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Posted Date: 5 June 2025

doi: 10.20944/preprints202506.0404.v1

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Article

From Struggle to Success: Exploring Effective Interventions for Undergraduate Thesis Writing

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Abstract: Undergraduate thesis writing is a critical academic requirement that often presents considerable challenges, particularly in institutions with limited research infrastructure, mentorship, and academic support systems. This study explores the difficulties faced by undergraduate students from five academic programs at Bukidnon State University (BukSU), Philippines, and identifies institutional interventions that support thesis completion. Employing a mixed-methods descriptive survey design, data were collected from 50 students through a validated questionnaire. Findings indicate that analyzing and interpreting data, managing stress and anxiety, ensuring technical writing quality, and meeting deadlines, and balancing responsibilities were among the most difficult (“very challenging”) aspects of the thesis process. Tasks related to methodology, data collection, and writing recommendations were rated as “neutral”; while receiving guidance from advisers and incorporating feedback were “moderately challenging” to the respondents. To address these issues, students proposed interventions such as structured mentorship, workshops on research methodology and writing, access to academic databases, and stress management support. These interventions, particularly mentorship and targeted training, helped improve students’ confidence, research performance, and motivation. These findings affirm global evidence that comprehensive, student-centered support systems are vital for facilitating undergraduate research. The study contributes to the broader discourse on research capacity-building in higher education and offers contextually grounded recommendations applicable to similarly situated universities worldwide.

Keywords: undergraduate thesis; academic writing; research challenges; institutional support; student interventions; higher education

Introduction

Undergraduate thesis writing represents a capstone academic endeavor across higher education systems worldwide. It is a complex intellectual task requiring the integration of disciplinary knowledge, methodological rigor, and advanced academic writing proficiency. Globally, students encounter persistent hurdles during this process, including inadequate mentorship, limited access to academic resources, low confidence in research capabilities, and elevated psychological stress. These challenges are not confined to any one region—they affect students across diverse academic institutions from Southeast Asia to North America, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa (Anderson et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2016; Maqsood et al., 2019).

In response, several researchers have explored this issue in varied contexts. For instance, Roxas (2020) and Bernardo and Mendoza (2021) investigated the difficulties encountered by Filipino students in completing undergraduate research, highlighting the lack of structured institutional support. In Thailand, Khamkhien (2021) emphasized linguistic and writing difficulties among EFL learners, while Kim and Kim (2023) demonstrated that structured writing support and collaborative peer learning environments mitigate student anxiety. In South Africa, Mudzielwana (2022) documented the positive effects of thesis-writing workshops, yet also acknowledged systemic gaps in research mentorship. Despite such contributions, many of these studies are either context-specific

or narrowly focused on singular interventions. There remains a notable gap in understanding the intersection of multiple student challenges and the effectiveness of multi-faceted institutional responses—particularly in developing university systems where academic infrastructures are still evolving.

In developed countries, higher education institutions have addressed these issues by institutionalizing writing centers, offering research skill development courses, and integrating peer mentoring programs into academic support structures (Johns, 2021; Abe, 2016; Jones & Robinson, 2020). Yet, even within these well-resourced environments, first-generation students, ESL learners, and those from marginalized communities often continue to struggle due to linguistic, cultural, or socioeconomic barriers (Glowka, 2014; Amida et al., 2020).

In the context of the Philippines, and specifically at Bukidnon State University (BukSU), the undergraduate thesis remains a core graduation requirement across numerous programs. However, students frequently report difficulties in completing this task due to insufficient preparation in research methods, limited academic writing proficiency, technological constraints, and a lack of personalized guidance. These issues are compounded by external responsibilities, such as employment and family obligations, which many students must navigate alongside their academic workload.

This study was developed to examine the layered and interrelated challenges that BukSU students face in the thesis-writing process and to explore institutional interventions that can meaningfully address these concerns. Importantly, this study distinguishes itself by not only documenting student difficulties but also by assessing the perceived effectiveness of implemented or proposed interventions. Through its mixed-methods approach and sequential data collection design, the research provides both diagnostic insights and evaluative evidence.

