchers' ideas, perspectives, and theories to synthesize them in a way that supports and relates to their own work. In the second part, however, the researcher “reviews and critiques relevant empirical research studies and shows how these provide a niche and lead into your own work.” (p. 102). This entails that this part is where the writer critically evaluates and identifies gaps and inconsistencies in the previous literature, in order to shed light on newer insights. By doing so, researchers provide validity to their work and demonstrate its originality and contribution to the field.

2.7. Steps of Writing a Literature Review

A literature review is an organized academic document; therefore, the writer is required to follow a set of steps to achieve an effective review. Though the exact process of conducting a literature review can change depending on different factors like the research questions, the preferred research methodology, the audience, and the field of study, Cresswell (2012, p.81), provided five general steps that can be followed in conducting a literature review: identifying key terms, locating literature, critically evaluating and selecting the literature, organizing the literature, and writing the literature review.

2.7.1. Identifying Key Terms

The first step in the process of conducting a literature review is identifying the key terms that will be used in the search for relevant literature. Ridley (2012) maintained that “The identification of key words involves the selection of nouns and adjectives which most accurately describe the content that you are looking for” (p.56). This means that the process of identifying key terms requires careful consideration of the research question or topic at hand, as well as, brainstorming and coming up with a list of relevant keywords that will help in narrowing down the search results. It also involves selecting the most relevant

nouns and adjectives that accurately describe the content being researched, since the selected key terms will help researchers to locate relevant information and data.

2.7.2. Locating Literature

The second step in reviewing the literature is conducting a search of relevant literature using various databases and search engines. This involves going through various sources such as journals, books, and online databases to find relevant literature of the topic under investigation. In this context, Ridley (2012) stated that “it is vital to keep a record of all the bibliographical details of every source text that you think you will include in your bibliography” (p.81). Therefore, setting up a bibliography of relevant literature can make the reference process easier and less time-consuming.

2.7.3. Critically Evaluating and Selecting the Literature

Once the literature is located, writers have to determine whether the sources are relevant, valid, and reliable to be used in their work. According to Cresswell (2012), researchers can depend on the following criteria when selecting literature: topic relevance, individual and site relevance, problem and question relevance, and accessibility relevance. This helps in identifying gaps that may exist in previous research and determining areas that need further investigation. In addition to these criteria, the writer should also consider the credibility of the source. Cresswell (2012, pointed out that “It sometimes comes as a shock to beginning researchers that even though a study has been published, it may not be worthy of inclusion in a literature review” (p.91). Thus, it is important to determine whether the authors of these sources are experts in their field and if they have a bias that may affect the credibility of their work. Another factor to consider is the date of publication, since older sources may not be relevant or accurate anymore.

2.7.4. Organizing the Literature

The next step once the literature is selected and evaluated for its relevance, is to organize it for a literature review. According to Cresswell (2012) “This process involves photocopying and filing the literature. At this time, you might quickly read it, take notes on it, and determine how it fits into the overall literature.” (pp.92-3). Once the literature has been photocopied and filed, it is time to dive deeper into the content. A quick read-through of each piece can help the writer determine its relevance to the research question. As they read, writers would make connections between different texts and consider how each piece fits into the overall literature on the topic. Taking notes and keeping records on each article or source can also help the writer keep track of key points and ideas, Ridley (2012), maintained that “note taking is imperative to help you recall the important information.” (p.65). Thus, by analyzing the literature in this way, review writers can gain a better understanding of the current state of knowledge on the topic, and identify areas where further research is needed.

2.7.5. Writing the Literature Review

Cresswell's (2012) last step is a crucial one in the literature review process. Once the writers have gathered and organized the sources, they must then embark on the task of constructing the review. This involves using various writing techniques and procedures to create a coherent and informative narrative. Cresswell (2012) highlighted the importance of “Employing specific writing strategies related to the extent of the review, the type of review, and the concluding statements in a review” (p. 98). Thus, when conducting a review, it is important to use strategies such as outlining, note-taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, and synthesizing, as it is clear that using them can significantly impact the quality and clarity of a review.

Another important thing to take into consideration when writing a literature review is the choice of citation verb, its tense, and aspect. Swales and Feak (2012) maintained that there are three tenses used in citation: past tense; when referring to a single study, present tense; when referring to generally accepted knowledge in the field, and present perfect tense; used when referring to an area of inquiry.

In addition, it is important for writers to use the correct referencing style when writing their literature review. Cresswell (2012) explained that a “style manual provides a structure for citing references, labelling headings, and constructing tables and figures for a scholarly research report” (P. 98). For instance, the most commonly used styles are APA, MLA, and Chicago; each having its own specific guidelines and style manuals for formatting references. Therefore, writers should consult these style manuals to follow their citation and referencing guidelines, and to avoid things like plagiarism.

2.8. Characteristics of a Good Researcher

Writing a literature review can be a difficult process at times, especially in the case of researchers or students who are new to academic writing. This is why researchers should be equipped with good research abilities to conquer this feat. Some of the characteristics that define a good researcher are:

2.8.1. Critical Reading

First and foremost, a researcher has to be a critical reader. That is because reading critically through texts and works of other authors gives the writer a deeper understanding of the topic. Ridley (2012) stated that “it is important to adopt a questioning and analytical approach towards the literature review material” (p.65). Therefore, Reading the literature in a critical manner also helps the writer identify any existing gaps in the literature by

engaging with the text, evaluating its credibility, and considering its relevance to the research question.

2.8.2. Critical Reading

Critical writing refers to the writers' ability to summarize and critique ideas and texts they've come across during the critical reading process. Ridley (2012, p.142) suggested a number of steps to writing critically:

- Present logical arguments which lead into your conclusions.
- Provide sound evidence and reasons to support your argument.
- In a dissertation or thesis literature review, you should evaluate, select, organize, and categorize theories and findings to provide a coherent framework which forms the basis of your research.

Implementing these suggestions helps researchers and writers produce high-quality work, develop logical arguments, and enhance academic and professional work.

2.9. Ways of Reporting Information while Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is considered to be a serious ethical issue in the academic community. According to Ridley (2012), Plagiarism refers to "a practice which must be avoided because, in whatever way it occurs, it is considered to be 'literary theft' and suggests a lack of respect for the work of others" (p. 67). It occurs when writers present something as their own, which in reality has been taken from someone else's work without properly citing the source. In order for researchers to report knowledge, avoid any form of plagiarism, and create a properly constructed literature review; it is necessary for them to use some strategies such as using the appropriate referencing style, paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting.

2.9.1. Referencing

Working on a literature review means researching and reading through countless academic documents, and as a result, utilizing the theories and ideas of other authors. This could sometimes lead to what is known as plagiarism. Therefore, writers should use referencing and citing in their works. Referencing makes it easy for readers to locate your source materials in case they want to gather more information, ensures that your work can be verified for accuracy, and avoids plagiarism (Ridley, 2012). Thus, referencing is used by researchers to provide a rationale for their research endeavor, research article authors, according to Swales (2004), must provide an explanation and assessment of the findings of past studies connected to the current work.

2.9.2. Paraphrasing

One way to avoid plagiarizing other researchers' and writers' works is paraphrasing. Bowker (2007), defines paraphrasing as follows: "Paraphrasing is to restate information using different words. Unlike summarising though, paraphrasing focuses less on shortening and condensing the information. Paraphrasing aims to rewrite information by drawing on different words and phrases" (p.13). This quotation denotes that paraphrasing is different from summarizing in the sense that its aim is not to reduce and make information shorter, but to rewrite information by using other words and phrases. That is to say, writers use their own words by keeping the same meaning. Murray and Hughes (2008, p.75) suggested four things to do for better paraphrasing which are:

- You need to summarise the idea you are paraphrasing.
- You need to express the idea using your own words. A good way of doing this is to take notes as you read the original text and where possible use synonyms. Another

way is to read the original text, then, when you have finished, write it from memory using your own words.

- You need to make sure that your paraphrase flows smoothly and expresses the original idea accurately.
- You need to acknowledge your sources just as if you were quoting them directly

Following these suggestions, when paraphrasing, will ensure that researchers are using their own words to convey ideas. It is also important for improving one's writing skills, avoiding plagiarism, and conveying important ideas and information to readers.

2.9.3. Summarizing

Many different scholars used the word “summarizing” when defining the literature review; for instance, Creswell (2012) referred to a literature review as a piece of writing that involves summarizing what has been already said and done in relation to the phenomenon being studied. According to Bowker (2007), summarizing involves selecting some key features and then using them to create a shortened version of the author's prose. In other words, summarizing aims to select the main and important ideas in order to condense authors' writing.

Therefore, the summary of ideas of other writers in the field is an important point in the literature review, as the writers present the points they want to touch upon through the lens of the other researchers, bringing more validity to their work. However, Froese et al (1998) reported that students often “summarise articles sequentially rather than comprehensively integrating the various findings.” (p. 298). Thus, they report that a particular writer said something while another said something else, rather than actually understanding, synthesizing, and criticizing those findings in their own way.

