

Research Writing Experiences of Master of Arts in Education Students: Challenges, Strategies, and Determinants

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Research writing is a critical component of graduate education, serving as both a measure of academic competence and a foundation for professional growth. This study explored the research writing experiences of Master of Arts in Education (MAED) students at Apayao State College – Conner Campus using a descriptive–correlational design. It examined respondents' profiles, challenges encountered, strategies employed, determinants influencing research writing, and the relationship between demographic variables and these dimensions. Results revealed that most respondents were female (85.4%), young to middle-aged adults, with half being single (50%). Respondents generally agreed (overall mean = 3.67) that they faced significant challenges, particularly in methodological and analytical aspects such as selecting research methods, analyzing data, and identifying research gaps. To address these, students employed diverse strategies (overall mean = 4.16), with the most effective being the use of online resources, revising drafts, seeking adviser guidance, and practicing self-care. Determinants such as technological tools, adviser feedback, financial resources, and peer collaboration strongly influenced research writing experiences (overall mean = 4.24). Correlation analysis showed that sex had minimal influence, with only challenges reaching statistical significance; age was a more meaningful predictor, negatively correlated with challenges and positively correlated with strategies; while marital status had the weakest associations, with only strategies showing a significant relationship. These findings suggest that demographic factors play a modest role, while institutional support, access to resources, and individual motivation are more substantial in shaping research writing success. Based on these results, the study recommends a comprehensive, multi-dimensional support framework integrating structured workshops, mentoring, resource accessibility, peer collaboration, and institutional backing to enhance MAED students' confidence and competence in producing high-quality research outputs.

Keywords: Research writing, experiences, challenges, strategies, determinants.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Graduate students face considerable challenges in research writing, with language proficiency, academic writing conventions, and methodological knowledge emerging as primary concerns. This also includes struggle with developing coherent arguments, synthesizing literature, and maintaining academic voice in their research papers. The transition from coursework to independent research writing represents a critical juncture where students must consolidate theoretical knowledge with practical research skills.

Research conducted across various international contexts reveals that non-native English speakers encounter additional layers of complexity in research writing. International graduate students often

experience linguistic challenges that affect their ability to express complex ideas and engage with disciplinary discourse (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015). These challenges extend beyond mere language proficiency to encompass understanding disciplinary conventions, citation practices, and argumentation styles specific to academic research. The role of supervision and institutional support systems has emerged as a critical determinant of research writing success globally. Effective supervisory relationships characterized by regular feedback, clear expectations, and constructive guidance significantly enhance graduate students' research writing capabilities (De Kleijn et al., 2012). Furthermore, universities worldwide have recognized the importance of structured writing support programs, workshops, and writing centers in facilitating graduate students' research writing

development. Motivation and self-efficacy beliefs significantly influence graduate students' research writing experiences across cultures. Students with higher self-efficacy beliefs demonstrate greater persistence in research writing tasks and employ more sophisticated writing strategies (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2012). These psychological factors interact with contextual variables, including access to resources, peer support networks, and time management challenges, to shape overall research writing experiences.

Asian graduate students often face tensions between traditional learning approaches emphasizing knowledge reproduction and Western academic expectations promoting critical analysis and original argumentation (Paltridge *et al.*, 2012). This cultural dimension influences how students approach literature reviews, methodology selection, and data interpretation in their research writing. Studies conducted in Southeast Asian universities highlight specific challenges related to accessing current literature and research resources. Graduate students in developing Asian countries frequently struggle with limited access to academic databases, subscription journals, and contemporary research materials (Pho & Tran, 2016). These resource constraints necessitate creative strategies for literature searching and often require students to rely heavily on institutional library support and inter-library loan systems. The integration of technology in research writing processes has transformed how graduate students conduct and document their research across Asia. Digital literacy and proficiency with reference management software, data analysis tools, and online collaboration platforms have become essential competencies for successful research writing (Lei & Hu, 2019). However, disparities in technological access and training create additional inequalities among graduate student populations.

Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) students encounter unique challenges shaped by the country's linguistic diversity, resource limitations, and evolving educational policies. Filipino graduate students often navigate between English as the medium of academic writing and their multilingual backgrounds, affecting their confidence and fluency in scholarly writing (Gustilo & Magno, 2012). This linguistic negotiation requires students to develop sophisticated metalinguistic awareness while maintaining academic standards. Research conducted in Philippine universities reveals that MAEd students frequently struggle with conceptualizing research problems relevant to local educational contexts. Education graduate students in the Philippines face difficulties in balancing theoretical frameworks from Western literature with the practical realities of Philippine classrooms and educational systems (Bernardo, 2008). This challenge necessitates critical adaptation skills and cultural sensitivity in research design and interpretation. Time management

emerges as a particularly salient challenge for Filipino MAEd students, many of whom pursue graduate studies while maintaining full-time teaching positions. Working professionals enrolled in graduate education programs experience significant stress balancing research writing demands with professional responsibilities and personal commitments (Collo, 2021). This time pressure affects the quality of engagement with research processes and extends program completion timelines. Financial constraints represent another significant determinant affecting research writing experiences among MAEd students in the Philippines. The costs associated with research implementation, data collection, transcription services, and professional editing create barriers that disproportionately affect students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ekpoh, 2016). These economic factors influence research methodology choices and project scope. Despite these challenges, Filipino MAEd students demonstrate resilience and employ various coping strategies. Students develop adaptive strategies including forming study groups, utilizing free online resources, and seeking multiple sources of feedback to overcome research writing obstacles (Tindowen *et al.*, 2019). Understanding these strategies provides valuable insights for improving graduate education support systems.

Apayao State College addresses the evolving demands of educational research in the Philippines, where graduate students must balance methodological rigor with locally relevant inquiry to contribute meaningfully to national development. It highlights the challenges students face, such as limited resources, institutional expectations, and the need to integrate indigenous and community-based knowledge, while also examining strategies like peer collaboration, digital tool utilization, and contextualized research design. By exploring these determinants, the study informs institutional policies and supports mechanisms that strengthen research capacity in underserved regions. In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it directly addresses SDG 4: Quality Education by fostering inclusive and equitable teacher education and indirectly supports SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities by empowering students from marginalized areas to produce impactful, evidence-based educational research.

This study aims to explore and analyze the research writing experiences of Master of Arts in Education students at Apayao State College–Conner Campus, focusing on their profiles in terms of age, sex, and civil status, the challenges they encounter in different stages of research writing, the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges, the determinants that significantly influence their experiences, and the relationships between demographic variables and these dimensions, while also providing recommendations to strengthen institutional support for MAED students in producing quality research outputs.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Quinto (2022) explored the difficulties faced by undergraduate students in completing their thesis requirements, focusing on both academic and non-academic factors that hinder progress. Findings revealed that students struggled with problem formulation, literature review, data analysis, and adherence to academic writing conventions, while external pressures such as time constraints, limited resources, and lack of confidence further compounded these challenges. The study emphasized that thesis writing is not only a technical process but also a personal and social experience shaped by institutional support, adviser guidance, and student motivation. Ultimately, Quinto highlighted the need for stronger mentoring systems and structured support to help students successfully navigate the complexities of thesis writing.

Sitompul and Anditasari (2022) examined the difficulties encountered by Master's students in academic research writing, focusing on both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Findings revealed that students struggled with organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, applying proper academic writing conventions, and using appropriate research methodologies. Non-linguistic challenges included time management, balancing academic and professional responsibilities, and limited access to scholarly resources. The study emphasized that these challenges were not only technical but also contextual, shaped by institutional support and students' prior exposure to research. Sitompul and Anditasari concluded that targeted interventions such as writing workshops, adviser mentoring, and improved resource accessibility are essential to help graduate students overcome these barriers and successfully complete their academic research requirements.

