



تحديد المشاكل التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في كتابة الأبحاث العلمية

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Identifying Problems Encountered by EFL Libyan learners in Research Writing

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الملخص:

إن كتابة الأبحاث ليست مهمة سهلة لأنها تتطلب معرفة خلفية كافية واهتمامًا وتحفيزًا وعملاً شاقًا. والغرض الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو تسليط الضوء على المشاكل الرئيسية في كتابة الأبحاث التي يواجهها طلاب المرحلة الجامعية في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الذين يدرسون في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الزيتونة. وكذلك التعرف على تصورات المعلمين الليبيين تجاه أعمال طلابهم. شارك في هذه الدراسة 26 طالبًا من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية و12 معلمًا. أظهرت النتائج أن التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الجامعية في كتابة البحوث هي: نقص المعرفة، صعوبات في كتابة ملخص الدراسات السابقة، نقص في المراجع المكتوبة، الاعتماد على الإنترنت للحصول على معلومات عامة بدلاً من جمع المعلومات من مصادر موثوقة، وعدم الإلمام بالتفكير النقدي المطلوب في الكتابة الأكاديمية. علاوة على ذلك، أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية يجدون صعوبة في إعادة الصياغة المعلومات. أظهرت النتائج أيضًا أن المعلمين غير راضين بكتابات طلابهم. وأفادوا أن أعمال الطلاب تفتقر إلى الاستشهاد المناسب والكتابة النقدية والوضوح لأسباب مختلفة، بعضها أن سنوات الكتابة الأكاديمية لم تكن كافية للطلاب للتفوق في الكتابة الأكاديمية ونقص الممارسة والخبرة في كتابة الأوراق البحثية. وبناء على النتائج تم تقديم بعض التوصيات والمقترحات بالخصوص.

الكلمات الدالة: الكتابة الأكاديمية، مشروع البحث، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية، المشاكل، المرحلة الجامعية.

Abstract

Research writing is not an easy task as it requires an adequate background knowledge, interest, motivation, and hard work. The main purpose of this study is to highlight the major problems in research writing faced by EFL undergraduate students studying at the Department of English Language at

Azzytuna University. Also to identify Libyan teachers' perceptions toward their students' works. A total of 26 EFL students and 12 teachers participated in this study. The results showed that the challenges that Libyan EFL undergraduate students face in writing research were: a lack of knowledge, difficulties in writing the literature review, a lack of library resources, relying on the internet for general information rather than gathering information from authentic sources, and being unfamiliar with the critical thinking that is needed in academic writing. Furthermore, the results also revealed that Libyan EFL students have difficulty with paraphrasing and with references. Moreover, teachers also showed negative attitudes toward their students' work. They reported that students' work lacked proper citation, critical writing, and clarity for various reasons, some of which were that the years of academic writing were not enough for students to excel in academic writing and a lack of practice and experience in writing research papers. Based on the findings, some recommendations and suggestions for further research are provided.

Keywords: Academic writing, research project, English language students, problems, undergraduate.

1.0 Introduction

Writing is an important skill for effective language development. Its importance increases when it comes to writing in English language, which is widely used for international communication and comprehension of the required knowledge. English writing has a great impact on the entire system of education because it is the primary source of world knowledge. According to Deane (2018), writing is the most significant development in human history. It is a method of exchanging knowledge, information, ideas, and opinions to future generations with other nations throughout the world. Difficulties in writing usually are found in academic writing. Heinkel (2004) pointed out that in previous studies, many non-native speakers experienced many difficulties in learning foreign languages. These studies also found that students created many problems and shortcomings in academic writing. Oshima and Hogue (1999) also agreed that academic writing is not easy. Moreover, they stated that to improve learners' writing abilities, producing academic papers needs a lot of study and practice.

Therefore, writing academic papers is more challenging than writing other types of writing. Oshima and Hogue (1999) clearly showed that academic writing focuses on the type of writing that second and foreign language learners need to achieve in an institution of higher education, such as a college or university. Therefore, for undergraduate students, academic writing means project writing. Hardling (2004), stated that research writing is an activity done by researchers to carry out the findings of their research in the form of writing. In the Libyan context, a graduation project has been one of the requirements of the undergraduate degree program for many years in the Department of English Language at most Libyan universities. It helps

undergraduate students to develop their personalities professionally. This experience equips students with in-depth knowledge of various aspects and techniques of research and its procedures. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to new researchers so that they do not find this task as challenging.