2.9.4. Direct Quoting

Other than the aforementioned ways of avoiding plagiarism, researchers sometimes simply quote the idea directly; thus Panelli (2012) stated that direct quotations involve taking someone else's exact words or statements and incorporating the quote into your writing. This can be an effective way to acknowledge the original source and give credit where it is due. However, it is important to use direct quotations sparingly and only when necessary. In addition, it is essential to properly cite the source of the quote using the appropriate citation style (APA, MLA, CHICAGO...). Behrens and Rosen (2016, p.41) reported that the writer can quote in the following cases:

- Use quotations when another writer's language is particularly memorable and will add interest and liveliness to your paper.
- Use quotations when another writer's language is so clear and economical that to make the same point in your own words would, by comparison, be ineffective.
- Use quotations when you want the solid reputation of a source to lend authority and credibility to your own writing.

Therefore, it is an important aspect of academic writing to properly integrate quotations into one's work. So, when used appropriately, quotations will not only help avoid plagiarism but also can elevate one's writing and make it more compelling for readers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a literature review is a crucial part of any academic work or research, as it provides the foundation and justification for the research undertaken. It allows researchers to identify gaps in previous research, familiarise themselves with key findings and theories in their field, and demonstrate the originality and contribution of their work. Conducting a literature review requires a set procedure that involves identifying key terms,

locating literature, critically evaluating and selecting the literature, organising the literature, and finally, writing the literature review. In addition, a good researcher is characterised by their critical reading and writing abilities. Lastly, to avoid plagiarism, researchers must use referencing, paraphrasing, summarising, and direct quoting techniques properly and efficiently. By following these guidelines, researchers can create a well-written and informative literature review that contributes significantly to the academic community.

Chapter Two: The Practical Part

Introduction.....	27
2.1. Research Method	29
2.2. Population and Sampling.....	29
2.3. Data Collection Tools	30
2.4. Description and Administration of the Research Tools	30
2.4.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire	30
2.4.2. Description of Supervisors' Interview	31
2.5. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results.....	31
2.5.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire	31
• Identifying Key Terms.....	46
• Locating relevant literature	46
• Critically evaluating and selecting relevant literature.....	47
□ Outlining the structure	47
• Determining the scope and focus	47
• Identifying the gap in previous literature	48
• Integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources.....	48
• Using Other Writers Ideas to Support One's Own	48
• Paraphrasing Information.....	49

• Summarising information.....	49
• Appropriately using the APA style	49
• Quoting.....	50
• Writing Coherently and in an Organised Manner	50
• Connecting ideas together by using transitional words.....	50
• Using Correct Verb Tense When Writing	50
2.5.2. Discussion of Students' Questionnaire	54
2.5.3. Supervisors' Interview Analysis	57
2.5.4. Discussion of Supervisors' Interview	68
2.5.5. Discussion of the Overall Result	69
2.6. Limitations of the Study	71
2.7. Pedagogical Recommendations	71
Conclusion	72
General Conclusion	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
General Conclusion	70
List of References.....	72
Appendices	77
Résumé.....	85
الملخص	27

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the research methodology then, it gives a description and administration of each research tool, followed by analysis, discussion, interpretation of the results, and pedagogical recommendations.

2.1. Research Method

In order to reach the main objectives of the study, the mixed-method approach is employed. According to Dörnyei (2007):

A mixed-methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at once or more stages of the research processes. (p. 163)

In other words, a mixed methodology combines both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and data analysis. The choice of using a mixed-method approach is not random. The main reason for this decision is that using only a questionnaire as a research tool may not yield precise and detailed results. Therefore, choosing this approach guarantees the credibility of the results and helps get a better understanding of the research problem, unlike the use of only one research method.

2.2. Population and Sampling

The sample of this study was collected randomly. It is made up of seventy (70) Master 2 students out of a population of (140). The only reason for this selection is that Master 2 students are the only subjects working on writing a literature review for their master dissertation. In addition, a sample of (10) supervisors out of a population of (32) was chosen to conduct an interview, so as to investigate the problems and difficulties facing EFL learners when writing a literature review.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

The questionnaire is an important data-collecting tool that consists of a set of questions that allows the researcher to gather information about people's attitudes and perceptions. According to Nunan & Baily (2009, p.126), questionnaires are "written instruments that represent respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they have to react either by writing their answers or selecting from among existing answers". Similarly, Cohen et al (2008) reported that the "questionnaire allows us to quantify people's observation, interpretation, and attitude" (p.24).

The interview is a complex communication task that involves the extraction of information from a person's life story. Anderson and Arsenault (1998) see the interview as a particular form of communication that goes beyond mere conversation. It is a specialized form of communication of a highly purposeful task in which the interviewer and interviewee have an agreed subject matter, making it a unique form of communication. Therefore, an interview is a significant tool to gather information and learn more about an individual's experiences and perspectives, often serving as a basis for further research.

2.4. Description and Administration of the Research Tools

2.4.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study consists of eighteen (18) questions divided into two sections. The first section entitled "General Information" contains four (4) questions to gather information about students' general research and writing skills. The second section "Learners' Difficulties in Writing Literature Review" consists fourteen (14) questions about the difficulties faced by Master 2 students when writing their literature review, the reasons

behind these difficulties, and possible solutions to them. Due to the shortness of time, the questionnaire was submitted online as a document on Google Forms on the 25th of May.

2.4.2. Description of Supervisors' Interview

The second data collection tool used in this study is a structured interview which consists of 15 questions that are devoted to knowing Master 2 supervisors' perceptions about the difficulties the students encounter when writing the literature review, as well as the reasons and solutions to these problems. Five (5) supervisors were interviewed face to face. To ensure credibility four interviews were recorded, while one (1) supervisor refused to. Five (5) others answered the interview questions on Google Forms due to time restrictions during the exams. The interviews were conducted on the 1st of June, and 8th of June, 2023; each of which lasted for about (20) minutes.

2.5. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

2.5.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Q1. What do you think about the research methodology course?

Table 2.1. Students' Perception of the Research Methodology Course

Options	Responses	Percentage
Helpful	34	48.5%
Interesting	19	27.1%
Boring	17	24.4%

This question was designed to know the students' perception of the research methodology course. The outcomes presented in Table 2.1 reveal that the most significant proportion of students (48.5%) acknowledged that the course was helpful, followed by (27.1%) who found it interesting. On the other hand, (24.4%) regarded it as boring. The findings suggest that the research methodology course has a positive impact on several students.

Q2. How would you evaluate your research methodology (RM) skills?

Table 2.2. Students' Evaluation of Their Research Methodology Skills

Options	Responses	Percentage
Good	15	21.4%
Average	42	60%
Bad	13	18.6%
Total	70	100%

The aim of this question is to find out how students evaluate their research skills. The results displayed in the table above show that (60%) of the respondents evaluated their research methodology skills as average, while (21.4%) of the respondents believed that their skills are good. On the contrary, (18.6%) of the students think their research methodology skills are bad. The findings show that students still lack research skills and may not be ready enough to conduct research of their own.

Q3. When did you start working on your dissertation? (Please mention the month)

Table 2.3. The Month Students Started Working on Their Dissertation

Options	Responses	Percentage
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December	3	4.3%
January	5	7.2%
February	16	22.6%
March	26	37.1%
April	15	21.4%
May	5	7.2%
Total	70	100%

This question is designed to track down when students started writing their dissertation. Therefore, the results in the above table (2.3) show that the majority of students started writing their literature review during March (37.1%). Followed by (22.6%) who started in February. Additionally, (21.4%) of students started in April presented with (21.4%). In contrast, (7.2%) of students started in January, while a few (7.2%) began writing in May. The rest (4.3%) started earlier in December. This indicates that the majority of the students did not commence writing their literature review until after the first semester, opting instead to delay it until after their examinations.

Q4. How often do you meet your supervisor?

Table 2.4. How Often Students Meet Their Supervisors

Options	Responses	Percentage
Always	4	5.7%
Often	16	22.9%
Sometimes	23	32.9%
Rarely	27	38.6%
Total	70	100%

This question aims at finding out how often students meet their supervisor throughout the process of writing their literature review. The results from Table (2.4) demonstrate that (38.6%) of the respondents rarely meet their supervisors, and (32.9%) of them said that they meet them sometimes. whereas (22.9%) said that they meet them often. Only (5.7%) of the students meet their supervisors always. The findings suggest that supervisors may not always be available to meet with students on demand and may instead encourage them to rely on themselves.

Section Two: Learners' Difficulties in Writing Literature Review

Q5. Have you finished writing your literature review?

Table 2.5. Students' Literature Review Status

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	37	52.9%
No	33	47.1%
Total	70	100%

This question aims at finding out whether students have finished writing their literature reviews or not. Results in Table 2.5 show that (52.9%) of the respondents have answered Yes which means that they've already finished their review. However, (47.1%) have answered No. This shows that students are still struggling with the process of writing.

