

## **“Unfolding the Lived Experiences of Students in Thesis Writing”**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

*Writing the research document in the form of thesis is considered as the most challenging among the students. Keeping this view of mind, the present study was conducted to explore the struggles and coping mechanisms by the students in thesis writing. There were 15 conveniently and purposely selected participants in this study from the 8 colleges in Quirino State University, Cabarroguis Campus, Philippines. The researcher used interview as a tool to collect data which included open ended questions. The result revealed that the participants have different experiences in thesis writing. The struggles that they have encountered in their thesis writing include lack of knowledge in research writing, lack of guidance from instructors, emotional and psychological problems, financial problems, and slow internet connectivity. Despite the struggles they encountered, they employed coping strategies to succeed in their thesis writing. These include self-motivation, seeking support from others, and proper time management. Proper dissemination of the result of the study and presentation of the proposed intervention program could be done to address the struggles of students in thesis writing.*

**Index Terms:** research documents, research writing, thesis writing, students

### **I. Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically reshaped our academic life as graduate students. The shift to online spaces as a phenomenon has exacerbated previous challenges in our educational system and added more barriers to accessible and equitable education.

Further, writing a thesis is a scientific study conducted by senior students to achieve a graduate degree in an academic field. Writing a thesis demands research as a component of college requirements.

According to Sentia (2022), the ultimate goal of thesis is the researcher's critical work, which applies procedures of logical reasoning in accordance with the scientific discipline, generated to fulfill the requirements for obtaining a graduate degree. However, students have difficulty integrating into academic education. Furthermore, Qasem and Zayyad (2019) highlighted that students face several challenges when conducting research. Some may have internal constraints, such as motivation, while others may have external constraints, such as understanding research methodology, motivation, and experience.

In another study, Dirgeyasa (2016) contends that the majority of natural writing processes fail for a variety of reasons, including the learning process, the difficulty of the student's writing background, and a lack of motivation. According to Miles (2019), the most prevalent writing error committed by students is incorrect grammar usage. In addition, he discovered that students were unable to comprehend the university style for thesis writing, to develop a thesis topic, and to construct an appropriate literature review. It was also demonstrated that students frequently had difficulty rephrasing source material into their own words.

Similarly, Qasem and Zayid (2019) discovered that students struggled with choosing a study topic, a lack of understanding of the research method, difficulty obtaining appropriate sources, a lack of interest in conducting research, and a lack of understanding of the issue, as well as a lack of time and research-based assistance.

Finally, Lestari (2020) observed that the difficulties that students face when writing a thesis are primarily associated with students' English proficiency; time management; the selection of the appropriate research methodology; students' research topic; students' attitude; the large number of supervised students; advisor workload; students' plagiarism; and co-advisor relationship, students' personalities; and finally, difficulties of student's motivation.

However, despite the problems students face when writing theses, numerous research have proposed coping strategies to help students overcome these obstacles. For instance, Eldaba & Isbell study (2018) emphasize an action plan, such as developing a mentoring program, providing a variety of support services, providing resource links, and counseling motivation. Additionally, Freire et al., (2020) applied person-self-centered approach as a coping strategy to increase self-efficacy of students.

On the other hand, Apriliyani et al., (2020) concluded that students experience maladaptive coping mechanisms affecting their stress levels while working on a thesis. The results of this study showed that respondents experienced a moderate stress level and thus, there was a relationship between stress levels and coping mechanisms in thesis writing among nursing students.

While several studies were conducted on the struggles of students worldwide, as indicated by the literature and related studies above, little has been established in the local setting, like in Quirino province, specifically on the lived experiences of college students during the COVID 19 pandemic. As a result, the current study aims to fill a research gap by adding to the body of knowledge on the lived experiences of college students in writing their thesis during pandemic. It specifically seeks to identify the struggles they experienced and the coping strategies they employed in thesis writing during COVID 19 crisis. Further, its ultimate goal is to develop interventions or recommendations to address the struggles experienced by students in writing their thesis.

## **II. Methods**

*The study utilized qualitative research employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Using qualitative idiographic psychological analysis, this study aims to communicate and disseminate information regarding how specific individuals understand the event in its current context. According to Tuffour (2017), Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has emerged as the prominent qualitative research methodology. In order to*

achieve its objective, it seeks to study the thorough and in-depth investigation of the experiences of a small number of participants. This method is known as "phenomenology" since it is based on an in-depth examination of the individual.