The study pursued three primary objectives: (1) to identify common challenges faced by undergraduate students during the thesis-writing process; (2) to determine effective institutional interventions based on student perspectives; and (3) to evaluate the perceived impact of these interventions on students' research performance, academic confidence, and motivation. Understanding these experiences is critical for enhancing curriculum design, refining instructional practices, and informing institutional policies aimed at improving undergraduate research outcomes.

Furthermore, the issues addressed in this study—academic writing challenges, research capability gaps, psychological stressors, and mentorship needs—are not unique to BukSU. They reflect broader systemic patterns observed in higher education systems globally. As such, this research aims to contribute to international discourse on undergraduate research support by offering empirically grounded, contextually sensitive insights that may inform programmatic improvements in other institutions, particularly those facing similar developmental and resource-related constraints.

Literature Review

Several studies have examined the challenges undergraduate students face in thesis writing and the intervention that support successful completion. Roxas (2020) emphasizes that while the thesis builds essential skills such as critical thinking and research proficiency, many students find the process overwhelming. Similarly, Ariyanti (2016), Khamkhien (2021), and Therova (2021) describe thesis writing as a demanding exercise requiring advanced academic literacy, methodological understanding, and sustained motivation—areas where many students report difficulties.

Academic writing remains a particularly persistent challenge. Johns (2021) notes that despite advancements in digital writing tools, students often struggle to construct coherent arguments and maintain academic rigor. Anderson et al. (2021) further highlight that in resource-constrained environments, limited access to research materials and insufficient methodological training contribute to these difficulties, compounding the stress associated with thesis writing.

Demographic factors also influence thesis-writing experiences. Olusiji (2018), Glowka (2014), and Amida et al. (2020) found that female students generally perform better in English proficiency

and time management, both of which correlate with more successful thesis outcomes. Additionally, Thelwall et al. (2019) observed gender-based preferences in research methodologies, with females tending toward qualitative research and males favoring quantitative designs.

The relationship between students and their advisors also plays a critical role. Farrell et al. (2018) demonstrate that strong mentorship enhances student resilience and academic performance, although older or working students may be less likely to seek out such support. Ameen et al. (2018) add that alignment between student research interests and institutional research priorities significantly affects student engagement and thesis quality.

Recent studies further emphasize the value of structured interventions. Mudzielwana (2022) reports that writing support programs and proactive feedback mechanisms significantly improve thesis outcomes. Kim and Kim (2023) found that collaborative writing workshops reduce writing anxiety and foster peer support. Yuan and Ke (2020) advocate for integrating research skill development across earlier coursework to ease the final-year thesis burden. Similarly, Maghfirah and Setiawan (2021) highlight the effectiveness of thesis boot camps in enhancing writing productivity and student confidence.

In the Philippine context, research by Bernardo and Mendoza (2021) and Lazaro and Garcia (2020) highlights the persistent academic writing challenges faced by undergraduates, particularly in state universities. Interventions such as writing boot camps and faculty-led methodology seminars have proven effective, though their implementation remains uneven across institutions.

Together, these studies underscore the need for universities to provide more structured, holistic support systems that address both the academic and emotional dimensions of thesis writing. They also suggest that understanding students' perspectives on challenges and interventions is essential for developing effective, student-centered strategies—an aim that this study seeks to fulfill within and beyond the local university context.

Method

This section outlines the research design, participants, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical considerations implemented in the study.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design to explore the experiences, challenges, and support needs of undergraduate students engaged in thesis writing. The design was selected for its suitability in systematically capturing both quantitative and qualitative data related to participants' perceptions and academic experiences (Creswell, 2014). While the survey primarily collected quantitative data through Likert-scale responses, open-ended questions enabled the inclusion of qualitative insights, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of student needs and potential interventions.