Q6. Have you ever written a literature review before writing your master's dissertation?

Table 2.6. Students' Past Experiences in Writing a Literature Review

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	14	20%

No	56	80%
Total	70	100%

The question above is designed to figure out whether the students have had any past experience in writing literature reviews before. The results show that only (20%) of the respondents have written a literature review before. Meanwhile, 56 students (80%) answered the question with No, instigating that they had no past experience writing a literature review.

- If yes, for what?

Nine Students answered that they wrote it for a research proposal, while five others explained that it was an assignment for the research methodology course.

Q7. Have you sought any support or assistance with writing a literature review, such as from a supervisor, former teachers, or a peer student?

Table 2.7. Sources of Students' Support.

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	30	42.9%
No	40	57.1%
Total	70	100%

The purpose of this question is to find out whether students write the literature review by themselves or seek help from others. The results of this table 2.7 show that out of 70 answers, (57.1%) of the students sought support from others, while (42.9%) chose to work by themselves.

- If yes please describe your experience:

Out of the 44 individuals who answered this question, only 1 person mentioned not getting much help from the supervisor “I asked my supervisor for help but she was constantly busy so it didn't help much”. However, A number of 17 out of the 44 students who answered this question mentioned that they asked for help from their own supervisors who were of great help in guiding them through the steps and process of writing the literature review “When I asked my supervisor if I should mention something in the literature review, he guides me”. Another student wrote “We haven't finished the literature review yet. Of course, we are doing it with the assistance of our supervisor since there are strict guidelines and it is very helpful, it facilitates the process of writing”. This shows the important role supervisor guidance plays in helping students accomplish their work without too much hardship.

Moreover, 7 students mentioned that they've asked for assistance from their friends, colleagues, and dissertation partners. One student said “Our friends helped us a lot during the process of finding sources”, while another maintained, “I asked my classmates about this issue and they advised me a lot and supported me when I had difficulties in gathering and writing information”. These statements show that peer support and assistance are as important as that of supervisors. Students shared information, source material, and ideas with one another, “I asked my friends who worked on a similar topic to mine to help me find sources.” such cooperation could save a lot of time and effort for these individuals.

Lastly, it is important to point out that assistance from other teachers was also helpful, as it is always a good idea to see help from other professionals in the field. Furthermore, (3) students reported that they received help from other teachers. One student wrote “I asked for assistance from both my supervisor and other teachers and they were

helpful” while another said, “Other teachers too gave us sources and stuff”. The answers above show that despite some students preferring to work alone, asking for support and assistance can also imply a positive impact on both the students and the work progress.

Q8. Did your supervisor provide you with feedback regarding the writing of your literature review?

Table 2.8. Supervisors’ Feedback to Students

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	37	52.9%
No	33	47.1%
Total	70	100%

The question above was designed with the purpose of discovering whether master 2 supervisors played a role in guiding their students during the process of writing the literature review. The results in Table 2.8 show that (37) Students (52.9%) answered yes to the question, while the other (47.1%) of the students chose No.

- If yes, explain how helpful it was

(36) students out of 70 individuals answered this question. The majority (30) of which thought their supervisors’ feedback to be helpful to their work. A group of students pointed out that their supervisors helped in correcting any mistake (spelling, grammar, punctuation or content) in their writing, as one student said “The supervisor corrected the wrong ideas of the literature review, and this gave as a better understand of how it should be written also a better understand of what we will do in the dissertation”. Other students also highlighted this by saying “she corrected the structure and the punctuations, the length

of the paragraphs” as well as “She helped us fix a lot of our problems concerning spelling and grammar mistakes”.

Moreover, the teachers’ feedback also helped the students get the correct idea of how the literature is correctly done. A student reported: “The supervisor corrected the wrong ideas of the literature review, and this gave a better understanding of how it should be written and also a better understanding of what we will do in the dissertation”. Multiple students mentioned that thanks to the feedback they were able to notice that some things were missing from their work which consequently led them to doing more research. “It was really helpful because we had missing things and she suggested adding them and correcting some mistakes.”.

In addition, many supervisors’ feedback focused on the correctness of citations, structure, and organization of ideas in the literature review as one student wrote “She gave us feedback regarding the structure, the citation, and what we should write about in the introduction and body paragraphs”, and another said “He explains for us how should we organize the literature review”. Lastly and most importantly it is apparent from students’ responses that the feedback was of great assistance in finding relevant sources and information to include in their literature review. As one student stated “It was helpful to collect the necessary information, valuable, reliable resources related to our research.”.

Q9. Was writing the literature review time-consuming?

Table 2.9. Students’ Perceptions

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	62	90%

No	8	10%
Total	70	100%

This question is designed to discover if the students consider the process of writing the literature review time consuming. Table 2.9 shows that the majority of the students (90%) considered it time-consuming while the other (10%) did not see it as time-consuming. This indicates that writing the literature goes beyond student's expectations in terms of time spent working on it.

Q10. Have you been trained to write a literature review?

Table 2.10. Students Training in Writing the Literature Review

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	23	32.9%
No	47	67.1%
Total	70	100%

The results in table 2.10 show that (67.1%) of the students believed that they did not receive appropriate training in the process of writing a literature review. While (32.9%) answered that they did receive training. The reasons for this could be traced back to teaching the literature review only theoretically.

Q11. Was the training you received helpful when writing the actual literature review?

Table 2.11. Students' Perceptions Towards the Effectiveness of the Literature Review Training.

Options	Responses	Percentage
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Yes	18	25.7%
No	52	74.3%
Total	70	100%

This question was designed to figure out whether the training the students received was helpful during the actual writing process. The results in Table 2.11 show that (74.3%) of the respondents found the training they received to not be helpful, unlike the (25.7%) of students who did find it helpful.

- Explain in both cases:

This question was answered by (44) students out of (70). The responses are varied, but the majority of them suggest that the training received for writing a literature review was inadequate or lacked depth one, as one student explained:

“We barely got training about the literature review, all I remember is that we got one assignment where we had to write a research proposal, which was confusing us even more about what a literature review is supposed to be like, we never practiced writing a literature review in class, nor did we get a full detailed explanation of how it's supposed to be done.”

Some students mentioned that they had no training at all “We didn't receive any kind of training to write it”. While others mentioned that they only received theoretical knowledge about it “We did not have actual training, we just got theoretical knowledge”. Moreover, some respondents also mentioned that they only learned the steps to follow or the general form of a literature review, but they lacked practical training or feedback from their professors.

A few students mentioned that external research or re-educating themselves through YouTube videos and online guidance was necessary for them to understand how to write it as one student wrote “I didn't receive any assistance, so I just took the matter seriously through reviewing other dissertations, I watched YouTube videos, pages in Instagram , and I searched in different sites”. Overall, the responses suggest that most believe that training they received was not helpful during the actual process of writing the review, which means that more training or guidance is needed for students to write a high-quality literature review.

Q 12. What resources or support tools did you find helpful when writing your literature review? (You can select more than one choice)

Table 2.12. resource and support tools used by students to write the literature review.

Options	Responses	Percentage
Books	42	24.2%
Articles	45	26%
journals	27	15.6%
Magazines	2	1.15%
Dissertations and theses	51	29.4%
All the above	3	1.7%
Total	173	100%

The aim of this question is to find out how much the students rely on each of the resources or tools listed in Table 2.12 in their research. The results indicate that dissertations and theses are the most used resources by (29.4%%) of students. Articles are the second highest used tool by (26%) of the students. whereas books are used by (24.2%),

and journals are used by students (15.6%%). While magazines are the least used tools (1.15%). Also, there are (1.7%) of respondents who said that they used all of the listed tools. This can be traced to the fact that dissertations and theses are more available and can be used as a template to find more data and information.

Q13. How difficult is writing a literature review?

Table 2.13. The Difficulty Level of the Literature Review According to Students

Options	Responses	Percentage
Easy	5	7.1%
Normal	37	52.9%
Hard	28	40%
Total	70	100%

In this question, the students were asked to describe the difficulty level of writing their literature review. More than half of the students (52.9%) declared that writing the literature review is a normal process. On the contrary, (40%) of the students described the process as hard. While only (7.1%) found it easy. This implies that most students don't find the literature review easy to write.

Q14. in your opinion, what makes writing a literature review particularly challenging compared to other types of writing assignments?

This question was answered by (55) students. It asks for the reasons why writing a literature review is particularly challenging compared to other types of writing assignments. The responses clearly show that one of the main reasons is the amount of research and reading required, as well as the need to find the gaps in the literature. One student said "The fact that you should read about your topic and write it carefully so you

avoid plagiarism”. Another wrote “It involves a lot of research and reading about the topic at hand, which can be time consuming and stressful, especially when you’re new to academic writing”. While another one mentioned “because we must read several studies, criticize them and find the gap”.