This study covered 16 college students conveniently and purposely selected from 8 colleges in Quirino State University, Cabarroguis Campus, Philippones who are enrolled in Thesis subject for Academic Year 2021-2022. Unfortunately, one (1) of the participants withdrawn during the scheduled interview sessions.

The study utilized a semi-structured interview guide to acquire pertinent data and participant responses. In addition, participants were advised of ethical considerations, such as maintaining confidentiality during the duration of the study. Ethical considerations also prompted the use of a consent letter that was provided to the participants and reviewed prior to their participation. Experts in the field reviewed, modified, and validated the instrument prior to the interview.

In many cases, researchers and participants must create rapport. Nonetheless, it was constructed by fostering mutual trust between individuals and by taking their conditions, languages, and cultures into account.

This study employed face-to-face interview following the IATF protocols. The guide questions were all open-ended, allowing participants to expound and allowing the researcher to qualify and clarify their responses. To guarantee the accuracy of the data, participants were interviewed in Iloko and Filipino, their mother tongue and "lingua franca," respectively. In addition, the process begins with the setting of the interview's date, time, and location. The time allotted for the interview was approximately thirty (30) minutes to forty-five (45) minutes. Nonetheless, this time limit was extended as a result of the numerous comments obtained from the participants in order to ensure that sufficient data was gathered from the conversations and a saturation point was reached. To ensure accurate and reliable information, six interview sessions was conducted to validate the synthesized data in the previous interviews and make sure that other contributions were extracted from the participants. Furthermore, observations were also done by the researchers. Further, the interview sessions were recorded and were transcribed verbatim, and the statements were interpreted, and reviewed to ensure that the original meaning of the articulations was preserved. Moreover, data were analyzed using inductive and thematic analysis to identify, evaluate, and determine the theme expressed by participants. The responses of each participant, especially in the first stage, were coded using keywords so as not to overlap. The NVivo program was used to facilitate the coding and categorization of researchers. Data from interviews were entered into Nodes and Cases to be grouped into data with specific codes. Thematic maps show the organization of concepts according to various levels, and potential interactions between concepts were then developed. The analysis team then discussed all codes and categorizations, as well as the possibility of integration between codes so that the codes could be streamlined. This inductive technique allowed the identification of themes that participants gave in response to the research questions.

### **III. Results and Discussions**

The data was evaluated further using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as the process of identifying, understanding, and presenting patterns or themes in data. It organizes and explains information as thoroughly and as simply

as feasible. It was necessary to review and reread the collected data in order to extract significant verbalizations and describe the similarities between the perspectives and experiences of the participants. The creation and organization of condensed interpretations of major utterances into codes and themes. Finally, correspondence and the "critical friendly" method were utilized to ensure the data's accuracy and reliability.

### ***I. Struggles of Students in Research Writing***

The goal of this paper was to explore and understand the lived experiences of college students engaged in writing their thesis. The first section summarizes student's struggles in thesis writing. The struggles that they have encountered in their thesis writing include lack of knowledge in research writing, lack of guidance from instructors, emotional and psychological problems, financial problems, and slow internet connectivity. The second part gathered participants' coping strategies in addressing the struggles they have encountered. These include self-motivation, seeking support from others, and proper time management

#### ***Theme 1: Lack of knowledge in research***

Writing research papers is a difficult task for college students. To produce a thorough output requires a painstaking effort. In this study, participants' insufficient knowledge or ideas in research indicated one of the most significant obstacles in their research writing. The accompanying statements indicate that participants struggle to complete their theses due to a lack of knowledge or ideas on how to do so. They struggled so much since their foundation in research is very limited. The following statements are manifestations that the participants really lack ideas or knowledge in writing research paper:

*"It's really difficult because it's my first time doing a thesis, especially since we do it individually." I really have no idea about doing comprehensive research. I also didn't understand our webinar on research."P12*

The preceding statements reveal that participants encounter difficulty in doing their thesis because they lack knowledge or ideas on how to do it. Due to a lack of a strong foundation in research writing, they encountered serious difficulties. This shows that a lack of ideas regarding the basics of research makes it more challenging to develop a comprehensive research paper.