Participants

The study initially involved 50 undergraduate students from five academic programs at Bukidnon State University: Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English, Bachelor of Arts in English, Bachelor of Science in Sociology, Bachelor of Science in Community Development, and Bachelor of Arts in Economics. Each program has 10 participants, selected through convenience sampling based on their availability, willingness to participate, and current engagement in the thesis-writing process. This diverse group allowed for a balanced representation of academic disciplines and research experiences.

The participants were at various stages of the thesis-writing process: data analysis ($n = 14$), data collection ($n = 8$), revision ($n = 9$), oral defense ($n = 3$), literature review ($n = 1$), and other preliminary stages ($n = 15$), including topic selection and proposal writing. This distribution enabled the

researchers to capture a wide spectrum of challenges, from early planning to final defense, thereby aligning with the first and second research objectives of the study.

For the third objective—evaluating the perceived impact of institutional interventions—a follow-up survey was administered to the same cohort. However, only 32 of the original 50 participants responded to this round.

The reduction in participant numbers was primarily attributed to scheduling conflicts, personal, or shifting academic responsibilities. Despite this, the 32 follow-up respondents still represented all five programs and provided valuable insights regarding the effectiveness of interventions such as mentorship, writing support, and access to resources. This distinction between the original and follow-up participants adds depth and continuity to the study's longitudinal component.

Instrumentation

Data were gathered using a structured researcher-developed questionnaire designed to capture the multifaceted experiences of undergraduate students involved in thesis writing. The instrument was composed of both closed- and open-ended items to accommodate the collection of quantifiable data as well as qualitative insights that reflect personal experiences, perceptions, and recommendations. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections:

a.) *Demographic Profile* –this section recorded participants' academic program affiliation and current stage in the thesis process (e.g., topic selection, data collection, analysis, writing, revision, or defense). The categorization helped in contextualizing the challenges and needs associated with each phase;

b.) *Challenges in Thesis Writing* – this core section consisted of 20 items measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not Challenging At All, 5 = Very Much Challenging). Items targeted various aspects of the research process, including topic selection, literature review, defining research questions, developing methodology, data gathering and analysis, writing tasks (e.g., introduction, conclusion, and recommendation), incorporating feedback, using technology ethically (e.g., AI tools), avoiding plagiarism, and balancing thesis work with other responsibilities. These areas were selected based on a preliminary literature review and pre-survey focus group interviews.

c.) *Support Needs and Recommended Interventions* – this section employed open-ended prompts asking students to describe the types of support they received, they lacked, or they needed during the research process. Questions included: "What institutional resources did you find most helpful?" and "What forms of support would have improved your thesis writing experience?" This allowed students to suggest potential strategies such as faculty mentoring, writing assistance, financial aid, and mental health services.

To assess the third objective—evaluating the perceived impact of institutional interventions on students' research performance, confidence, and motivation—additional items were incorporated into the follow-up version of the questionnaire. These items included Likert-scale statements such as "The support I received improved my ability to analyze data," "My confidence in academic writing has increased due to the interventions," and "The mentorship I received motivated me to continue with my thesis work." Open-ended questions asked students to elaborate on how specific interventions (e.g., access to databases, financial aid, or writing workshops) influenced their thesis progress. These targeted items were designed to capture both the cognitive and affective outcomes of the interventions, ensuring the instrument aligned with all three research objectives of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted in two sequential phases. The first phase involved administering the baseline survey to 50 undergraduate students across five academic programs. This stage aimed to identify common challenges and gather suggestions for support strategies. The second phase, carried out approximately one month later, involved a follow-up survey with 32 of the original participants. This follow-up assessed the perceived effectiveness of selected interventions that had

been introduced or discussed following the first survey round (e.g., informal mentoring, writing support, and resource access).