1.1 Statement of the problem.

As Libyan EFL undergraduate students approach graduation, they face a crucial challenge: mastering research writing (Colwell 2011). By its nature, research is a challenging task for any learner, regardless of their level of study. This is especially true for undergraduates, who are doing research for the first time. Every research requires an in-depth study of the subject matter, adequate planning, and care. That is why many undergraduate students find it challenging. According to Litmoren (2015) most students found that writing research is the toughest challenge they face in order to earn their college degree. It is time-consuming and brain draining. But in the end, it is one of the unforgettable moments students treasure.

Undergraduate students are required to do research as part of their degree. Research provides students with access to in-depth experience in learning and writing research related to their field. Students learn how and why research aims to address questions that currently have no answers. Therefore, this research needs to be addressed and explored to show students how to deal with these difficulties and to generate some solutions and recommendations that may help EFL students in the future. Therefore, this study tries to answer these questions: (1) what are the challenges that Libyan EFL undergraduate students encounter in research writing? (2) What are the teachers' attitudes towards their students' work?

1.2 Significance of the study.

It is hoped that the results of the present study will bridge the gap in the literature. Simultaneously, the results can be beneficial to both students and teachers. For students, it might be used as a good resource for them in the field of research writing, and it may help to provide a better understanding of how they write and organize their research writing. For the teacher, this research may help them understand the problems faced by the students so they can provide more meaningful feedback to improve the quality of the students' academic writing.

1.3 Scope of the Study.

This study aims to explore the challenges that EFL students encounter in research writing and to identify teachers' attitudes towards their students' work. The participants will be all 4th year students and some of their lecturers at the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education, Azzytuna University, Tarhuna.

2.02.0 Literature Review

3.02.1 Nature of Writing

Writing is one of the four basic skills in learning English as a second language and as a foreign language. Writing has an important role in the context of English teaching as a foreign language. Writing is a visual form of communication, either printed in hardcopy or electronic form. White and Arndt (1991) described writing as a form of problem-solving which involves such processes as generating ideas, discovering a voice with which to write, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating what is going to be written as well as what has been written and searching for language with which to express exact meaning. In writing the writers try to express their ideas in written form using grammatically correct sentences for communication. In writing, the writer is required to pay attention to some aspect of the production of the written text which involves the content, organization, vocabulary, grammatical, spelling and punctuation.

4.02.2 Academic Writing

Academic writing refers to a formal style of writing that is produced in an academic setting (Valdes, 2019). That is, it is any writing that entails scientific knowledge for educational purposes. Labaree (2009) proposed a more detailed definition stating that “academic writing refers to a style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their specific areas of expertise”, adding that it is “designed to convey agreed meaning about complex ideas or concepts for a group of scholarly experts”. The academic writing concept can be defined in different ways. The academic writer considers what is known about the subject and then determines what they think about it. If the writer’s paper fails to inform or argue, then it will fail to meet the expectations of the academic reader. Furthermore, this study will focus on writing a research thesis as one kind of academic writing.

5.02.2.1 Features of Academic Writing

According to Valdes (2019) some characteristics or features of academic writing are described below.

- 1) Clear and limited focus. The focus of academic writing is clear and usually mentioned in the problem statement.
- 2) Logical structure. All forms of academic writing have a consistent structure. Academic writing always consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion.

3) Evidence-based arguments. Academic writing requires well-informed discussions – statements supported by evidence from many sources.

4) Impersonal tone. Delivery of arguments should contain logic and objective, and not use emotional or biased language.

6.02.3 Previous Studies

Writing skill is a difficult skill for most learners who learn English as a foreign or a second language because forming a good piece of writing requires not only high proficiency in the foreign language' linguistic rules but also demands good cognitive skills in organizing and presenting ideas. In this part, the researchers presented some studies that exist in the literature which explore the challenges encountered by learners of EFL/ESL in research writing. However, studies in the Libyan setting are still rare.

Several previous studies have been conducted related to the students' challenges in writing final projects or theses. First, Alshehry (2014) to explore the challenges that female undergraduate students and their teachers encounter at Najran University in Saudi Arabia, using a semi-structured interview with twenty students and four lecturers as a tool of research. The results showed that students encountered significant flaws consisting in looking for resources, time, and creative procedures. The results also revealed that students faced problems in research writing such as having no time to conduct research and issues related to ethics. Another great difficulty lies in the students' lack of experience and knowledge about research, and the difficulty to decide on convenient topics with appropriate references.