Additionally, there is the challenge of organizing and selecting the appropriate information to be included in the literature review while adhering to specific guidelines. One respondent wrote “the researchers have to be selective of the information”. And another wrote “organizing the amount of information and deciding which one is suitable for your dissertation”. Others also believed that Students' lack of experience in this genre of academic writing and limited writing skills may also contribute to the difficulty. As one student explained:

“Because in the process of writing up a literature review you need to master different writing skills; you should synthesize, not describe, criticize, not report. In other words, it requires not only research skills but a high level of writing skills.”

Finally, the length of the literature review, time, and effort required to complete it is also seen as difficult. One student wrote “The length of the literature review and the detailed and precise information that we need to put”. While another said “It's longer than other writing assignments and needs much more time and effort, it is also very hard to stay focused on working on it”. Overall, the responses suggest that writing a literature review requires a high degree of research and writing skills, and can be time-consuming and stressful for students.

Q15. What part of the literature review was more challenging for you?

Table 2.15. Most Challenging Part of The Literature Review According to Students

Options	Responses	Percentage
The introduction	15	21.4%
The body	53	57.7%
The conclusion	2	2.9%
Total	70	100%

The purpose of this question is to identify the most challenging part of writing a literature review. The results in Table 2.15 show that (57.7%) of the students found working on the body of the literature review to be the most challenging, whereas (21.4%) of them choose the introduction. However, only (2.9%) of the students chose the conclusion as the most challenging part for them. Which indicates that students pay much attention and time for this part of the structure.

- Please explain why:

(53) students reported that the hardest part to write in the literature is the body summarized in the following reasons:

- Unlike the body which needs more awareness and resources which are not always available and the fact that you can't write something on your own without referring to someone's work is challenging. Sometimes you know the idea but you can't write it because you are not an expert, so you need to look for it in multiple resources and you may not find it for free. It becomes problematic.
- Relating other studies with the aims of my work.
- It needs detailed information and reading a lot.
- Collecting and organizing the ideas is challenging.

For the introduction, the following reasons were reported by (15) the students:

- The introduction is hard because it's too general.
- The introduction is the most difficult because we should start with an attractive writing style in order to draw the audience's attention and make them excited to hear more about the subject that is going to be discussed.
- Since it is an introduction, the part that clears what about the literature review is, so, it was somehow hard to choose the right ideas to provide.

Concerning the conclusion there were only two answers which are:

- I do not know what to write exactly in the conclusion.
- I can never write a conclusion that makes me satisfied with myself

Q16. Tick the right box that represents your choice in front of each of the following statements

Table.16. Students Challenges in Writing the Literature Review

	Easy	Normal	Hard
Statements	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Identifying Key Terms	32 45.7%	36 51.4%	2 2.5%
Locating relevant literature	7 10%	24 34%	39 55.7
Critically evaluating and selecting literature	6 8.6%	13 18.6%	51 72.8%
Outlining the Structure	16 22.9%	38 54.2%	16 22.9%
Determining the scope and focus of the literature	5 7.1%	41 58.6%	24 34.3%

Identifying the gap in previous literature	9 12.9%	16 22.9%	45 64.2%
Integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources	6 8.6%	28 40%	36 51.4%
Using other writers' ideas to support one's own	22 31.4%	37 52.9%	11 15.7%
Paraphrasing information	27 38.6%	32 45.7%	11 15.7%
Summarizing information	25 35.7%	39 55.7%	6 8.6%
Appropriately using the APA style	16 22.9%	26 37.1%	28 40%
Quoting	23 32.9%	33 47.1%	14 20%
Writing coherently and in an organized manner	14 20%	35 50%	21 30%
Connecting ideas together	21 30%	43 61.4%	6 8.6%
Using correct verb tense when writing	20 28.6%	40 57.1%	10 14.3%

- **Identifying Key Terms**

This question was designed to discover how the students perceive the step of identifying key terms that they would use to do their research. Table 2.16 indicates that a majority of students (51.4%) had a neutral experience when it came to identifying key and tick the normal option, while almost half (45.7%) found it to be an easy simple task. Only a small fraction (2.5%) of students struggled and found it hard with identifying key terms.

- **Locating relevant literature**

This question was designed with the purpose of realizing whether students face a difficulty in searching for, and finding relevant sources and literature to use in their literature review. The results in table 2.16 show that more than half (55.7%) of the students found locating relevant literature hard, unlike the other (34.3%) of them who said it is normal, this means that it was not that hard for them. Only a number of 7 students (10%) chose the easy option. From the analysis of this question, it can be said that finding relevant literature is one of the difficulties Master 2 students face when writing their literature review.

- **Critically evaluating and selecting relevant literature**

The chief purpose of the present inquiry is to discover whether the students have the ability to critically evaluate and select the most relevant and reliable literature from the sources they have at hand. Table 2.16 shows that while working on their literature review (72.8%) of the students realized that critically evaluating and selecting relevant literature is hard. Meanwhile (18.6%) of students flagged it as normal when only (8.6%) said it's easy. Therefore, the results indicate that the majority of the students find difficulty with this step of working on the literature review.

- **Outlining the structure**

The results show that the majority of the students (54.2%) found that outlining the structure of their literature review to be normal. Meanwhile (22.9%) of the students found it to be an easy task, as opposed to the other (22.9%) who found it hard to outline the structure. This indicates that only a small portion of Master 2 students struggle with the process of outlining a structure for the literature review.

- **Determining the scope and focus**

It has been observed that a majority of the students, that is, around (58.6%), consider this determining the scope and focus of literature review to be completely normal. Whereas a portion of the participants (34.3%) found it to be considerably hard to carry out. The remaining respondents, which constitutes a mere (7.1%) of the student population, expressed their opinion that the process of determining the scope and focus of literature review was relatively easy for them to accomplish.

- **Identifying the gap in previous literature**

The chief purpose of the present inquiry is to determine the level of complexity involved in identifying any gaps or deficiencies in existing literature. According to the data presented in Table 2.16, a significant proportion (64.2%) of the respondents found it hard to pinpoint such gaps while writing their literature review. However, a sizable number (22.9%) perceived this task as being comparatively easy. The remainder of the respondents (12.9%) believed that identifying gaps in the literature was easy.

- **Integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources**

This question was designed with the aim of investigating students' ability to synthesize and integrate other authors' ideas in their work. Results in Table 2.16 shows that (51.4%) of the respondents found it hard to do this task. Furthermore, a number of (28) respondents chose the normal option which indicates that they felt neutral towards this task. However, only (8.6%) of the students found it to be easy. Therefore, the results indicate that the process of synthesizing and integrating information from multiple sources is one of the challenges Master 2 students encounter when writing the literature review.

- **Using Other Writers Ideas to Support One's Own**

The question above is designed with the purpose of discovering students' ability to understand other writers' ideas and consequently use them to support their argument. Results indicate that the second option (normal) was chosen by more than half the students (52.9%). However, 22 students (31.4%) believed it to be an easy task, unlike the other (15.7%) who thought it to be hard. This implies that most students have a neutral standing regarding this task, meaning that most of them neither struggle nor find it easy to support their work with other authors' ideas.

- **Paraphrasing Information**

The question above was used to discover the students' ability to paraphrase information. The results indicate that (45.7%) students chose the "normal" option. Whereas, (38.6%) described it as an easy process. Only (15.7%) of the respondents found the process of paraphrasing information to be hard.

- **Summarizing information**

The results show students' perception towards the task of summarizing information. The results showed that (55.7%) of the respondents chose the second option (normal) meaning they felt neutral towards it. Moreover, (35.7%) of the students chose the easy option. Whereas, only (6) students (8.6%) struggled with summarizing information from other sources.

- **Appropriately using the APA style**

The data displayed in the table provides a comprehensive overview of the students' ability to utilize the APA referencing style appropriately. On one hand (40%) admit that the APA style is hard to use. On the other hand (37.1%) of the students can use it normally. Conversely, there is a sizable population of students, constituting (22.9%), that found the APA style remarkably easy to use.

- **Quoting**

This question was designed to investigate whether students struggle with quoting information. The table above indicates the highest number (47.1%) of students found quoting to be normal. Another (23.9%) of the 70 respondents believed it to be easy. Whereas, the lowest number of students (20%) found quoting information to be hard.

- **Writing Coherently and in an Organized Manner**

The results in table 2.16 shows that half the respondents (50%) agreed on the second option (normal) to best describe their perception of the process of writing coherently and in an organized manner. However, (30%) of the students appear to find it hard. The other (20%) of students chose the first option which means that they didn't have difficulty with this task.

- **Connecting ideas together by using transitional words**

The table above shows the results of a question designed to find out whether students found the process of connecting ideas together to be difficult. As indicated in the results, the highest number of students (61.4%) chose the second option which means that they found it neither too hard nor too easy. However, (30%) students considered it to be easy. Whereas only 6 students (8.6%) found this task to be difficult.