Quantitative responses from both phases were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each Likert-scale item to gauge perceived difficulty levels across the various thesis-related tasks. To facilitate interpretation, the following scale was applied:

Mean Range	Qualitative Description	Interpretation
1.00–1.80	Not Challenging At All	Did not encounter any difficulty
1.81–2.60	Moderately Challenging	Encountered moderate difficulty
2.61–3.40	Neutral	Neither difficult nor easy
3.41–4.20	Very Challenging	Encountered high difficulty
4.21–5.00	Very Much Challenging	Encountered very high difficulty

Open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic coding to extract recurring themes, insights, and specific recommendations. NVivo 12 software was used to organize and analyze qualitative data, enabling the identification of dominant patterns such as emotional stressors, advisor support gaps, and resource constraints. This process facilitated the integration of student voices into the results and allowed for deeper interpretation of the statistical findings. Triangulation of data sources strengthened the internal validity of the results and ensured that quantitative trends were corroborated by qualitative narratives.

Quantitative and qualitative findings were then cross-analyzed to draw holistic conclusions, particularly for evaluating the effectiveness of proposed interventions. This approach enabled the researchers to move beyond mere identification of challenges, toward actionable solutions grounded in student feedback and best practices from the literature.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to ethical research standards to ensure the rights and welfare of participants. Ethical considerations included:

1. **Informed Consent:** Respondents were provided with an informed consent form explaining the study’s purpose, procedures, and potential benefits. Participation was voluntary, and students could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.
2. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** All responses were treated with strict confidentiality. Identifiable information was not recorded, and data were reported in aggregate form to protect the identities of the respondents.
3. **Data Security:** The collected data were stored in a secure, database, accessible only to the researcher. After analysis, data were anonymized and stored.

Findings/Results

Common Challenges Experienced by Undergraduate Students During the Thesis Writing Process

The results of the Likert-scale questionnaire, as shown in Table 1, reveal that undergraduate students face a wide array of challenges during the thesis writing process. Among the 20 identified tasks, analyzing and interpreting data emerged as the most challenging, with a mean score of 3.98. This task requires technical, cognitive, and experiential skills, and many students cited limited training in both statistical tools and qualitative analysis methods as significant barriers. The use of specialized software for quantitative analysis and the need for critical thinking in qualitative methods were commonly mentioned as difficult, reflecting broader gaps in institutional preparation. Managing stress and anxiety was identified as the second most challenging aspect (mean = 3.86), illustrating the psychological toll of thesis writing. Students reported feeling immense pressure from tight deadlines, high expectations, and the iterative nature of research, often compounded by external responsibilities such as coursework and personal obligations.

Table 1. Common Challenges in Thesis Writing.

Thesis Writing Tasks	Mean	SD	QD
1. Choosing a suitable thesis topic	3.36	0.94	Very Challenging
2. Conducting thorough literature review	3.40	0.93	Neutral
3. Locating relevant literature and sources	3.50	0.97	Very Challenging
4. Developing a clear research question	3.12	1.08	Neutral
5. Defining appropriate research methodology	3.02	1.24	Neutral
6. Collecting relevant data	2.84	1.13	Neutral
7. Creating and/or selecting data gathering tool	3.48	1.01	Very Challenging
8. Analyzing and interpreting data	3.98	0.82	Very Challenging
9. Writing Conclusions	3.34	1.02	Neutral
10. Writing Recommendations	3.12	1.14	Neutral
11. Writing and formatting the thesis	3.22	1.23	Neutral
12. Meeting deadlines	3.66	1.10	Very Challenging
13. Receiving adequate guidance from adviser	2.58	1.20	Moderately Challenging
14. Incorporating Feedback from the panel and adviser	2.24	0.66	Moderately Challenging
15. Balancing thesis work with other subjects at school or managing time effectively	3.52	1.07	Very Challenging
16. Managing stress and anxiety	3.86	1.05	Very Challenging
17. Ensuring technical writing quality (grammar and structure)	3.78	0.68	Very Challenging
18. Paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism	3.46	0.97	Very Challenging
19. Avoiding overreliance on AI	3.36	1.08	Neutral
20. Understanding the ethical use of AI in Thesis writing	2.98	0.84	Neutral