Dangalao (2023) examined the lived experiences of MAED students, highlighting both the difficulties they faced and the opportunities available to them while pursuing graduate studies. Findings revealed that students encountered challenges such as time management, balancing academic requirements with professional responsibilities, limited access to research resources, and difficulties in writing and completing their thesis. At the same time, the study emphasized opportunities including professional growth, enhanced research skills, and the potential for career advancement through graduate education. Dangalao concluded that while MAED students struggled with common barriers in research writing and academic work, institutional support, adviser guidance, and personal motivation created opportunities that helped them persevere and succeed in their graduate programs.

Diocos (2022) examined the competencies of graduate students in academic writing alongside the difficulties they encountered in completing research

requirements. Findings revealed that while many students demonstrated adequate skills in basic writing, topic selection, and data gathering, they struggled with higher-level tasks such as synthesizing literature, applying appropriate methodologies, analyzing data, and adhering to academic writing conventions. The study also highlighted non-academic challenges, including time constraints, balancing professional responsibilities with academic demands, and limited access to scholarly resources. Diocos concluded that strengthening research training, providing consistent adviser support, and enhancing institutional resources are critical in helping graduate students overcome these barriers and successfully complete their research writing tasks.

Castulo et. al (2025) investigated the multifaceted challenges faced by education graduate students in the Philippine context, ranging from academic difficulties such as research writing, literature synthesis, and methodological application to non-academic concerns including time management, financial constraints, and balancing professional responsibilities with graduate study demands. Using a needs analysis approach, the study identified critical gaps in institutional support and student preparedness, and then proposed strategic solutions such as enhanced mentoring, structured research workshops, improved access to resources, and stronger administrative support systems. The authors emphasized that contextualizing these challenges within the realities of Philippine graduate education is essential for developing responsive interventions that not only address student struggles but also strengthen overall research culture in higher education institutions.

Caingcoy (2024) focused on three critical areas: the ability to apply multivariate statistical techniques, the skill of writing coherent and academically sound research proposals, and the capacity to produce publishable scholarly papers. Findings revealed that while doctoral students demonstrated varying levels of proficiency in statistical analysis, many struggled with the technical rigor required in multivariate methods. Similarly, challenges were noted in proposal writing, particularly in framing research problems and aligning methodologies with objectives. In terms of producing publishable papers, issues such as adherence to journal standards, clarity of academic writing, and originality of contributions were highlighted. Caingcoy concluded that strengthening training in advanced statistics, enhancing mentorship in proposal development, and providing structured guidance in scholarly publishing are essential to improving the overall research capability of doctoral students.

Shahsavari and Kourepaz (2020) explored the specific challenges faced by postgraduate students when preparing the literature review section of their theses, which is often considered one of the most demanding

parts of academic writing. Findings revealed that students struggled with locating relevant sources, synthesizing information from multiple studies, organizing ideas coherently, and applying proper citation and referencing styles. In addition, many encountered difficulties in critically analyzing existing research rather than merely summarizing it, which limited the depth and originality of their work. The study emphasized that these challenges were influenced by students' limited prior training in academic writing, lack of confidence, and insufficient institutional support. Shahsavari and Kourepaz concluded that targeted interventions such as writing workshops, adviser mentoring, and improved access to academic resources are essential to help postgraduate students strengthen their literature review writing skills and successfully complete their theses.

Durante (2024) examined how students engaged in online research activities, particularly during the shift to digital learning environments, and identified both the challenges they faced and the strategies that proved effective in supporting their learning. Findings revealed that students encountered difficulties such as limited access to reliable online resources, issues with digital literacy, and challenges in maintaining academic integrity in virtual settings. At the same time, the study highlighted effective teaching strategies, including structured guidance from instructors, integration of digital tools, collaborative learning activities, and scaffolded research tasks that helped students adapt to online research demands. Durante concluded that strengthening research pedagogy requires not only addressing technical and resource-related barriers but also fostering critical thinking, digital competence, and supportive instructional practices to enhance students' overall research writing experiences in online contexts.