- **Using Correct Verb Tense When Writing**

The chief purpose of the data in this table is to identify whether students know about the Correct tense they must use when writing the literature review. The results revealed that a staggering (57.1%) of students find it neither easy nor hard to demonstrate an adept understanding of selecting the appropriate tense in their written language. There

were (28.6%) found it an easy mechanic to apply. While (14.3%) of the respondents believed it was hard for them to determine the correct tense they opted to use.

From the data, it is clear that some students find certain tasks difficult, such as locating relevant literature, critically evaluating and selecting relevant literature, and integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources. These findings highlight the importance of providing support and guidance to students in developing these critical skills necessary for producing high-quality literature reviews.

Q17. What are the reasons behind these difficulties?

Table 2.17. Reasons Behind These Difficulties

Options	Responses	Percentage
Lack of resources	31	18.7%
Poor research skills	27	16.3%
Lack of practice in writing literature reviews	49	29.6%
Supervisors' lack of guidance and feedback	25	15.1%
Weak language skills	14	8.4%
Deficient teaching methods (research methodology course)	19	11.5%
Total	165	100%

The question above was specifically designed to find out the reasons behind the challenges Master 2 students encounter when writing their literature review according to the students. Each student had the ability to choose more than one option from the ones presented above. The highest number of (49) students (29.6%) agreed that the lack of

practice is the primary reason behind the students' struggle. The second highest option that was chosen by (31) students (18.7%) was the lack of sources. Another reason mentioned in the table is poor research skills which was chosen by (27) students (16.3%). Moreover, (25) students (15.1%) believed that supervisors' lack of guidance and feedback is also one of the reasons for the difficulties they faced. Furthermore, (19) students (11.5%) chose the last option which is Deficient teaching methods (research methodology course) as their reason. Lastly, only (14) students (8.4%) out of (70) thought weak language skills to be one of the reasons behind the difficulty students face when writing their literature review.

The students were also able to present reasons of their own, one of them mentioned the role anxiety plays in making their work even harder, they wrote "I think the anxiety of having to write such a long and important work also plays a role in making it this hard". Another respondent said that "I think pair work was a very hard thing to do, sometimes me and my partner's ideas clashed and it would cause different changes to be made which made us lose a lot of time", this shows that students do struggle with the process of working in a team, which effects their productivity and consumes a lot of their time.

Other students suggested:

-The books were not available in the library of university. The majority of the books online are paid, The new experience as a whole, the lack of support, motivation, and the writing skills.

-Time management and writing a literature review is challenging due to the extensive research required, critical analysis of sources, organization and structure, synthesis of ideas, adherence to academic writing style, and the need to avoid bias.

- The problem is that we have no guidance from the supervisor.

- I don't know what I am supposed to write about in the literature review concerning studying.

Others suggested that the administration should provide sources “The ministry should change the SNDL platform with a richer form with resources. We are dying to find an article.” In the same context, another student said: “The lack of access to sources since our university doesn't update its library with the newest books”

Q18. What can you suggest to make the process of writing the literature review easier?

This question aims at finding solutions to the problems that Master 2 students face when writing their literature reviews. A number of (51) out of (70) students answered this question. (21) of which have suggested that students should receive more training and practice related to how to write a dissertation in general and a literature review specifically one respondent said “Students should be trained in a good and comprehensive way how to write it, also students should get enough practice” and another wrote “we should receive instructions on how to write one and how to do the research besides we must be trained on how to write it in master 1”. It is also important to note that multiple individuals have mentioned that the research methodology (RM) course should have more time dedicated to dealing with it, and that it should be taught at an earlier stage of the students’ academic journey “Have enough courses in Methodology, APA Style, and the different steps of how to write a literature review deeply (How to write the whole dissertation)”. Another individual wrote “I suggest that students should start studying research methodology and how to write a literature review earlier than 2nd year master”. Such responses highlight the importance of receiving the appropriate instruction and practice in facilitating students’ work.

Moreover, another highly suggested solution is that students should be provided with enough source material to work with “I also suggest that the university must have a specialized website that contains all important resources or at least give students an institutional email which would help students get access to their needed resources” and “efficient resources should be given by the supervisor and he /she should help their students to make it easy”.

Furthermore, respondents pointed out that supervisors should be available and accessible when students seek their help. One student wrote, “supervisors should be reachable in case the students need them, and most importantly they should at least help the students find resources or provide them with some as a starting point”. Another one said, “Supervisors should correct students' work and give them feedback often to avoid any mistakes that can affect the entire dissertation”.

In addition to the solutions mentioned above, some respondents believed that students should not procrastinate and start researching and collecting information on their topic earlier in the year “I suggest that students should start working on their review earlier, or at least look for helpful sources so that when the time comes, they don't panic and know where to find information”. They also brought up the importance of choosing a dissertation topic that has convenient amounts of previous literature written about it “Choose a topic that has enough information in the review of the literature.”

2.5.2. Discussion of Students' Questionnaire

The findings of the questionnaire administered to EFL Master 2 students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia indicate that literature review writing poses challenges for many students. The "general information" section of the questionnaire

provided a comprehensive understanding of the students' perceptions of the research methodology course, their research skills, the time they commence their work, and the frequency of their meetings with their supervisors. While most students believed that the research methodology course was helpful, they assessed their research skills as average. Additionally, most students embarked on their dissertations between February and April, with the highest percentage of students (37.1%) starting their work in March. This finding suggests that a significant number of students procrastinate, leading to potential obstacles in accomplishing their work. Furthermore, the responses to Question 4 indicated that the majority of students struggled with the infrequency of supervisor meetings.

The findings from the second section of the questionnaire titled "Learners' Difficulties in Writing the Literature Review" suggest that a considerable portion of EFL Master 2 students have not completed this section of their dissertations and lack prior experience in executing it. Additionally, it appears that most students prefer working independently and do not seek guidance from their supervisors, peers, or former instructors. Of those who did ask and receive feedback from their supervisors, only half found it beneficial. Another noteworthy observation was that the majority of students reported not receiving much training in conducting literature reviews; and that the little training they did receive was not helpful in the actual process. In addition, it was observed that students tend to rely heavily on Dissertations and Theses as their primary sources, rather than engaging with the original sources. This preference for ready-made sources may suggest a lack of inclination towards critical reading of primary sources.

The questionnaire findings reveal that students find writing the body section to be the most difficult of the three parts of their literature reviews. This is primarily due to the intensive work required in terms of locating relevant resources and studies related to their dissertation topic. Furthermore, the results indicate that students are faced with many

challenges when writing the literature review. The majority of respondents agreed that, critically evaluating and selecting relevant sources, was the most challenging aspect of the literature review writing process, followed by the difficulty in identifying gaps in previous literature. Other types of difficulties are the challenges in locating literature, integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources, and properly applying the APA style.

The analysis of students' questionnaire reveals that students perceive the literature review as a challenging task due to its demanding nature, which entails extensive research and reading about the topic. This process can prove to be tiring and draining at times. Additionally, lack of sources, poor research skills, and lack of practice in writing the literature review were considered as the main reasons behind the challenges students face. Furthermore, most students added not receiving sufficient practice in literature review writing, while others suggested reasons as pair work, anxiety, and lack of confidence.

The analysis reveals that there are several potential solutions to the challenges faced by students when writing their literature reviews. Firstly, it is recommended that students receive adequate training and practice on writing comprehensively to prepare them for the actual writing process. Secondly, the results demonstrate that many students believe that the research methodology course should provide more instruction on writing literature reviews, and that this material should be taught at an earlier stage in their academic journey. Another commonly suggested solution is for students to have access to sufficient source material, provided by either their university or their supervisors. Additionally, the respondents noted that supervisors should be available and willing to assist students throughout the process, and students should seek help from their supervisors, peer students, and other teachers. Finally, students should begin working on their literature reviews early or, at minimum, compile information on their topic prior to commencing the writing

process. This would allow them to avoid feeling panic and experiencing time pressure that may impede their progress.

2.5.3. Supervisors' Interview Analysis

Q1. How long have you been supervising master's dissertations?

The aim of this question is to determine the supervisors' level of experience in supervising dissertations. The results show that eight supervisors have more than (5) years of experience; whereas two supervisors have less than (5) years of experience. Hence, teachers with long experience may be more aware of the difficulties master 2 students face when writing their literature reviews; as well as the possible causes and solutions to these problems.

Q2. According to your experience, are Master 2 students ready to conduct research? Please explain.

The aim of this question is to find out supervisors' opinions on whether Master 2 students are ready to conduct research. All the interviewed supervisors said that the majority of students are in fact not ready to conduct research. Some supervisors explained that this is due to students' lack of critical thinking and language/writing proficiency. One supervisor reported "No, they are not. Most of Master 2 students lack the required level of critical thinking to conduct research and the acceptable proficiency for writing a dissertation". While another said "The majority are not ready because they don't master the basics of the language, let alone conducting the research". Other supervisors pinned students' unpreparedness to conduct research on the lack of training:

“They are not. They should have been trained before, not just at the theoretical level which explains the principles and procedures to students, but at a practical level. This entails that students should have carried out mini research papers before conducting a major piece like a graduation dissertation.”