Gender-based differences in stress management were also noted, with male students tending to procrastinate and female students more likely to use time-management strategies. Ensuring technical writing quality ranked third (mean = 3.78), as students struggled with maintaining grammatical accuracy, logical structure, and adherence to academic conventions, particularly among ESL learners. Other significant challenges included meeting deadlines (mean = 3.66), balancing thesis work with

other responsibilities (mean = 3.52), locating relevant literature and sources (mean = 3.50), creating or selecting appropriate data gathering tools (mean = 3.48), paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism (mean = 3.46), and choosing a suitable thesis topic (mean = 3.36). Even tasks rated as “neutral,” such as conducting literature reviews or writing recommendations, were found to require foundational research and critical thinking skills. No task was rated as “not challenging,” underscoring the overall difficulty of the thesis-writing process.

Strategies and Resources to Mitigate Undergraduate Thesis Writing Challenges

To address these challenges, students and the literature identified several effective strategies and resources. Enhanced advisor support and structured mentorship programs were frequently mentioned as critical, with students emphasizing the importance of regular feedback and guidance in overcoming difficulties. Workshops on research methodology and data analysis, covering both qualitative and quantitative techniques and the ethical collection of data, were suggested as effective means to build essential skills and reduce anxiety. Academic writing and formatting support, such as access to writing centers, Grammarly, and Turnitin, were noted as helpful for improving technical writing skills and building confidence. Access to online research databases and digital libraries, along with training in efficient search techniques, was highlighted as essential for conducting effective literature reviews. Time management and stress-reduction programs, including workshops on project management tools and access to mental health resources, were also recommended to help students balance competing demands. Financial and logistical support, such as subsidies for research-related expenses and free access to necessary software, was seen as important for ensuring equitable access to resources. Finally, the establishment of peer support networks or study groups was suggested to provide moral support, motivation, and a sense of community throughout the thesis writing journey.

Strategies and Resources to Mitigate Undergraduate Thesis Writing Challenges

Respondents reported a marked increase in confidence, time management, and technical writing skills following these interventions. In qualitative feedback, students noted that structured mentorship and financial support were “game-changing,” while writing centers were viewed as “essential” for those with limited English proficiency.

Table 2. Perceived Effectiveness of Interventions (n = 32).

Intervention	Mean Score	Qualitative Description
Research methodology workshops	4.48	Very Effective
Structured mentorship	4.42	Very Effective
Academic writing support (e.g., Grammarly, Writing Center)	4.35	Very Effective
Database access & training	4.20	Effective
Time management training	3.95	Effective
Financial assistance	4.30	Very Effective
Peer study groups	3.88	Effective

Discussion

Common Challenges Experienced by Undergraduate Students During the Thesis Writing Process

The findings clearly demonstrate that undergraduate thesis writing is a complex and demanding process, requiring a blend of technical, cognitive, and emotional competencies. The predominance of data analysis as the most significant challenge points to a gap in students' methodological training and access to analytical tools, echoing Scardamalia and Bereiter's (1987) knowledge-transforming model. The high levels of stress and anxiety reported by students highlight the psychological burden of thesis work, which is intensified by overlapping responsibilities and varying coping strategies between male and female students. Technical writing difficulties, particularly among ESL students, further emphasize the need for targeted writing assistance. Additionally, challenges in literature searching and topic selection suggest that students may not be receiving adequate training in research skills or may lack access to necessary resources. Overall, these challenges underscore that thesis writing is not merely an academic exercise but a multifaceted endeavor that requires comprehensive institutional support.

Strategies and Resources to Mitigate Undergraduate Thesis Writing Challenges

Addressing the difficulties faced by undergraduate students during the thesis writing process requires targeted strategies and accessible resources. Based on the challenges identified in the data and supported by recent literature, several strategies and resources were identified by the respondents to alleviate these obstacles and improve the overall experience of thesis writing.