Walter and Stouck (2020) explored the challenges graduate students face in writing the literature review section of their theses and dissertations, a task often regarded as one of the most complex components of academic research. Findings revealed that students struggled with synthesizing multiple sources, maintaining coherence and organization, and demonstrating critical analysis rather than simply summarizing existing studies. Many also encountered difficulties with citation practices, academic writing conventions, and managing the overwhelming volume of literature available. The study emphasized that these challenges were compounded by limited prior training and insufficient guidance from supervisors. Walter and Stouck concluded that targeted instructional support, structured writing workshops, and stronger mentoring are essential to help graduate students develop the skills needed to produce effective and scholarly literature reviews.

Atibuni *et al.*, (2017) investigated the difficulties faced by Master of Education students in

engaging with research activities and the strategies they adopted to address these challenges. Findings revealed that students encountered obstacles such as limited access to research materials, inadequate supervision, poor research skills, and difficulties in balancing academic work with professional responsibilities. Despite these barriers, students employed coping strategies including peer collaboration, consultation with supervisors, attending research workshops, and self-directed learning to strengthen their research engagement. The study concluded that institutional support, improved supervision, and structured training programs are essential to enhance the research capabilities of graduate students and to foster a stronger research culture in higher education institutions in Uganda.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design. The descriptive aspect was used to present the profile of the respondents and to identify the challenges and strategies they encountered in research writing. The correlational aspect was utilized to determine the significant relationships between the respondents' profile, the challenges they faced, the strategies they employed, and the determinants that influenced their research writing experiences.

3.2. Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Apayao State College - Conner Campus.

3.3. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were Master of Arts in Education students who had completed their thesis and research subjects at the graduate school during Academic Year (AY) 2025–2026. Using purposive sampling, they were chosen because they had direct experience in undertaking graduate-level research writing, making them well-suited to provide insights into the challenges, strategies, and determinants that shaped their academic journey.

3.4. Research Instrumentation

An adapted survey questionnaire (Sitompul & Anditasari, 2022) was used as the primary research instrument to gather data from the respondents, and it was composed of five major parts: Part I elicited the profile of the respondents including age, sex and civil status. Part II focused on the challenges they encountered in the different stages of research writing such as problem formulation, literature review, methodology, data analysis, and adherence to academic writing conventions. Part III examined the strategies they employed to overcome these challenges, including adviser consultation, peer collaboration, seminar participation, and use of digital tools. Part IV identified the determinants that significantly influenced their

research writing experiences, such as institutional support, workload, and personal motivation, and Part V focused on the recommendations from the Master of Arts in Education in improving their writing experiences.

3.5. Data Analysis

Percentage and frequency were used to measure the profile of the respondents.

Weighted mean was used to measure the challenges, strategies, and determinants from the respondents using 5 Point-Likert scale:

Table 1. 5 Point-Likert scale

Scale	Mean Range	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Strongly agree
4	3.40 – 4.19	Agree
3	2.80 – 3.39	Neither agree nor disagree
2	1.80 - 2.79	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.79	Strongly disagree

Thematic analysis was used for the recommendations of the respondents.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Part I. Profile of the respondents

Table 2: Profile of the respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	7	14.6
Female	41	85.4
Age		
20-25 years old	8	16.7
26-35 years old	28	58.3
36-45 years old	10	20.8
46-50 years old	1	2.1
51 years old and above	1	2.1
Marital Status		
Single	24	50.0
Married	22	45.8
Separated	2	4.2

The profile of the respondents in table 2 reveals that the majority are female, accounting for 85.4% of the sample, while only 14.6% are male, indicating a strong gender imbalance. In terms of age distribution, most participants fall within the 26–35 age bracket (58.3%), followed by those aged 36–45 (20.8%), with smaller proportions in the younger group of 20–25 years (16.7%) and minimal representation from older age groups, specifically 46–50 years (2.1%) and 51 years and above (2.1%). This suggests that the respondents are predominantly young to middle-aged adults. Regarding marital status, half of the respondents are single (50.0%),

nearly half are married (45.8%), and only a small fraction is separated (4.2%).

Overall, the data highlights that the sample is largely composed of young to middle-aged women, with a balanced mix of single and married individuals, reflecting a demographic that is both diverse in age and marital status but heavily skewed toward female participation.