Following the same interest, and in a study conducted by Al-Qaderi, (2016) also investigated the difficulties that undergraduate students at Ibb University in Yemen face when writing their graduation research projects. English is taught as a foreign language (FL) in Yemen, and it has been discovered that the most common problems encountered by students were broadly (1) their low academic level in English as a medium of instruction and research, or in specialization, (2) a lack of a well-equipped library with open access to resources and websites, and (3) students' difficult circumstances and negative attitudes toward research projects.

In addition, Divsar (2018) conducted a study of similar interest which investigated the challenges encountered by Iranian TEFL students in thesis writing. The results of this study revealed that linguistic difficulties (e.g., grammatical and organizational problems and lack of

mastery of academic writing style) constituted the major challenge for Iranian EFL students. However, findings showed that the students reported a wide range of other difficulties which were grouped into three main categories: (a) instructional and pedagogical inadequacies (mainly students' lack of knowledge and experience in researching and writing up their thesis), (b) personal problems and affairs such as poor management of time and the loss of interest and motivation in the process of thesis writing, and (c) educational support such as the limited availability and assistance offered by the supervisor and adviser.

Based on studies that have been done by Tiwari (2019) examine the common challenges students face when writing a thesis at English Educational Tribhuvan University. The sample consists of (15) students who have submitted their final draft of the thesis. The researchers used the interview to collect data. The study found that unsupportive behaviour of the supervisors and difficulties in selecting the appropriate field or area of the study were the most common challenges when writing the thesis.

In addition, another study about the challenges in research writing done by Qasem and Zayid (2019) examined the challenges that students face during writing research projects in Saudi Arabia. The total study sample is (60) Students from the English Institute and the Institute of Computer Science. Learning tools Including questionnaires and informal interviews. The results of the study showed that the level of the challenges students face when writing a research paper or undertaking a research project is significant. Common challenges were identified when writing research proposals and projects. This difficulty identifying research topics, lack of knowledge of research methods, difficulty finding relevant references, lack of interest in research, lack of understanding of the topic, and lack of time and research management.

In general, most studies listed above investigated the same topic, the challenges, and the problems of writing research but with a different focus area. Most of them took up the subject of the challenges for EFL and ESL students at the higher education level as well as all the results of the mentioned studies support the claim that students face challenges in research writing. This study will also investigate challenges students face in writing research projects, but focus more on EFL students who specialize in the English language and who had already studied writing subjects, such as creative writing and advanced writing, and who wrote papers in English during their studying time. In addition, how they deal with these difficulties and obstacles in writing their graduation project besides studying other subjects that need time and effort. Only limited research studies are available in the Libyan context. So; there is a need to

do more research on this topic to provide a detailed picture and analysis of the problems and challenges that students face in the research field.

7.03.0 Methodology

8.03.1 The Research Design

To achieve the aim of study, the study employed a mixed- method approach by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Creswell, (2014) pointed out that mixed methods is an approach to inquiry that involves using both quantitative and qualitative methods in a research. Greener (2011) presented some justifications for mixing methods in a research which are: to achieve breadth (through using quantitative methods) and depth or closeness (through using qualitative methods). Thus; the rationale for using mixed methods in this study is to obtain a full and in depth understanding of students ' challenges, which might be difficult to obtain using only one method.

3.2 Sample

The researchers used a purposive sampling technique to select the students and teachers according to the needs of the study. The Sample consists of 26 EFL undergraduate Libyan college students (6 males and 20 females), their ages ranged between 20 to 23 as well as twelve teachers (4 males and 8 females). The teachers were selected on the basis that they are teachers of academic writing as well as being supervisors on research projects and the students were selected on the basis that they are in their last year at university and they are required to do a research project as part of their degree.

Table (1) and (2) show the details of the two samples of the study: the students' sample and the teachers' sample.