Enhanced Advisor Support and Mentorship Programs

Many students emphasized the critical role of advisers in their responses, with one student noting, *"The support of my thesis adviser and online sources such as Google Scholar, AI for further but will not totally depend on it"* as essential for overcoming difficulties. Others echoed this, stating that *"guidance from adviser and enough resources about the study"* would alleviate stress and clarify expectations. Literature supports these insights, demonstrating that regular, structured mentorship not only improves thesis quality but also reduces stress (Wang et al., 2019). Each program of the University could formalize mentorship programs to ensure that advisers provide regular feedback and check-ins to ensure that students feel adequately supported throughout the process.

Advisers play an important role in guiding students through the thesis process, offering expertise, motivation, and constructive feedback. However, the data suggests that many students feel they do not receive adequate guidance. Implementing structured mentorship programs where advisers provide regular, scheduled feedback sessions could bridge this gap. The study of Wang et al. (2019) found that frequent, intentional advisor interactions not only improved thesis quality but also significantly reduced student stress.

Workshops on Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Several respondents found defining an appropriate methodology challenging, with one student remarking, *"Defining appropriate research methodology"* is difficult. This means the need for targeted support. Workshops on research methodologies and data analysis that cover qualitative and quantitative research techniques and ethical data collection can be done by teachers handling thesis writing. A hands-on approach with tools like SPSS and NVivo would provide essential skills for data handling, interpretation, and ethical research practices. As noted in prior studies (McCluskey et al., 2017), methodologically focused workshops reduce student anxiety by demystifying the research process. Research by McCluskey et al. (2017) highlighted the effectiveness of such workshops, especially for students from non-research-heavy programs, as these sessions give students the practical skills needed for effective data handling and interpretation.

Academic Writing and Formatting Support

Technical writing, structuring arguments, and formatting were repeatedly cited as particularly difficult aspects of the thesis process. Several students expressed frustration with organizing their

ideas coherently, applying consistent citation styles, and maintaining grammatical accuracy throughout their manuscripts. One respondent explicitly mentioned the need for “helpful apps like Grammarly” to aid in technical writing, while another emphasized the growing reliance on “support from AI” to refine their written outputs. These insights point to a gap in foundational academic writing skills, which are crucial for effective research communication.

Establishing an academic writing center within the university could provide a long-term solution. Such centers, commonly found in institutions in the United States and Europe, offer individualized writing consultations, workshops on grammar and structure, and peer review opportunities (Jones & Robinson, 2020). These services are not only beneficial for editing and formatting but also for fostering a culture of writing as a process, rather than a one-time task. As Abe (2016) emphasizes, structured academic writing support not only enhances technical proficiency but also builds student confidence in articulating complex ideas, especially for ESL learners. Additionally, integrating tools like Grammarly, Turnitin, and referencing software such as Mendeley can reinforce academic integrity while promoting independent writing practices. These measures help students internalize scholarly writing conventions, thereby improving the overall quality of their theses.

Access to Online Research Databases and Digital Libraries

The importance of having access to credible and diverse academic sources was repeatedly stressed by respondents. Many noted their reliance on free platforms like Google Scholar, but they also acknowledged the limitations of such sources in terms of depth and variety. One student described Google Scholar as “indispensable,” while another pointed out the challenge of “navigating the internet to reliable sources,” particularly when many peer-reviewed articles were behind paywalls. These concerns reflect a widespread issue among students in developing institutions—insufficient access to subscription-based academic databases that are considered standard elsewhere.

To address this, universities should prioritize institutional subscriptions to major digital libraries and databases such as JSTOR, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and ScienceDirect. These platforms offer a vast repository of journals, theses, conference proceedings, and books that are essential for conducting a thorough literature review. As Derntl and Fischer (2015) note, students who are trained in using these databases effectively demonstrate stronger analytical skills, select more relevant and recent sources, and develop better arguments in their papers. In addition to subscriptions, training workshops should be regularly held to teach students how to refine search strategies, use Boolean operators, and evaluate source credibility. Equipping students with these skills early in the thesis process increases their autonomy and research efficiency, while also reducing dependence on unverified online content.