4.3. Factors affecting research writing experiences of MAED Students

Table 3: Challenges encountered in the different stages of research writing

Statement	Mean	S.D.	D.E.
1. I felt difficulty selecting the topic and making the title suitable for my interest in research on linguistics	3.69	0.926	Agree
2. I faced difficulty in identifying and formulating the right problem in research	3.71	0.898	Agree
3. I felt it was hard to identify the research gap in my research background	3.77	0.857	Agree
4. I felt hard in elaborating research niche (research importance) in my research background	3.58	0.821	Agree
5. I felt difficulty in differentiating research niches and significance	3.58	0.794	Agree

6. I always felt a dilemma in selecting an appropriate research method for my selected research issue in differentiating data and data sources.	3.88	0.841	Agree
7. I felt difficulty in determining the sample in terms of considering an adequate or representative sample.	3.67	0.808	Agree
8. I felt it was hard to find an appropriate instrument to collect research data.	3.54	0.849	Agree
9. In the research method, I always get stuck on designing instruments (making statements or questions).	3.69	0.803	Agree
10. I sometimes felt difficulty in determining the scale of a questionnaire.	3.67	0.834	Agree
11. Although the instruments were provided, I always felt difficulty in collecting the data in terms of did not knowing what to collect.	3.48	0.85	Agree
13. The same as data collection, analyzing the data is always the most challenging step for me in terms of processing, transforming and/or informing conclusions from the data obtained.	3.79	0.798	Agree
14. I also struggled to organize and sort and match data into the research topic investigated.	3.64	0.792	Agree
15. Although I knew how to compare my results with other studies, I still get difficulties in identifying and elaborating the results to reach their implications.	3.73	0.736	Agree
Overall	3.67		Agree

The findings in table 3 indicated that respondents generally agreed (overall mean = 3.67) that they encountered significant challenges throughout the stages of research writing, particularly in methodological and analytical aspects. The highest difficulty was reported in selecting appropriate research methods (mean = 3.88), followed by analyzing data (mean = 3.79) and identifying research gaps (mean = 3.77), which underscores the complexity of designing and executing rigorous research. Other notable struggles included formulating research problems, designing instruments, determining representative samples, and interpreting

results, all of which are essential for producing valid and reliable studies.

These results suggest that while students may understand the basic structure of research, they often struggle with deeper conceptualization, methodological rigor, and data interpretation. This is corroborated by Wang (2019), who found that graduate students face linguistic and epistemological challenges in academic writing, particularly in identifying research problems, structuring arguments, and analyzing data, highlighting that such difficulties are widespread across contexts and not limited to one discipline.

Table 4. Strategies employed to overcome challenges in research writing

Statement	Mean	S.D.	D.E.
1. I seek guidance from my research adviser or mentors to overcome writing difficulties.	4.28	0.688	Strongly Agree
2. I make use of online resources (journals, databases, e-books) to strengthen my research writing.	4.45	0.544	Strongly Agree
3. I collaborate with peers or classmates to discuss and clarify research-related issues.	4.09	0.803	Agree
4. I create a structured outline before writing to organize my ideas effectively.	4.09	0.654	Agree
5. I manage my time by setting specific schedules for research writing tasks.	4.17	0.564	Agree
6. I use citation tools or software (e.g., Mendeley, Zotero) to handle references accurately.	4.17	0.732	Agree
7. I attend seminars, workshops, or training sessions to improve my research writing skills.	3.68	0.887	Agree
8. I revise and edit my drafts multiple times to improve clarity and coherence.	4.28	0.621	Strongly Agree
9. I seek feedback from peers or faculty to refine my research paper.	4.19	0.68	Agree
10. I reduce stress and writing anxiety by practicing self-care and maintaining a positive mindset.	4.23	0.633	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.163		Agree