A third supervisor reported, “I don't think our students are good with the skills of conducting research”. Some of such skills he/she mentioned are “skills like critical thinking skills. Sifting through the information. Evaluating the argument, deciding which argument to take and which one to leave.”. They also highlighted the importance of extensive reading in conducting research, which most students lack “first, our students do not read much, and conducting research is usually based on extensive reading and extensive reviewing of the literature”. From the explanations above it can be concluded that most Master 2 students are not prepared to conduct their own research, since the majority of them lack the knowledge, research skills, and writing abilities required from researchers.

Q3. What do you think about students' dissertations in terms of quality?

This question aims at knowing supervisors' perceptions of the quality of Master 2 students' dissertations. When asked the question above, one supervisor said that “Very few are good dissertations but the majority are very poor in terms of quality.” while another reported that students' dissertations are “Generally below average”. A third supervisor explained it best in the following statement:

“In terms of quality, I'm not entitled to say anything about that because I am not specialized in didactics or methodology. But in terms of language, I would say,

sometimes. They produce very poor dissertations. In terms of style, language, organization, and the mechanics of writing.”

It is clear from the interview answers that most supervisors rate Master 2 students' dissertations as below average too bad, with only a few students having decent or high-quality dissertations.

Q4. In your opinion, what makes writing a literature review particularly challenging compared to other types of writing assignments?

The question aims to know supervisors' opinions on what makes writing a literature review more challenging compared to other types of writing assignments. One reason that was mentioned by supervisors is the need to read and understand previous literature related to the topic as it was reported “Writing review of literature requires a deep understanding of all the literature written within your area of research. So, in order to be able to write a thorough review of literature you need to have a good background. You must have read a lot of sources in that field of study. This is related also to the research skills”. While Another said that because of the “Lack of readership among students and limited research skills”.

Other supervisors highlighted the importance of critical thinking skills which may be hard for students to master. One supervisor explained “In writing a literature review, students should employ higher order thinking skills (cognitive, meta-cognitive ones). This surpasses the training they have had in memorizing, comprehending, applying and, to a lesser degree, analyzing information”. While another supervisor said that “Writing the literature review of the dissertations requires lots of critical thinking, and high academic writing proficiency compared to the other types of writing”. Another reason mentioned

was that writing a literature review requires the ability to critically analyze and select valid and reliable arguments as one supervisor best explained it:

“I’ve already talked about this. I mean, sifting through the arguments, analyzing the arguments, choosing what to take and what to leave, reading critically, because sometimes, students borrow uncritically, sometimes when we supervise, when we correct our students, dissertations, we come across, quotes and borrowings, which actually do not have much flesh to set their teeth. the groundless arguments”

Other reasons that were mentioned were the lack of practice, and “Paraphrasing the original source while preserving its writing quality and being faithful to its content”. It can be inferred from the responses that composing a literature review; when compared to other sorts of academic writing assignments, necessitates a higher level of proficiency, skills, and diligence from students to undertake.

Q5. Do Masters 2 students encounter problems in locating sources? If yes, how can this affect the writing process of the literature review?

This question seeks to determine whether Masters 2 students have difficulties in finding sources for their literature review and how this can affect their writing process. Out of the 10 supervisors’, only one answered no, explaining that “there is no problem in finding resources, they just need to make efforts in looking for primary sources”. While the other 9 supervisors believed that the majority of the students do struggle with locating sources.

According to some of them “students are unable to find up-to-date resources” which can affect “the originality of their work as outdated resources may lead to less accurate findings”.

Moreover, other supervisors also mentioned how problems in locating sources affects the writing process because “it doesn't adapt access to solid previous literature published in the field. You can't simply identify a very good research gap like this”. In addition to the aforementioned effects, one supervisor also mentioned the quality of the work “If you can't access sources your work will not be of good quality, it will delay the process of writing or rush to write something not related to the topic”. These questions show that access to reliable and diverse sources is essential for producing high-quality work, as it can help gain a more well-rounded understanding of the subject matter, provide valuable firsthand information, and make work easier and less time consuming for students.

Q6. What do you think of the students' abilities to critically evaluate and select the literature?

The aim of this question is to gather the supervisors' opinions on the students' ability to critically evaluate and select literature. All supervisors think that students' abilities in this area are “below par” except for a select few. One supervisor related this to students' lack of critical evaluation skills, they said “I don't think they have the required skills to critically evaluate these materials. Most of the students lack the skill of critical thinking and critical analysis. Some of the students may even work on some materials which do not really fall within the realm of their research.”, while another added “They can't select (sources). They're not equipped with the skills, because in order to develop these skills, you should develop the skills to analyze simple texts; short text, general texts. I don't think our students are equipped with these skills”.

Furthermore, a supervisor highlighted the importance of analyzing arguments by saying that “it is probably the epitome of doing research”. They further added that “It's

very important. If you're not able to differentiate between somebody's arguments and another person's arguments, then you're dead.” All the answers above show that students lack the skills to critically evaluate and select literature, which can negatively affect their work, and lead to many challenges that hinder their work.

Q7. Do students find difficulties in providing a structured outline for the literature review? Please explain.

The aim of the question is to inquire supervisors' opinion on whether or not students commonly encounter challenges when creating a structured outline for their literature reviews. All 10 supervisors agreed that most students do find difficulty in this area. One supervisor said that “they just copy the literature outlines of previous dissertations”. Another explained that the reason is the “lack of clarity on the purpose of the review.” making these students “unable to identify the research gap, unable to identify subtopics”. Moreover, some believe the reason behind this is that students are not well informed about their topic, with one supervisor commenting that “Realizing a structured outline reflects how students are well-informed about the subject (in other words, they have to read extensively about the topic of the study)”.

Some supervisors explained that students' inability to provide a structured outline for the LR is because “they don't really have a clear edge of what they are going to search about”. One supervisor explained that “They have only the title in general, but they do not really grasp or comprehend the different variables and different elements of their research”. This means that students struggle to create a precise image of the structure in their thoughts due to the inability to consolidate various components. This difficulty often leads to their inability to produce a cohesive structure.

Q8. Do students find difficulties in identifying the gap in previous literature? Please explain

This question seeks to understand whether or not students struggle with identifying gaps in previous literature during their research, from the perspective of supervisors. All 10 supervisors think that students do find difficulties in identifying the gap; with some of them even saying that it is one of the most challenging aspects of a literature review and that “It is hard for everyone even for qualified researchers”. Some supervisors believe that this is because “the concept of gap is not clear in their minds.”. Other supervisors also commented that students “are not familiar enough with the research topic”; “the timing allocated to do the research is not that enough to do the proper work”; and that student “do not understand the purpose behind the gap”. These answers showcase that students see literature review as just “an extension to the theoretical part.”. According to one supervisor, this leads to the “majority just copying and pasting information”, which does not serve to show the gap. From the answers provided, it is clear that students do struggle with the process of identifying the gap in previous literature due to their lack of readership, knowledge, and understanding of the concept.

Q9. Do students know how to integrate and synthesize information from multiple sources to support their own?

This question intends to seek the supervisor's perspective concerning the students' abilities to synthesize information from multiple sources to support their own. Three supervisors asserted that some students, with little guidance, can synthesize information from multiple sources to support their own “They are relatively successful in doing so with minimal guidance.” whereas the other supervisors firmly denied the students' abilities to do so “No, I do not believe that most students can incorporate sources to serve them to support

their claims.”. Another teacher gave further explanation on this point “Unfortunately no. Again, lack of practice and the method of teaching are a problem. When you read their chapters, you get the impression that it's just simply outlining one idea after another; somebody said this, somebody said that, and sometimes there's no connection between what somebody else said.” According to the supervisors, students really don't know how to synthesize the information for the lack of practice, and guidance.

Q10. Explain why students commit plagiarism regardless of using paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting

The purpose of this question is to seek an explanation of the reasons for committing plagiarism by students regardless of using paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting. A supervisor went on to say: "Unfortunately, they plagiarize because they don't master paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting." Another supervisor expressed that at times, students may be unaware of committing plagiarism “Sometimes students are not even aware of plagiarism”

Another supervisor highlighted another reason “They tend to rush things so they finish earlier because they don't have time. Some of them don't have even the qualities or the competence to do the research”. Another supervisor explained his point of view concerning this problem. “Sometimes, they do not know what plagiarism is. That's one thing. The other thing is again going back to their writing skills. It should be blamed on their writing skills and probably it also should be blamed on the methodology class. I mean, we should raise awareness towards plagiarism by teaching our students how to write properly and simply how to identify what is not there.”

Q11. Would you please comment on the difficulties encountered by students in terms of language (mechanics, structure, mechanics, vocabulary, formality, complexity, hedging, and coherence...)