Time Management and Stress-Reduction Programs

The dual pressure of academic workload and personal responsibilities emerged as a major stressor among thesis writers. Students frequently mentioned difficulty in maintaining a balanced schedule, particularly those who were also enrolled in multiple classes, involved in extracurricular activities, or working part-time. One respondent noted the importance of “managing time efficiently” as a core skill, while another emphasized the emotional toll of the process by stating the need to “be strong enough to fight stress and anxiety.” These comments reveal how the thesis process is not only intellectually demanding but also emotionally and logistically overwhelming for many students.

Time management training should therefore be integrated into the thesis-writing curriculum. Such programs can include practical tools like Gantt charts, semester planners, and project management apps like Trello and Asana. These tools help students break down their work into manageable tasks, prioritize deadlines, and track progress systematically. Additionally, institutions should invest in programs focused on student well-being. Counseling services, mindfulness sessions, and peer support groups are effective strategies for promoting mental health and resilience. According to Brown and Patel (2018), mindfulness-based stress reduction programs have shown

measurable success in reducing anxiety and improving academic performance in higher education settings. Furthermore, institutions could incorporate wellness checkpoints or mandatory check-ins during the thesis process to monitor student progress not only academically but also emotionally. These initiatives create a more supportive academic environment, encouraging students to view thesis writing as a journey of personal and intellectual growth rather than a solitary, high-stakes task.

Financial and Logistical Support

Financial constraints were a recurring theme, with many students explicitly mentioning “*financial expenses*” as a primary barrier to successful thesis completion. For instance, one respondent highlighted the need for “*financial and emotional support, since conducting a thesis really needs money.*” The financial burden of thesis-related expenses was a common concern among students, particularly for resources like internet connectivity and paid research tools. Institutions could offer subsidies for essential research expenses or provide free access to commonly used software and databases. Financial support could also extend to covering travel expenses for students needing to conduct field research, ensuring that all students can carry out their projects without significant financial strain.

The University could offer targeted subsidies for essential research-related expenses, such as internet access, software licenses, or fieldwork costs, ensuring equitable access to resources regardless of financial background. Osorio et al. (2020) emphasize that providing funding for essential resources, such as internet connectivity, statistical software, or transportation for data collection, can significantly reduce students’ financial burden and improve research outcomes. They further mentioned that institutions that offer flexible payment plans or financial aid tailored to research costs have reported higher completion rates and greater student satisfaction.

Peer Support Networks

Students also expressed a clear need for moral and emotional support throughout the thesis-writing process. One respondent emphasized that “moral support is one of the needs of the students in which they can feel that they are not alone in their thesis writing journey,” underscoring the isolating nature of this academic endeavor. These sentiments were echoed by others who highlighted the importance of having someone to talk to about thesis-related frustrations and the value of exchanging insights and encouragement with peers.

Establishing formal peer networks or study groups can significantly enhance students’ emotional well-being and academic engagement. Such networks allow students to share drafts, discuss research problems, and provide each other with constructive feedback. In doing so, they promote a collaborative learning culture, which helps reduce anxiety and increase motivation. Smith et al. (2017) found that students involved in structured peer mentoring or writing circles exhibited higher levels of accountability, sustained effort, and satisfaction with their research progress. Similarly, studies by Eodice et al. (2019) and Jones and Robinson (2020) underscore the importance of peer-led communities in improving writing performance and fostering a sense of academic belonging.

Moreover, peer support groups can serve as informal checkpoints, where members regularly update each other on milestones, troubleshoot common challenges, and celebrate progress. This communal dynamic alleviates the sense of isolation often reported by thesis writers and encourages persistence through mutual encouragement. Institutions could facilitate these groups by assigning faculty moderators or integrating peer mentoring components into thesis courses. By doing so, universities not only support academic achievement but also foster a research environment grounded in empathy, collaboration, and shared growth.