Table 3.1 *the students' sample*

Gender	No	Total for both Male & Female
Male	6	26
Female	20	
Age	From 20 to 23	

Table 3.2 *Tachers' sample*

Gender		Academic Degree		Teaching Experience		Supervising Experience	
Male	4	Master	9	1–5 year	3	1–5 year	5
Female	8	PhD	3	5–10 years	7	5–10 years	4
				More than 10	2	More than 10 years	3

The total number of teachers 12

9.03.3 Research Instruments.

The researchers selected:

- The Students' Questionnaire which was used with students to obtain information about the challenges they face while writing their research project. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from Atikritis' study (2022).
- Teacher Questionnaire which was designed by using Google forms to gain further information and insight into the challenges that Fourth year undergraduate students face in writing their research project and evaluate their project works from the perspective of academic writing teachers and supervisors. The questionnaire is an adapted version of the questionnaire designed by Filali, (2019).
- Semi-structured Interviews which consisted mainly of 10 open-ended questions related to the students' challenges in writing their research project. The questions (3 and 4) were adopted from Asisa's study (2021), While the rest of the questions were formulated by the researcher after reviewing the literature and by considering the topic of the study and its research question with the suggestions and the comments of the supervisor who guided this study.

10.0 3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection was conducted over 6 weeks between 15 June 2022 and 30 July 2022 at Azzaytuna University. This study carried out with both quantitative and qualitative instruments to achieve the aims of the study. The use of both types of instruments provides a more

comprehensive picture of the participants' attitudes than could be possible with one data collection method alone (Creswell, 2014). The instruments employed were two questionnaires: students' questionnaire and a teachers' questionnaire and an interview with students. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) and Gray (2014), questionnaires are a well-known and widely used primary data gathering technique for collecting quantitative data. On the other hand, the tool of semi-structured interviews is used in order to support the findings for quantitative data.

11.0 4.0 Findings and Discussion

12.0 4.1 Results obtained from Students' Questionnaires and Interviews

13.0 Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics of students' responses for the items from 1 to9, which are reflecting the students' attitudes about the problems in writing research project items

Table4.1: *Results of students' attitudes towards research writing*

No	Items		A	N	D	Mean	Std.Deviation
1	I have knowledge of how to write a research	F	6	8	12	1.77	0.815
		%	23%	31%	46%		
		%	92%	0%	8%		
2	My supervisor chooses the topic for me	F	5	0	21	1.38	0.804
		%	19%	0%	81%		
3	I depend on using the internet for my knowledge resources	F	25	1	0	2.96	0.196
		%	96%	4%	0%		
4	I depend on books for my knowledge resources	F	6	8	12	1.77	0.815
		%	23%	31%	46%		
5	Although I study many subjects this year, I have enough time to write my research project.	F	8	7	11	1.88	0.864
		%	31%	27%	42%		
6	My supervisor reads and checks my paper constantly	F	13	4	9	2.15	0.925
		%	50%	15%	35%		
7	I have knowledge of choosing a topic for my research project	F	9	13	4	2.19	0.694
		%	35%	50%	15%		
8	Writing a research paper is easy for me	F	0	3	23	1.12	0.326
		%	0%	12%	88%		
9	My supervisor is very supportive	F	11	6	9	2.8	0.891
		%	42%	23%	35%		

The following table shows the descriptive statistics of students' responses for the items from 10 to 16 that are reflecting Students' challenges about research methodology items.

Table 4.2: *Results of students challenges about research methodology*

NO	Items	A		N	D	Mean	Std.Deviation
		F	%				
10	I know how to choose a good methodology for my research project.	F	1	10	15	1.46	0.582
		%	4%	38%	58%		
11	I have a clear idea of how to collect data for my research	F	1	6	19	1.31	0.549
		%	4%	23%	73%		
12	I have knowledge of how to organize ideas.	F	9	12	5	2.15	0.732
		%	35%	46%	19%		
13	I have knowledge of writing both introduction and conclusion.	F	12	7	7	2.19	0.849
		%	46%	27%	27%		
14	I have knowledge of how to paraphrase.	F	4	5	17	1.5	0.762
		%	15%	20%	65%		
15	I know how to make in-text citation and work cited list.	F	3	7	16	1.5	0.707
		%	12%	26%	62%		
16	I have knowledge of making a critical thinking.	F	0	5	21	1.19	0.402
		%	0%	19%	81%		

The following table presents the descriptive statistics of students' responses for the items from 17 to 22 that are reflecting Students' challenges about background knowledge in writing research projects.