In addition, a limited vocabulary is one of the contributing elements to the difficulty students' encounter when writing their theses. As a result of a deficiency in vocabularies, students have trouble writing, as illustrated by the following:

*"Another thing that made it difficult for me was that I didn't have enough vocabularies about discussing because the one I chose was qualitative."-P15*

Consistent with the findings of the present study, Ekasari, Y. (2020) stated that students encounter a variety of difficulties while writing English research papers involving the usage of vocabulary. The majority has difficulty with limited vocabulary, distinguishing words with similar or related meanings, and understanding the meaning of new terms.

Furthermore, the participants discussed their incompetence to produce a good research background and their difficulty creating a research conceptual framework. Because both of these aspects are essential in writing a thesis, hence the students' incapacity to write a thesis was caused by their limited background on the research process. As they expressed:

*"It's really hard to do, I'm struggling with that conceptual and theoretical framework,*

*the research I'm going to do is based or dependent on it."- P4 "When I was in the discussion part, I had a hard time because you I have to paraphrase the literature support."-P11*

The comments above reveal that students struggled for having insufficient vocabulary in writing their thesis. This imply that is one issue that greatly affects a student's life, specifically in writing research. The writing process for a thesis consists of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. To write a well-developed research, college students must go through a series of steps. Due to the obstacles, they experience, the majority of students struggle with multiple phases of thesis writing. Starting with ideas, concepts, a lack of vocabulary, and rewriting or paraphrasing difficulty are examples of common struggles of students face when writing a thesis, all of which are related to their language and research backgrounds.

Writing research is not an easy activity because it requires a lot of hard work and effort on the part of the student researcher. In addition to that, a significant amount of time and extensive prior knowledge are required (Alsied & Ibrahim 2017). Further, its process involves planning, drafting, rewriting, and editing. Therefore, to write properly, one must pass through the various stages required to create a well-developed piece of writing. The majority of students struggle with numerous parts of academic writing, particularly thesis writing, because of the challenges they face. The student must begin with concepts, structures, lack of language, and revision or difficulty in paraphrasing are typical issues that students encounter when writing theses (Shahsavari & Kourepaz 2020).

### ***Theme 2: Lack of guidance from instructors***

According to the participants in this study, learning on one's own is challenging because no one explains the thesis writing process or offers clarification when questions or misunderstanding emerge. The participants disclosed:

*"My adviser was very busy and she lacks time to meet me and assist me with my study. When I chat her, she was only seen mode."-P1 "We did not meet since pandemic. Actually, she only read my thesis once. Our final defense will be next week, but she just read my output now."-P11 "It was really hard because we didn't have a very clear lecture on research. Our research instructor didn't seem to care about us, we just had the lecture twice."- P9*

The above statements reveal the predicaments of the participants in writing their thesis because of limited lectures conducted by their instructors, professors and the guidance of their respective advisers. This therefore implies that guidance and motivation of teachers are significant to students to come up with a successful research output. Through a comprehensive lecture on research, they will be able to understand the process of writing their thesis. Important as well is the participation of their advisers in the composition of their theses, so that they may guide and assist in writing their research papers. The guidance and motivation of teachers are essential to the student's academic success.

The finding of Hulu (2020) corroborates with the result of the present study in which, she discovered that students' motivation to learn can be increased thru the guidance of their teachers. Similarly, Mauliya et al. (2020) discovered that a lack of instructor support contributed to poor academic achievement of students.

Supervision is a dynamic, interactive endeavor having the capacity to influence the success of a student's learning. In this paper, the supervision was supposedly done by their adviser, unfortunately, these mentors whom they considered as their advisers failed to portray

their roles. In fact, the participants expect that their advisers will provide them rigorous process of pedagogical instructions, starting with the procedure of subject development and continues through the entire production of a good thesis. These resources may include selecting a topic, conducting literature review, developing an outline, taking notes, composing a draft, revising and refining their thesis.

The current situation demands instructors and professors to play their responsibilities in a dynamic manner in order to facilitate the academic pursuits of learners. With immediate remedies such as "supporting the training and development of instructors and professors," universities are urged to consider these difficulties as a "call to action and policymaking to lessen the effects and consequences of nationwide education disruption" (Fabella & Arandia, 2021, p. 21).

### ***Theme 3: Psychological and Emotional a Problems***

The third struggle encountered by the participants while working on their thesis concerns with psychological and emotional According to them, psychological tension occurred as a result of the writing process. In the present study, psychological and emotional problems were evident among the participants as they write their thesis.