Impact of Interventions on Student Outcomes

The integration of structured interventions—particularly mentorship programs, academic writing support, and financial aid—had a significant perceived impact on student outcomes. Many

respondents expressed greater confidence in handling complex research tasks, improved time management, and a more positive outlook toward research. These results are consistent with global research indicating that mentorship and financial equity are critical to improving thesis completion rates (Wang et al., 2019; Osorio et al., 2020).

More specifically, students highlighted that regular mentor meetings helped them clarify research objectives and overcome writer's block. Academic writing support services enabled them to structure arguments effectively, improve coherence, and ensure grammatical accuracy—areas previously identified as weak. Access to Grammarly and plagiarism-checking tools such as Turnitin contributed to developing ethical writing habits and increased awareness of academic integrity.

Financial aid was cited as crucial in reducing the burden of fieldwork-related costs, internet access, and printing needs. Several respondents noted that such support allowed them to dedicate more time to thesis writing, as they were temporarily relieved from part-time work or familial financial obligations. These changes led to improved focus and a more sustained engagement with the research process.

Importantly, the findings suggest that the psychological benefits of these interventions are just as critical as the technical ones. Increased confidence and reduced anxiety were repeatedly emphasized in open-ended responses. This reflects the growing body of literature that emphasizes academic self-efficacy as a determinant of student persistence and success (Bandura, 1997; Brown & Patel, 2018).

This finding affirms the transformative potential of institutional support, not only in overcoming technical challenges but also in reshaping student identity as capable researchers. The data also emphasize the need for ongoing and holistic support throughout the research journey, rather than ad-hoc or reactive solutions. Embedding these interventions within the institutional fabric ensures continuity, accessibility, and equity, which are essential to fostering a research-oriented academic culture at the undergraduate level.

Recommendations

In response to the challenges identified in this study, it is recommended that Bukidnon State University—and institutions with similar undergraduate research requirements—adopt a comprehensive support framework to improve students' thesis-writing experiences and outcomes.

1. Establish or enhance structured mentorship programs that provide students with regular, personalized guidance and timely feedback. This will help address difficulties in research design, data analysis, and academic writing, while also reducing anxiety and uncertainty.

2. Implement focused workshops on research methodologies, data analysis (qualitative and quantitative), and academic writing. Practical sessions incorporating software tools and hands-on activities can improve students' technical skills and confidence.

3. Expand access to online databases and digital libraries. Training students in effective literature search strategies will support more thorough and efficient reviews, contributing to higher-quality theses.

4. Include workshops on time management, goal-setting, and mental health awareness within student support services. These initiatives can help students manage competing responsibilities and reduce thesis-related stress.

5. Offer support for research-related costs, such as software access, printing, and internet use. This promotes equity by enabling all students to participate fully in the research process.

6. Facilitate peer study groups and communities to foster motivation, collaborative learning, and emotional support. Structured peer engagement can reduce isolation and improve accountability during thesis development.

Collectively, these recommendations can foster a more inclusive and supportive research environment that addresses both the academic and emotional dimensions of undergraduate thesis writing.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that undergraduate students encounter a range of challenges during the thesis-writing process, with data analysis, managing stress and anxiety, and maintaining technical writing quality identified as the most significant. These difficulties are compounded by limited access to resources, inadequate training in research methodologies, and the pressure of balancing thesis work with other academic responsibilities. These results highlight the urgent need for targeted institutional support. Interventions such as structured mentorship, focused training on research methods and academic writing, improved access to research databases, and stress-reduction programs are shown to be effective in addressing these challenges. When implemented holistically, these strategies can strengthen students' research competencies, alleviate anxiety, and cultivate a more supportive academic environment—ultimately improving thesis completion rates and student success.

Acknowledgements: The researchers would like to thank the 50 undergraduate students who willingly agreed and cooperated to be respondents of this undertaking.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest

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