The results in table 4 show that respondents actively employ a variety of strategies to overcome challenges in research writing, with an overall mean of 4.16 indicating strong agreement on their effectiveness. The most highly rated strategies include making use of online resources such as journals and databases (mean = 4.45), revising and editing drafts multiple times (mean = 4.28), seeking guidance from advisers or mentors (mean = 4.28), and reducing stress through self-care and maintaining a positive mindset (mean = 4.23). These highlight the importance of both academic and personal

support systems in enhancing research writing. Other strategies such as time management, collaboration with peers, creating structured outlines, and using citation tools also received high agreement, reflecting a balanced approach that combines technical, organizational, and emotional coping mechanisms. Attending seminars and workshops, while still agreed upon (mean = 3.68), was rated lower, suggesting that students may rely more on immediate, accessible resources than formal training.

These findings are corroborated by Shah et. al (2009), who emphasized that effective research writing requires not only technical skills but also strategies such

as collaboration, mentorship, and stress management to overcome common barriers like writer's block, poor structure, and citation difficulties.

Table 5: Determinants significantly influence their research writing experiences

Statement	Mean	S.D.	D.E.
1. Adequate access to library resources and online databases influences my ability to write research effectively.	4.08	0.794	Agree
2. Guidance and feedback from advisers or faculty members significantly affect my research writing progress.	4.31	0.689	Strongly Agree
3. Peer collaboration and support contribute positively to my research writing experience.	4.29	0.617	Strongly Agree
4. My level of language proficiency impacts the clarity and quality of my research writing.	4.19	0.607	Agree
5. Time management skills determine how well I accomplish research writing tasks.	4.25	0.7	Strongly Agree
6. Availability of technological tools (e.g., citation software, word processors) influences my efficiency in research writing.	4.33	0.781	Strongly Agree
7. Institutional support such as seminars, workshops, and training sessions helps improve my research writing skills.	4.17	0.883	Agree
8. My motivation and self-confidence play a crucial role in overcoming research writing challenges.]	4.27	0.676	Strongly Agree
9. Financial resources (e.g., printing, internet access, materials) affect my ability to complete research writing requirements.	4.3	0.749	Strongly Agree
10. The curriculum design and academic policies of the institution influence my overall research writing experience.	4.19	0.79	Agree
Overall	4.24		Strongly Agree

The findings in table 5 reveal that respondents strongly agree (overall mean = 4.24) that multiple determinants significantly shape their research writing experiences, with the most influential factors being access to technological tools (mean = 4.33), guidance from advisers (mean = 4.31), financial resources (mean = 4.30), and peer collaboration (mean = 4.29). These highlight the critical role of institutional and external support systems in enabling effective research writing. Time management (mean = 4.25), motivation and self-confidence (mean = 4.27), and language proficiency (mean = 4.19) also emerged as essential personal attributes that directly affect clarity, productivity, and resilience in the writing process. Meanwhile, institutional support through seminars and workshops

(mean = 4.17) and curriculum design (mean = 4.19) were acknowledged as important but slightly less emphasized compared to immediate resources and interpersonal support.

Collectively, these results suggest that successful research writing is not only dependent on individual skills but also on the availability of academic, technological, financial, and social support systems. This is corroborated by Obrador (2024), who found that determinants such as teacher guidance, student motivation, and environmental factors significantly affect students' writing skills, underscoring the interplay between personal and institutional influences in shaping research writing outcomes.

Table 6: Relationship between the profile of respondents and the challenges, strategies, and determinants they encounter in research writing

Variables	Spearman's Rho (ρ)	Descriptive Interpretation	p-value
Sex ↔ Challenges	0.089	Very Weak Positive Correlation	0.011*
Sex ↔ Strategies	0.124	Very Weak Positive Correlation	0.068 ^{ns}
Sex ↔ Determinants	0.076	Very Weak Positive Correlation	0.245 ^{ns}
Age ↔ Challenges	-0.187	Very Weak Negative Correlation	0.022*
Age ↔ Strategies	0.215	Weak Positive Correlation	0.04*
Age ↔ Determinants	0.143	Very Weak Positive Correlation	0.052 ^{ns}
Marital Status ↔ Challenges	-0.102	Very Weak Negative Correlation	0.158 ^{ns}
Marital Status ↔ Strategies	0.165	Very Weak Positive Correlation	0.028*
Marital Status ↔ Determinants	0.094	Very Weak Positive Correlation	0.189 ^{ns}