Table 4.3: *Results of students challenges about background knowledge in writing research*

No	Items	A		N	D	Mean	Std.Deviation
		F	%				
17	I have a clear idea of the differences between MLA, APA	F	0	5	21	1.19	0.402
		%	0%	19%	81%		
18	I know how to find books in a library	F	22	1	3	2.73	0.667
		%	84%	4%	12%		
19	I know how to write a literature review for the study	F	2	11	13	1.58	0.643
		%	8%	42%	50%		
20	I can access plenty of resources that	F	14	4	8	2.23	0.908

	serve my paper	%	54%	15%	31%		
21	I regularly meet my supervisor	F	15	3	8	2.27	0.919
		%	58%	12%	32%		
22	I am committed to the supervisor's guidance	F	24	2	0	2.92	0.272
		%	92%	8%	0%		

The following table shows the descriptive statistics of students' responses for the items from 23 to 26 that are reflecting students' challenges related to the references in writing research.

Table 4.4 Results of students' challenges related to the references

No	Items	A	N	D	Mean	Std.Deviation	
23	Having knowledge how to quote from references	F	8	9	9	1.96	0.842
		%	30%	35%	35%		
24	Being able to make use of online references and resources	F	14	5	7	2.27	0.874
		%	54%	19%	27%		
25	Having knowledge of the well-known, modern, and specific references which help in writing research proposals and projects	F	3	4	19	1.38	0.697
		%	12%	15%	73%		
26	lack of references and resources in the surrounding libraries	F	18	5	3	2.58	0.703
		%	69%	19%	12%		

The insights gained are discussed in two parts: The first part presents a discussion of students' questionnaires and interviews related to the first research question: What are the challenges that Libyan EFL students encounter in research writing? The second part involves the discussion of the teachers' questionnaire and is related to the second research question: What are teachers' attitudes towards students' work?

RQ1– *What are the challenges that Libyan EFL undergraduate students encounter in research writing?*

Concerning the difficulties that undergraduate students encountered while writing their research projects in terms of quoting and obtaining good references and resources 35% of participants stated that they lacked knowledge on how to quote from references, It was not surprising that, with the spread of technology, the majority of the students (54%) use online references rather

than hard copy references, and a smaller number of students (27%) use hard copy references while writing their research projects. Based on the results of the students' attitudes towards research paper writing issues, the results showed that a large number of students (46%) affirmed that they lacked the knowledge to write research papers. Alshehry (2014) found in his study on the challenges that female undergraduate students encounter while conducting their research projects at Najran University in Saudi Arabia that the students had a short time to conduct and complete their research projects on time.

Through the students' questionnaires, the researchers found that students face many challenges and difficulties when writing research projects. This supports the result of Alsied and Ibrahim in a study conducted at Sabha University (2017), in which they reported that students face significant difficulties during the research phase of writing a project; one of these difficulties is writing a literature review.

Likewise, Al-Qaderi (2016), in his study on the challenges undergraduates face in conducting research projects, found that the most needed references and recourses are not available in the libraries and students have difficulties in finding them. This finding is in line with Altikriti,(2022), who found that Jordanian students lack knowledge of the differences between the two styles of writing a research paper (MLA and APA).

Regarding to the interview data, it was determined that the students struggled with writing the literature review because they had to read a large number of sources and then draw connections between the reviewed books and articles, identify a research gap, and restate information in their own words. This is also found in the results of the questionnaire, which showed that some of the students had problems writing a literature review for research. Altikriti reached a similar conclusion and stated that the most important problem faced by students was a lack of understanding of the research writing process.

Additionally, the obtained data also showed that students faced difficulty in dealing with time management, supervisors, methodology, and a lack of research background. The main findings revealed that the majority of fourth-year students faced many challenges in terms of research methodology, as shown in the table above. On the other hand, in terms of writing the introduction and conclusion, the participants in this study (46%) were positive and agreed that they knew how to write these two sections, which is maybe because of the research method course they had taken during their last university year, as the results are shown in the table above.

When students were questioned about their general attitude toward doing a research paper, the majority of them (88%) were negative and responded that they found it a difficult task. Moreover, the findings revealed that writing a research project is not a simple task for students. This result is also in line with Al-Qaderi (2016), and Altikriti, (2022) ,both of them found that students face challenges related to the lack of library resources. Not surprisingly, with the spread of technology, the majority of students (96%) prefer obtaining data and information from the internet to borrowing resources from libraries; yet (23%) prefer books for their knowledge resources. The data analysis shows that students' background knowledge about which style of research paper they should choose is not clear. Furthermore, (62%) of students did not know how to create text lists or cite works when documenting information obtained from sources serving their chosen research topic. Additionally, another important finding is that (42%) of students agreed that they do not have adequate time to do their research project. Some students reported that they had negative experiences and a lack of knowledge when undertaking research. In the same line Altikriti, S. (2022), found that students face challenges related to the lack of library resources. (73%) of them felt that they lacked a clear idea of how to collect data for research, which led to another hurdle in defining the correct research methodology. The majority of students (58%) disagreed that they did not know how to make a good research methodology.