Based on the reflections of a small number of others, the individual's sense of anxiety is more than real and has a negative impact on their health. The participants held:

*"I feel depressed with my thesis. When I worked in Chapter IV of my research, I was so stressed because I have no idea at all. In fact, I cannot sleep well." P5 "There are times when I go to bed late, I read something, and I don't understand it. I feel like giving up." -P4 "I am so worried. I thought I wouldn't be able to finish it. It got to the point where I wanted to give up. My adviser just browses my paper without any input in it. I am exerting effort in doing my research, but it seems my output is still wrong. It's just really frustrating."- P3 "Stressful... and I feel nervous. The deadline is approaching but I haven't finished anything yet."*

The aforementioned transcripts revealed that students encountered emotional and psychological difficulties while writing their research papers. Anxiety, frustration, and depression were among the difficulties they encountered. According to them, conducting research is an exhausting and tedious endeavor. Additionally, they described research as a depressing, stressful, and frustrating activity. In addition, they confessed that they endured a great deal of stress and psychological pressure from the requirement that they should finish their thesis. In fact, some claimed that worry prevented them from sleeping adequately. Additionally, they were under pressure to complete their research before the deadline.

### ***Other students noted***

*"I'm worried because I haven't been able to show my adviser anything yet. I'm almost going crazy thinking about what my output will be." P7 "The parts where you have to interpret the tables and look for support in the results of your study are very stressful."- P1 "I even overthink sometimes because I don't know if I can finish it."-P10*

The verbalizations of the participants above indicate that they experience psychological pressure when writing their research. According to them, they are concerned that they may not have anything to present to their advisers. In addition, many expressed difficulties completing all sections of their thesis. These pressures affected them so much to overthink. Consistent with the findings of Ameen and Praharai (2020), the current study reveals that recurring

uncertainties linked with progress emerge as a major contributor to anxiety, which is likely manifesting among participants as sleepiness, poor appetite, increased interpersonal problems, loss of motivation to continue with research needs, and poor time management. In addition, "anxiety contributes to discouragement and demotivation among students, and as a result, they may develop negative self-efficacy and writing attitudes." (Sabti, et al., 2019).

While working on their thesis, students faced anxiety. Students may lose their thesis work because of feelings of anxiety, frustration, worry, and uncertainty if they experience difficulties while working on their theses. According to (Apriliyani, 2020), the stress responses of students working on a thesis may be both positive and harmful. If students are eager to search for references or publications and feel motivated to complete a thesis, their stress response improves.

#### ***Theme 4: Financial Problems***

In addition, students frequently have trouble finding financial support for their research projects. They are unable to provide daily expenses in the form of a financial allowance for them to buy load so that they have a connection of the internet, which is very necessary when conducting research. As they expressed:

*"I suffer from financial constraint. I need to spend much for internet load so that I can do research" P6 "How can I do research when I don't have a load, even if it's just data. It's hard to find money now because of the pandemic." P9*

The articulations above indicate that students faced financial difficulties and were obliged to maintain a full-time load to do research work. This implies that financial aspect is necessary to conduct research. According to the participants, they honestly admitted that it is only through the internet where they can gather literatures and studies which are needed as their support to the findings of the study, unfortunately, they suffer financially. It is in this reason, why they fail to submit their research outputs on time. Students globally are being impacted by the pandemic in various ways, most notably through school cancellations and the replacement of face-to-face (f2f) instruction with online platforms (World Health Organization, 2020).

The present study confirms the findings of Daud (2018), who found that the majority of participants experienced financial difficulties due to their inadequate financial resources and high costs of living.

In this paper, majority of the participants are able to survive on their family's income, while others must earn their own money to pay for their education and daily necessities. Because they lack sufficient financial resources to overcome financial challenges, some students are compelled to reduce their study hours in order to pursue alternative money resources, such as long hours of part-time job or multiple jobs, which can have a negative effect on their academic performance. As they noted:

*"I worked as a construction worker during the pandemic. It's really shameful to ask money from my parents." -P13 "I used to be a sales lady when there was no face-to-face classes. That's why I find it very hard to manage my time working with my thesis and at the same time earning money to survive."-P15*

Student academic performance is significantly impacted by financial factors. Financial troubles, on the other hand, are a severe issue that must be handled since they contribute to several stages of troubles, including health issues and poor performance in school. The result

of the study demands for a mechanism that students would adapt in order to combat financial constraint. This is essential for alleviating the poverty felt by the students. Thus, financial management will be beneficial to students who suffered from financial problems.