*p<0.05, ns-not significant

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine relationship between the demographic variables such as sex age, and marital status with challenges, strategies, and marital status. The analysis revealed that sex demonstrated very weak positive correlations across all three dimensions of research writing experiences. A statistically significant relationship was found between sex and challenges ($\rho = 0.089$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that while the correlation was very weak, male and female students differed slightly in their perception or experience of research writing challenges. The correlation between sex and strategies ($\rho = 0.124$, $p = 0.068$) approached but did not reach statistical significance, suggesting minimal gender differences in strategy employment. Similarly, sex and determinants showed a very weak positive correlation ($\rho = 0.076$, $p = 0.245$) that was not statistically significant. Overall, these findings suggest that sex plays a minimal role in differentiating students' research writing experiences, with only challenges showing a statistically significant, but very weak, relationship.

Age emerged as a more meaningful predictor of research writing experiences compared to sex. A very weak negative correlation was observed between age and challenges ($\rho = -0.187$, $p = 0.012$), which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This negative relationship indicates that older students tend to encounter fewer research writing challenges, possibly due to greater academic maturity and life experience. In contrast, age showed a weak positive correlation with strategies ($\rho = 0.215$, $p = 0.004$), which was highly significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting that older students employ more diverse or sophisticated research writing strategies. However, the relationship between age and determinants ($\rho = 0.143$, $p = 0.052$) was very weak and non-significant. These findings collectively

suggest that age is associated with reduced challenges and enhanced strategy use.

Marital status demonstrated the weakest associations with research writing experiences among the three demographic variables examined. The correlation between marital status and challenges was very weak and negative ($\rho = -0.102$, $p = 0.158$), indicating no significant relationship between being married and the challenges faced in research writing. However, marital status showed a very weak positive correlation with strategies ($\rho = 0.165$, $p = 0.028$), which achieved statistical significance at the 0.05 level. This suggests that married students may employ slightly different or additional strategies in their research writing process, potentially benefiting from spousal support or enhanced time management necessitated by family responsibilities. The relationship between marital status and determinants ($\rho = 0.094$, $p = 0.189$) was very weak and non-significant, indicating that marital status does not substantially influence the determinants of research writing success.

Overall, the correlation analysis revealed that all three demographic variables demonstrated relatively weak associations with research writing experiences. Age showed the most consistent pattern of significant relationships, particularly with challenges (negative) and strategies (positive). Sex showed minimal influence, with only challenges reaching statistical significance. Marital status had the weakest overall impact, with only strategies showing a significant relationship. These findings suggest that while demographic factors play some role in shaping research writing experiences, their influence is modest, implying that other factors such as institutional support, prior research experience, and individual motivation may be more substantial factors of graduate students' research writing success.

Table 7: Thematized Recommendations for Strengthening Research Writing Support

Theme	Recommendations
Training	Implementation of a comprehensive training program that includes step-by-step workshops from topic selection to final manuscript preparation, seminars on updated thesis formats, focused sessions on methodology, literature review, APA style, and academic writing, specialized training in data analysis and statistics, structured research retreats, and accessible online or virtual workshops to ensure inclusivity and flexibility for all learners.
Mentorship & advising	Establish accessible and structured mentorship programs that combine one-on-one consultations, regular adviser feedback, standardized advising practices, group mentoring, and online check-ins to ensure consistent guidance and support for MAED students throughout their research writing journey.
Resources & Tools	Strengthen resource accessibility by providing better access to journals, e-books, and library materials, maintaining repositories of sample papers and templates, promoting the use of citation tools like Mendeley and Zotero, ensuring availability of technological resources such as laptops, printers, and internet, and fostering collaboration with librarians to enhance research literacy among MAED students.
Peer Collaboration & Support	Foster peer collaboration through writing groups and buddies, peer-review systems for continuous feedback, supportive idea-sharing communities, and the use of collaborative platforms to strengthen engagement and improve the quality of MAED students' research writing.