14.0 4.2 Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire

RQ2– What are the teachers' attitudes towards their students' work?

Based on data analysis, almost all teachers (83.3%) were positive and agreed that students are motivated to do research but that the academic environment does not help them in motivating and writing. Furthermore, when teachers were asked to rate their students' project works, most of them (75%) rated them as average and reported that the students' works lacked proper citation, critical writing, and clarity. This result contradicts the result of the study conducted by Divsar (2018), which investigated the challenges encountered by Iranian TEFL students in thesis writing and found that the students lack interest and motivation in the process of thesis writing. Both the literature review and the data analysis require attention to detail and careful documentation. This finding is in line with Divsar (2018) and Alshehry (2014). Most teachers believe that the problems and difficulties of writing in an academic style happen because of a lack of practice and experience in writing research papers, as the results of Alshehry's study (2014) indicated. It can be noticed that despite their motivation to do research, students

encounter challenges related to the classroom environment that may effect on the quality of their writing. The results of the teachers' questionnaire also showed that most teachers felt that the years of academic writing were not enough for students to excel in academic writing. One of the teachers justified that "students need to practice frequently, but the time is not enough for the teachers to give them more exercises during lectures.

4.3 Conclusion

The current research investigated the problems experienced by Libyan students when writing their research project at the Department of English Language at Azzytuna University. The primary focus of this study was to explore the major obstacles faced by EFL learners when undertaking a research project. Moreover, it also aims to identify the teachers' attitudes towards their students' work. Such an understanding of their problems and the suggested solutions will be beneficial for both Libyan students and teachers. For this purpose, two research questions were put out for these aims, and the answers to these questions were provided and discussed. The scope of the study is to collect data from both students and teachers from the above university. Data for the study was gathered using a mixed design of questionnaires and interviews. Based on the results of the students' questionnaire and interview, it can be concluded that Libyan EFL learners majoring in English face some common challenges related to lack of knowledge; difficulties in writing the literature review; a lack of library sources; relying on the internet for general information rather than gathering information from authentic sources such as books and library articles and unfamiliarity with the critical thinking that is needed in academic writing. Additionally, the results also revealed that Libyan EFL learners have difficulty in determining the appropriate methodology; difficulties with time management; difficulties in selecting a topic of research; difficulties with paraphrasing; difficulties with references; and difficulties in differentiating between MLA and APA styles of writing research. As a result, the researchers conducted by those students were of very low quality. Moreover, teachers also showed negative attitudes towards their students' work and rated it as average and reported that students' works lacked proper citation, critical writing, and clarity for various reasons, some of which were that the years of academic writing were not enough for students to excel in academic writing and a lack of practice and experience in writing research papers. After the discussion of the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that Libyan students have many research-related deficiencies because they are not fully aware of the importance of research and, for them, doing research is seen as a tedious and difficult task.

4.4 Recommendations and suggestions for future research

To overcome the challenges students face in writing their research paper, the researchers suggests the following:

- Encourage students to read extensively. Reading widely and regularly exposes students to different writing styles and helps them develop a solid foundation in language and vocabulary, thereby improving their own research writing skills.
- Break down the writing process: Help students understand that research writing is a step-by-step process that involves planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing. Provide guidance and checkpoints at each stage to ensure they develop good writing habits and produce high-quality research papers.
- Encourage students to develop their critical thinking skills by questioning assumptions, analyzing evidence, and developing logical arguments. Teach them how to integrate their own ideas into the research they present and provide opportunities for discussion and debate.
- Teach effective research skills: Guide students in conducting efficient and focused research by introducing them to reliable sources, such as academic journals, databases, and credible websites. Teach them how to evaluate information critically and cite sources properly.
- Evaluate the contents and teaching techniques of the research methods courses that are given at Libyan universities. The students' weaknesses are likely to be reduced if this is done properly.
- The findings of the study are expected to be used as a consideration for other researchers who plan to carry out a study focused on students' challenges in research writing

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