This question intends to seek the supervisor's remarks on the linguistic impediments faced by students. Only one teacher admitted that there are good students who submit good work. "It's the mistakes we come across. Disastrous mistakes sometimes. In terms of mechanics. But some excellent students produce excellent work." Whereas the rest of the supervisors have agreed that no literature review has been submitted with complete accuracy for different reasons. "Most students don't have an adequate master of the language".

One supervisor pointed out that: "Master 2 students commit mistakes at the level of coherence and cohesion; they use cohesive marks randomly. They also disobey punctuation rules and use many run-on sentences" For further emphasis on this problem another supervisor said "Too many areas to comment on that require a lot of time, effort, and space! Use of general words: say, some, do, make. Informalities: contractions, informal words, phrasal verbs, and idioms. Sentence fragments, short choppy sentences, or run-on sentences. Being too categorical especially in formulating hypotheses and aims and drawing conclusions"

Another supervisor illustrated his perspective "Most of the students, again, lack these writing skills, the mechanics, the structure, they are not aware of the different components of a paragraph that every paragraph needs a topic sentence, then embodied in a conclusion, most of the students do not follow these structures, and most of the students commit a lot of language mistakes, grammar, spelling, mechanics most of the time"

Q12. In which area (s) do students face problems when using the APA style?

The objective of this question is to find out which areas master two students face problems when using the APA style. Some teachers could not provide us with a good answer since They are not familiar with the APA style; Their answers to this question were as follows: “No idea, I work with MLA”, “I'm not familiar with the APA style, in civilization and literature we use MLA. So, I'm not familiar with it”. The other answers were simply focusing on one point “In-text citations”, or “deciding whether paraphrasing or citation is more appropriate”

Q13. Could you please mention other problems faced by students related to the writing of the literature review?

This question aims to collect other problems which students encounter when writing the literature review. One assumption made by a supervisor was as follows: “They rely a lot on other thesis outlines without making any efforts to write their outline after reading. They also rely too much on secondary sources.” Another supervisor suggested “Understanding the scope of the claims that are made in theory”.

According to another supervisor, students lack several skills. He maintained that: “other problems can be the lack of readership, lack of skills to properly and critically analyze, synthesize, paraphrase, and summarize from the different materials and resources available” While another one said: “Language, identifying the gap, how to establish the link between the literature review and their work/theme”

Q14. According to you, what are the reasons behind these difficulties?

The intention of formulating this question is to ask the supervisors what they believe are the reasons behind the previously mentioned difficulties. They mentioned several reasonable reasons such as carelessness, laziness and lack of research skills. One

supervisor said that the reason is “Research skills in general. They should read a lot in the field they specialize in”. Another supervisor claimed that “They do not make enough effort to master writing and critical thinking”. Another supervisor also suggested a different reason which is the “Lack of training in doing actual research and time constraints”. Out of all the answers, one supervisor presented an interesting reason: “Probably they (the problems) relate to the teaching. I mean, we should reevaluate the way we teach certain modules, especially the writing module, the methodology module, and what else? Probably the whole syllabus.”

Q15. What could you suggest to help students improve their research skills in general and the writing of literature reviews in particular?

This question was designed to request recommendations that can assist the students in enhancing their research skills, with a specific focus on refining their literature review writing capabilities. All the answers in general had one centered idea which is reading. One supervisor maintained that “They should read a lot and be more serious in writing their dissertations. Supervisors should also assist them in their process of writing their literature review.” With the same idea another one said that students should “read more methodology books to support whatever knowledge they have about methodology. Have more fruitful sessions with their supervisors. And Take feedback into consideration whenever provided”.

Another suggestion was that students should “learn to be autonomous and practice analyzing literature and writing reviews outside the walls of the methodology classroom”. While another one proposed that “Training workshops are needed during the first year of study in the Master program”. Lastly, one of the supervisors suggested a reasonable idea which is “Limiting the number of students' access to the master's program based on merit”.

2.5.4. Discussion of Supervisors' Interview

This interview's main aims are to discover supervisors' perceptions in regard to the difficulties their students encounter when writing the literature review; as well as the reasons and possible solutions to these problems. After conducting a series of interviews with supervisors, at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, a thorough analysis of the data has revealed several key themes that provide valuable insights into the research questions at hand. First of all, according to the results obtained, eight supervisors have more than 5 years of experience; whereas two supervisors have less than 5 years of experience. Thus, most of the supervisors have expertise in this field. According to their experience, all 10 supervisors believed that most Master 2 students are not ready to conduct research; ranking their dissertations as below average in terms of quality. The data also indicated that supervisors believe that the difference between a literature review and other types of assignment, is that it requires deep understanding and readership of previous literature, higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, high academic writing proficiency, and referencing information.

The interviews' data also revealed that their students do face a number of obstacles when writing their literature reviews. It is indicated that students have problems with locating sources, critically evaluating and selecting literature, providing a structured outline for the literature review, identifying the gap in previous literature, and integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources to support their own. All these problems can affect the originality of the work and the writing process. It can also cause a decrease in work quality, and lead to students' inability to identify the gap for their research. In addition to those mentioned before, it was also discovered that students struggle with avoiding plagiarism and referencing, this can be due to their inability to master

paraphrasing, summarizing and quoting rules, being in a rush, or being unaware of the concept of plagiarism. Likewise, supervisors maintained that students do feel challenged when it comes to using the APA style, especially in the case of in-text citations.

Additionally, the results shed light on language difficulties that students face, namely, problems with the mechanics of language, coherence and cohesion, structure, grammar, punctuation, informalities, and run on sentences and so on. Other difficulties and problems teachers pointed out were, understanding the scope of the claims that are made in theory, mastering the language, identifying the gap, and establishing the link between the literature review and their work/theme.

As far as the reasons behind students' difficulties are concerned, teachers have mentioned carelessness, laziness, and lack of research skills. It was also noted that students often lack essential skills such as critical thinking, reading, research, writing, and language skills. Additionally, some supervisors identified various factors, including the lack of proper training and practice, time constraints, and outdated methodology courses that do not adequately equip students to write effective literature reviews.

To address the challenges faced by students in improving their literature reviewing skills, several solutions have been proposed by teachers. One common suggestion is for students to enhance their knowledge by reading more methodology books. Additionally, it is important for students to take feedback from their supervisors and learn to be autonomous in analyzing and writing relationships outside of the methodology classroom. To further support students, training workshops should be provided during the first year of the master's program. Lastly, admission to the master's program should be based on merit, thereby limiting the number of students and ensuring higher quality education.

2.5.5. Discussion of the Overall Result

The results of the questionnaire and the interview both indicate that EFL Master 2 students face challenges when writing their literature reviews. The questionnaire findings reveal that many students struggle with the literature reviewing process, especially in terms of critically evaluating and selecting literature, identifying gaps in previous literature, and integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources. The interview results also show that students have difficulty locating sources, analyzing and selecting literature, providing a structured outline, and integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources.

Furthermore, both the questionnaire and the interview indicate that students struggle with language, grammar, and APA style when writing their literature reviews. The questionnaire results suggest that students struggle with the proper application of the APA style, while in the interview, the supervisors highlighted that students face language difficulties such as coherence and cohesion, grammar, and structure. Additionally, both the questionnaire and the interview highlight that students lack research skills and experience, knowledge of critical reading and writing, and do not seek enough guidance from supervisors and peers.

Finally, the questionnaire and the interview reveal that there are potential solutions to the challenges faced by students in writing their literature reviews. The questionnaire suggests that students should receive adequate training and practice in writing, gain access to sufficient source materials, and receive supervisor guidance. The interview suggests that students need to enhance their research skills, read more methodology books, and attend training workshops. Furthermore, both the questionnaire and the interview suggest that students should start their work early and learn to be autonomous in analyzing and writing, and supervisors should be available to assist students. Additionally, the interview

suggested that admission to the master's program should be based on merit to ensure higher quality education.

2.6. Limitations of the Study

The current study has a number of flaws that should be considered. One limitation is that this research is still under study. As a result, it was difficult to discuss these research findings in relation to previous studies results. Furthermore, a document analysis of students' literature reviews was among the planned tools for collecting data. However, due to time limitations and the students not completing their literature reviews, this approach could not be carried out.

2.7. Pedagogical Recommendations

In light of the study's results, it is believed that the following suggestions would help both students and teachers overcome the aforementioned challenges:

- Workshops and seminars on research skills in general and dissertation writing in particular, should be organized for Master 2 students every year.
- Supervisors should encourage peer-feedback. This would help students improve their work based on their peers' comments and suggestions before submitting the final drafts to their supervisors.
- Research methodology and writing expression teachers should focus more on the practical aspect of the module to give students more opportunities to apply their research skills
- In order to improve their writing skills, students should be encouraged to practice extensive reading.

- The administration of the department should limit the number of students' access to the master's program based on merit (students' qualifications).