Guidelines & Structure	Strengthen academic guidance by providing clear rubrics and guidelines for research outputs, structured templates for each chapter, model papers to guide proposals, frequent monitoring of student work with constructive feedback, and integrating research tasks early into the MAED curriculum to build competence and confidence from the start.
Institutional Support	Enhance institutional support by establishing research help desks or online consultation hours, ensuring full backing from the research committee, recognizing impactful and applied research through awards, providing seminars and workshops for teachers on research and statistics, and conducting continuous assessments of student needs to tailor support effectively.
Personal Development & Motivation	Promote personal and emotional resilience among MAED students by encouraging self-confidence and determination, reducing stress through self-care and a positive mindset, providing guidance and monitoring for effective time management, offering flexibility for working students and teachers in remote areas, and emphasizing patience and perseverance as essential qualities for successful research writing.
Writing Quality & Style	Strengthen academic writing skills by providing clear guidance on writing style for clarity, directness, and citation accuracy, encouraging multiple revisions and editing for coherence, promoting ethical use of sources and responsible scholarships, and offering training in framing research questions and interpreting results to ensure high-quality research outputs.

The recommendations for strengthening research writing support among MAED students highlight the need for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach that integrates training, mentorship, resources, collaboration, and institutional backing. Students emphasized the importance of structured workshops and seminars covering methodology, literature review, APA format, data analysis, and updated thesis guidelines, complemented by accessible one-on-one mentoring, standardized advising practices, and group consultations. Equally vital is the provision of resources and tools, such as access to journals, citation software, technological support, and librarian collaboration, alongside peer-writing groups, peer-review systems, and collaborative platforms to foster shared learning. Clear guidelines, rubrics, templates, and model papers, coupled with early integration of research tasks in the curriculum and frequent monitoring, provide scaffolding for the writing process. Institutional support through help desks, recognition awards, seminars, and continuous assessment ensures consistency and motivation, while personal development strategies like time management, stress reduction, perseverance, and confidence-building address affective barriers. Finally, emphasis on writing quality and style, including clarity, citation accuracy, ethical scholarship, and multiple revisions, equips students to produce rigorous, coherent, and impactful research outputs.

A related study that corroborates these recommendations is Pangket et al. (2023), who have found that graduate students often struggle with methodological design, literature review, and data analysis, and emphasized the importance of structured support systems such as workshops, mentoring, access to academic resources, and peer collaboration to improve research writing competence.

This directly supports the recommendations outlined for MAED students, which highlight the need

for step-by-step workshops, accessible mentoring, clear guidelines, peer support groups, and institutional backing. Both sets of findings stress that research writing is not only a technical skill but also a process that requires scaffolding, consistent feedback, and access to resources. By aligning institutional support with these determinants, students can gradually build confidence, reduce anxiety, and produce higher-quality research outputs.

4. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that while demographic variables such as sex, age, and marital status show only weak associations with research writing experiences, age emerges as the most meaningful predictor, with older students reporting fewer challenges and employing more effective strategies. The findings highlight that methodological and analytical aspects remain the most difficult stages of research writing, yet students actively adopt diverse strategies, particularly the use of online resources, mentoring, and self-care, to overcome these barriers. Determinants such as technological tools, adviser guidance, financial resources, and peer collaboration strongly influence research writing success, underscoring the importance of institutional and external support systems. Overall, the results suggest that beyond demographic factors, institutional scaffolding, access to resources, and personal motivation play a more substantial role in shaping graduate students' research writing competence, pointing to the need for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional support framework that integrates training, mentoring, resources, collaboration, and continuous feedback to enhance confidence and produce high-quality research outputs.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

I acknowledge that I have not used ChatGPT or Copilot for refining some of the sections in the document.

Consent (WHEREVER applicable)

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

Ethical approval (WHEREVER applicable)

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the college. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondents' privacy and confidentiality.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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