### ***Theme 5: Slow internet connectivity***

Internet connectivity has established itself as a fundamental human right across the globe during this time of global health crisis. Unfortunately, this aspect, which participants described as a factor affecting their preparation of their thesis writing, refers to their difficulty connecting to the internet, caused by a lack of signal and wifi access in their location. As they shared:

*"It's really hard to do research, especially when there's no internet. I live in the mountains so the signal there is difficult."- P1 "Sometimes I borrow money from my brothers so I can write down everything I have searched for; I also don't have enough time." P8 "It's far from here so I'm having a hard time finding a signal." P5*

The remarks above indicate that the participants had difficulty writing their theses due to the geographical location of their homes, which resulted in a weak signal and a slow or nonexistent internet connection. This suggests that having access to the internet is an important component in conducting research.

The present study is in congruent with the study of Al-Rasheed (2021), who discovered that one of the difficulties experienced by the female students accessing online platforms during the COVID-19 epidemic was associated with technological difficulty. Participants in this research identified internet connectivity issues as a cause of their anxiety.

The internet serves primarily as a tool for students to gather knowledge, and it has become one of the first places learners go to collect data on practically any subject, whether at home or at school. A multitude of knowledge is publicly accessible in the form of texts, primary sources, journal, artifacts, online newspapers, multi-media presentations, editorials, charts, and database — almost anything possible on almost every topic. This tool is vital for college students who are performing research, as it acts as a repository of essential knowledge for college students. It would be a failure if they were unable to access these materials, which could affect the quality of their research output.

## ***II. Coping Mechanisms employed by the students in research writing***

Students' coping strategies in conducting research vary significantly. However, the following themes were identified after a study of particular responses: self-motivation, seeking support from others, and proper time management.

### ***Theme 1: Self-Motivation***

Self-motivation is a coping strategy that refers to the process that starts, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behaviors. It motivates and directs behavior toward success and is consequently acknowledged as a recognized in academic success (Soriano, 2020).

*"Thesis writing is not like a "piece of cake." It requires hard work, perseverance, patience and vigilance, but because of persistence I was able to finish it."-P12; "I overcame the difficulties I experienced in doing the thesis through self-motivation. I really wanted to finish so I didn't give up."-P9; "Of course I will give my best so that I can make the final*



*defense."-P6 "I will not give up. In God's perfect time, I will also finish."-P13; "I will always remind myself that I will not just stop. I will do everything to finish because I can't expect anyone to do anything for me."-P11*

The foregoing remarks suggest that the participants' self-motivation enabled them to become resilient in the face of their challenges. For them, self-motion is the key to overcoming the difficulty of their academics.

Human behavior is driven by motivation, which causes people to initiate and maintain goal-directed actions. The behaviorist perspective is not expressly focused on ideas such as motivation, but rather on operant conditioning. People are trained through a process called operant conditioning to seek out rewards while avoiding punishments (Alkaabi, 2017). In this paper, students are driven to write their theses since their ultimate aim is to graduate from their chosen course; however, in order to do so, they must fulfill their final requirement, which is a completed thesis.

***Furthermore, the participants also noted:***

*"I need to study well. I need to focus on the thesis. This is where my diploma rests."-P4; Everything would be possible as long as you are very much willing to do it. For me, you should be determined to finish your thesis. If you lose hope, you won't finish it, you won't be able to graduate either."- P5.*

The statements made by the participants reveal that they become optimistic in order to overcome those obstacles in finishing their thesis. Further, their being self-motivated leads them to success. This implies that self-motivation is a powerful tool for them to accomplish their research papers.

Motivation motivates a person to act in order to achieve a particular objective. According to Asisa (2021), motivation can be defined as a behavior that motivates others to act. Motivation can be described as the driving force behind a person's efforts to achieve a goal. Motives are sometimes considered an internal state. Starting with the term motive, motivation can be interpreted as an involved motivational force, especially when the need to achieve goals is highly felt or urgent.

***Theme 2: Seeking support from others***

This coping strategy relates to the students' method of obtaining assistance or support from others in order to manage the difficulties they are facing. They seek assistance or support from their parents, peers, friends, and relatives in order to overcome their obstacles. As they indicated:

*"I was lucky then because I sought assistance from my friends who were graduates from college already. They were very willing to help me finish my thesis."-P3); I overcame it with the help of my friends. When I don't understand something, I ask them."-P9*

According to the responses of the participants, they manage their issues by seeking assistance from others, such as their friends and classmates. Typically, this support is of an emotional or academic in nature. According to the participants, their friends, acquaintances, and classmates contributed significantly to the completion of their theses. They stated that they considered this to be a significant graduation help. They were also their support during times when they were in the midst of a storm, when they were exhausted, and when they wanted to

give up on their studies, but because of these individuals, they were given hope to continue their education.