Conclusion

This chapter includes a presentation of the research instruments represented in a students' questionnaire and a teachers' interview. The chapter provided an analysis and interpretation of the gathered data. The results were displayed in the form of tables and written text. The findings of the research indicated that Master 2 students encountered many difficulties that were due to a number of different reasons. However, there were suggestions of solutions that, if implemented properly, could be effective in helping students get past these difficulties. In the end of the chapter, the results closed up with a set of limitations, and pedagogical recommendations for further research.

General Conclusion

As a Master 2 student, writing a literature review is an essential task that requires careful attention, as it is a crucial component of one's thesis or dissertation. A literature review provides a comprehensive summary and analysis of the existing literature on a specific research topic. This may make it a challenging process for many students. This study is based on the assumption that Master 2 students struggle with writing their literature reviews, and that these difficulties may lead to a poor quality of their dissertations. This study has been carried out to identify the difficulties EFL students face when writing the literature review, as well as the reasons behind these difficulties, and possible solutions to them.

In the handling of these points, this research work has been framed within two chapters. On the one hand, the first chapter covers the theoretical part and it is divided into two sections. The first one sheds light on some key concepts related to academic writing and its importance, stages, and characteristics; whereas the second section deals with the literature review. The second chapter, on the other hand, is concerned with the practical part that outlines the methods and procedures used to collect data. It is also devised to analyse, interpret, and discuss the results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the supervisors' interview.

The results shows that there are many difficulties students face during the literature reviewing process; locating relevant literature, critically evaluating and selecting essential sources, identifying gaps, integrating and synthesizing information, and time management, issues with plagiarism, weak language, and poor structuring of the outline. Furthermore, the reasons for these difficulties were identified as lack of practice, resources, research skills, writing skills, anxiety, and motivation.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that students receive adequate training and practice on writing comprehensively, and that they should start early. Improving knowledge by reading more methodology books is also suggested, as well as seeking feedback from supervisors, and establishing autonomy in analysis and writing. Additionally, workshops should be provided during the first year of the master's program, and admission should be based on merit to ensure a higher quality of education. Overall, the findings provide us with some insights into the difficulties faced by students when writing literature reviews and offer suggestions for improving their skills and performance.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Students Questionnaire

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is designed to help us accomplish a Master's dissertation on the problems and difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a literature review at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel University. We will be grateful if you could help us by answering the following questions by putting a tick (✓) in the right box or completing the answer by giving your own opinion. Thank you in advance for your help.

Section One: General Information

Q1. What do you think about the research methodology course?

Helpful

Interesting

Boring

Q2. How would you evaluate your research methodology skills?

Good

Average

Bad

Q3. When did you start working on your dissertation? (please mention the month)

.....;

Q4. How often do you meet your supervisor?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Section Two: Learners' Difficulties in Writing Literature Review

Q5. Have you finished writing your literature review?

Yes

No

Q6. Have you ever written a literature review before writing your master's dissertation?

Yes

No

If yes, for what?

.....
.....
.....

Q7. Have you sought any support or assistance with writing a literature review, such as from a supervisor, former teachers, or a peer student?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe your experience

.....
.....
.....

Q8. Did your supervisor provide you with feedback regarding the writing of your literature review?

Yes

No

Please explain how helpful it was

.....
.....
.....

Q9. Was writing the literature review time-consuming?

Yes

No

Q10. Have you been trained to write a literature review?

Yes

No

Q11. Was the training you received helpful when writing the actual literature review?

Yes

No

Please explain in both cases

.....

Q 12. What resources or support tools did you find helpful when writing your literature review? (You can select more than one choice)

Books

Articles

Journals

Magazines

Dissertations and theses

Others,

Q13. How difficult is writing a literature review?

Easy

Normal

Hard

Q14. In your opinion, what makes writing a literature review particularly challenging compared to other types of writing assignments?

.....
.....

Q15. What part of the literature review was more challenging for you?

The Introduction

The Body

The Conclusion

Please explain why:

.....

Q16. Tick the right box that represents your choice in front of each of the following statements.

Difficulties of Writing Literature Review	Easy	Normal	Difficult
Identifying key terms (adjectives and nouns to use in your search)			
Locating relevant Literature			
Critically evaluating and selecting the most important sources in previous literature			
Outlining the structure of the literature review			
Determining the scope and focus of the review			
Identifying the gap in previous literature			
Integrating and synthesizing information from multiple sources			
Using other writers' ideas to support your own			
Paraphrasing information			
Summarizing information			
The appropriate use of the APA style			
Quoting (author, date and page number)			
Writing coherently and in an organized manner			
Maintaining a good academic writing style			
Connecting different ideas together by using transitional words			

Using the correct verb tense when writing			
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Q17. According to you, what are the reasons behind these difficulties?

Lack of resources

Poor research skills

Lack of practice in writing literature review

Supervisors' lack of guidelines and feedback

Weak language skills

Deficient teaching methods (research methodology course)

Others:.....

Q18. What can you suggest to make the process of writing the literature review easier?

Appendix B

Dear Supervisors,

This interview is designed to help us accomplish a master's dissertation on the problems and difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a literature review at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, University. We will be grateful if you could help us by answering the following questions and giving your opinions. Thank you in advance for your help.

Q1. How long have you been supervising Master's dissertations?

Q2. According to your experience, are Master 2 students ready to conduct research? Please explain.

Q3. What do you think about students' dissertations in terms of quality?

Q4. In your opinion, what makes writing a literature review particularly challenging compared to other types of writing assignments?

Q5. Do Masters 2 students encounter problems in locating sources? If yes, how can this affect the writing process of the literature review?

Q6. What do you think of the students' abilities to critically evaluate and select the literature?

Q7. Do students find difficulties in providing a structured outline for the literature review?

Please explain.

Q8. Do students find difficulties in identifying the gap in previous literature? Please explain

Q9. Do students know how to integrate and synthesize information from multiple sources to support their own?

Q10. Explain why students commit plagiarism regardless of using paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting.

Q11. Would you please comment on the difficulties encountered by students in terms of language usage (mechanics, coherence, formality, structure, formality....)

Q12. In which area(s) do students face problems when using the APA style?

Q13. Could you please mention other problems faced by students related to the writing of the literature review?

Q14. According to you, what are the reasons behind these difficulties?

Q15. What could you suggest to help students improve their research skills in general and the writing of literature review in particular?

Résumé

Cette étude descriptive vise à identifier les difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants EFL Master 2 lors de la rédaction de la revue de littérature. La présente étude repose sur l'hypothèse que les étudiants en Master 2 ont de la difficulté à rédiger leurs revues de littérature et que ces difficultés peuvent conduire à une mauvaise qualité de leurs dissertations. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs de la présente étude, un questionnaire et une interview ont été utilisés pour recueillir des données au département d'anglais de Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. D'une part, le questionnaire des étudiants a été remis à (70) étudiants de Master 2 sur un total de (140). Il vise à identifier les difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants lors de la rédaction de leur revue de littérature. D'autre part, (10) enseignants sur (32) ont été interviewés pour obtenir des informations complémentaires et compléter les données obtenues de l'outil précédent concernant les difficultés de leurs élèves. Les résultats obtenus indiquent que les étudiants de maîtrise 2 ont de la difficulté à rédiger leur analyse documentaire. Ces difficultés consistent principalement en l'incapacité de trouver la documentation pertinente, de cerner les lacunes dans la littérature précédente et d'évaluer et de sélectionner les sources les plus importantes dans la littérature précédente. Sur la base des résultats, certaines recommandations pédagogiques ont été suggérées pour surmonter ces difficultés.

المخلص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب ماجستير في اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة جيجل. من المفترض أنه إذا تم تحديد الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب EFL Mater 2 في كتابة مراجع الأدبيات الخاصة بهم، فيمكن العثور على حلول وتحسينات للتغلب عليها. للإجابة على هذه الفرضية تم استخدام استبيان ومقابلة. تم توزيع الاستبيان على 140 طالب ماجستير في السنة الثانية لتحديد التحديات التي يواجهونها عند كتابة مراجع الأدبيات. وأجريت المقابلة مع 10 معلمين إنجليزي من نفس القسم بهدف اكتشاف توقعاتهم للصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب وأسباب وحلول هذه الصعوبات. تتكون هذه الأطروحة من فصلين: الأول يتناول الكتابة الأكاديمية، والثاني مخصص لمراجعة الأدب. أشارت النتائج أن الطلاب يواجهون عقبات مختلفة عند كتابة مراجع الأدبيات، مثل العثور على الأدبيات المناسبة، والتحليل النقدي والاختيار، وتحديد الثغرات وتطبيق أسلوب APA، والتي تم تأكيدها من قبل المشرفين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، هيكله المخطط للكتابة الأدبية، وارتكاب السرقة الأدبية واستخدام لغة ضعيفة. هذه التحديات هي نتائج عدة أسباب. واستناداً إلى النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها، اقترحت بعض التوصيات التربوية للتغلب على هذه الصعوبات.