According to Kwaah and Essilfie (2017), having emotional support from friends and family can assist students in managing stress. The lives of students are inherently stressful and require understanding and compassion from family and friends, particularly when academic pressure is intense.

Moreover, participants receive financial and emotional assistance from their families. This coping strategy pertains to the pupils' method of requesting assistance or support from others in order to manage the challenges they face.

*"Fortunately, I have parents who help me financially. Of course, I need money to load the wifi so I can do research on the internet."-P5; "My aunt who is in the other country supported me financially, so I can buy a new laptop because I need it for my research."-P13*

This study confirms the conclusion of Guevarra and Cimanés (2017), who asserted that social support is the most important coping mechanism for students.

### ***Theme 3: Proper time management***

This coping mechanism refers to how the participants allocate or commit their time to writing their thesis. The majority of participants believed that effective time management is helpful to achieve academic success. Participants exhibit the following transcripts:

*"To avoid rushing, you should spend time on your thesis and not just work to earn money."-P3; "You really have to sacrifice time to have output because the final defense is fast approaching."-P6; "It takes patience, time and effort. Managing your time wisely is very essential to succeed." P14.*

The preceding remarks from the participants reveal that they effectively manage their time in doing their research. This implies time management is necessary for students to accomplish their multiple tasks such as balancing their obligations and their academics.

Students have indicated pleasure with their time management skills in completing their research. This study confirms the findings of Sari et al. (2021), who concluded that time management has a stronger impact on learning outcomes. In addition, Ahmad et al. (2019) assert that both remote and traditional students are successful at time management. In addition, time management is an ability that each student should learn and practice in order to improve their academic performance.

Time management is vital since it teaches people how to effectively manage their lives and time. Managing time wisely is a trait a student must possess. Students must effectively organize their schedules for daily tasks. When an assignment is given to the majority of students, they are unable to complete it by the deadline, whereas those who have been instructed to successfully manage their time have plenty of time. Effective time management usually produces satisfaction and happiness in daily life (Khan, 2020). Remarkably, the students in this study, indicated that they were able to effectively manage their time to complete their research before the deadline. They handle their hectic schedules with their education and sideline jobs well.

Consistent with the result of the study, Adebayo (2015) argues that time management

is the ability to organize, plan, arrange, and account for one's time in order to increase job productivity and efficiency. How one allocates and distributes time between competing demands relies on one's priorities, as time cannot be stored and cannot be increased or decreased beyond 24 hours.

Students in higher education can use the findings of this study to better organize their time and focus on their academic pursuits, which is critical for their long-term success.

## **IV. Conclusions**

The findings contextualize the numerous struggles that students face in the writing their thesis. The challenges were predominantly about the limited knowledge in research, lack of teacher's guidance, psychological and emotional problems, financial problems, and slow internet connection. Despite the struggles the participants encountered, they manage to complete their research outputs by employing coping strategies such as self-motivation, seeking support from others, and proper time management.

Moving forward, the university needs a comprehensive set of guidelines and policies in research based on an innovative educational framework. Several things must be considered as the university embarks on a new method of teaching research. The office of Research and Development of the university may execute a realistic and effective capability building program for all research instructors and professors, as well as thesis advisers. This capacity building may include involve workshops on teaching research and advising and mentorship.

To address the issue of financial concerns, the university administration, through the Office of Student Government and the Office of Scholarships, would establish a mechanism to financially assist students from the poorest families. Student aid grants would be required to support students who are experiencing financial hardship. Students can manage their mental and emotional stress by seeking support from family, friends, and teachers; maintaining positive behavior; utilizing social media for communication; and adopting self-management. Further, free internet connectivity should be provided to all students enrolled in the university.

On the other hand, this study had some significant limitations. Due to the study participants and location, it is possible that the findings do not represent the experiences of all local and international students. This study even suggests that additional research be conducted to investigate students' research writing experiences and uncover other factors that contribute to their difficulties in completing research outputs and apply effective coping strategies that can lessen student's stress while working on their thesis.

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