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Research Report Writing Challenges: Literature Review, Research Significance and Coherent Paragraph Matters

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Abstrak

Untuk memenuhi persyaratan studi akhir di perguruan tinggi, setiap mahasiswa harus melakukan dan menulis laporan penelitian. Namun, menulis laporan penelitian membutuhkan keterampilan menulis yang baik. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan mahasiswa dalam menulis laporan penelitian. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif, dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara terstruktur sebagai instrumennya. Sebanyak delapan belas mahasiswa tingkat akhir program studi Bahasa dan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini, dipilih secara convenience sampling. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa mahasiswa menghadapi kesulitan dalam menulis paragraf yang koheren dan kohesif, sementara mereka dapat dengan mudah merumuskan masalah penelitian dan signifikansinya. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, disarankan agar mahasiswa tingkat akhir yang bertanggung jawab untuk menghasilkan tulisan penelitian harus secara aktif mendaftar di kelas menulis dan penelitian atau berpartisipasi dalam program pelatihan penulisan penelitian.

Kata kunci: *laporan penelitian, penulisan, tantangan*

Abstract

To fill the requirement of final year study in a higher institution, every student has to conduct and write a research report. However, writing a research report requires proficient writing skills. This study was conducted to explore the students' challenges in writing a research report. The study employed a descriptive research design, using a questionnaire and structured interview as its instrument. Eighteen final year students of English Language and Education study program participated in the research, selected by convenience sampling. The findings revealed that the students faced difficulties in writing coherent and cohesive paragraphs, while they are able to easily formulate the research problem and significance. Based on the findings, it is suggested that final year students responsible for producing research writing should actively enrol in writing and research classes or participate in research writing training programs.

Keywords: *research report, writing, challenges*

INTRODUCTION

Writing a research report is a crucial skill for students, particularly those pursuing degrees in fields such as English language and education. A research report serves as the foundation for a student's research project, outlining the problem statement, objectives, methodology, and anticipated outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Proficiency in research proposal writing is essential for students to secure funding, gain approval for their studies, and demonstrate their research competence (Ridley, 2012).

However, many students often face significant challenges in the process of writing research proposals. These challenges can include difficulties in identifying a research problem, formulating appropriate research questions, selecting suitable methodologies, and presenting a clear and coherent argument (Kumar, 2014). Additionally, factors such as limited research experience, language barriers, and inadequate writing skills can further hinder the students' ability to produce a well-written and compelling research proposal (Flowerdew & Li, 2007).

To address these challenges and improve the quality of research proposals, it is essential to understand the specific difficulties faced by students. A descriptive study can provide valuable insights into the nature and extent of the writing challenges experienced by students, as well as the underlying factors contributing to these challenges (Creswell, 2013).

The present study aims to explore the research report writing challenges encountered by English language and education students. By employing a qualitative, descriptive research design, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the students' perspectives and experiences regarding the challenges they face in writing research proposals.

RESEACRH METHOD

This is a descriptive qualitative research that explores the challenges students face in writing research report. It aims to understand and describe the difficulties students encounter when composing the research writing. It is expected that the findings will contribute to the teaching and learning process, as well as enhance students' knowledge in this area.

Respondents

The subjects of the research were 18 final year students who were writing for research report. They are the students of English Language and Education study Program in Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai. They were selected through convenience sampling, as they had responded to the online questionnaire that was distributed. The data were described below:

Table1. Number of Respondent

Male	Female	Degree
2	16	Undergraduate

Instruments

The study employed two instruments: a close-ended questionnaire and an interview guideline. The questionnaire was constructed based on the structure of a research report. The researcher validated the questionnaire for content matters before distributing it to the respondents. For the interview guideline, the researcher composed and validated it through expert judgment. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher conducted triangulation on the instruments.

Procedures

The research procedure involved several steps. First, the researcher obtained the necessary permissions and approvals to conduct the study. The 18 final year students were then selected through convenience sampling, as they had responded to the online questionnaire distributed. The close-ended questionnaire, which was validated for content, was administered to these students to gather data on the specific challenges they faced in writing research proposals. Additionally, the researcher conducted structured interviews with the participants using the interview guideline, which had also been validated through expert judgment. This allowed the researcher to gather more in-depth, qualitative data on the students' experiences and perspectives. To ensure the validity of the data collected, the researcher employed methodological triangulation by using both the questionnaire and the interviews as data sources. The data from these multiple instruments were then analyzed to identify the key themes and patterns related to the students' research proposal writing challenges.

Data analysis

The data analysis for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. First, the responses from the close-ended questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The researcher calculated the means, standard deviations, and frequencies for the various items related to the students' self-reported challenges in research proposal writing. This provided an overall understanding of the key difficulties faced by the participants. The statistical analyses were conducted using PSPP software.

For the qualitative data gathered through the interviews, the researcher employed a thematic analysis approach. The interview transcripts were carefully reviewed, and an initial set of codes was developed based on the emerging patterns and themes. These codes were then refined and organized into broader categories that captured the essence of the students' experiences and perceptions regarding the challenges in research proposal writing. Relevant quotes from the interview data were selected to illustrate the identified themes. To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, the researcher engaged in member checking by sharing the preliminary findings with some of the participants to obtain their feedback and validation. Additionally, the coding process and the development of themes were reviewed by a peer researcher to enhance the credibility of the qualitative findings. By triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research report writing challenges faced by the final year students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Data

In this research, the researchers present the data about research writing challenges. The data were taken from an online questionnaire distributed to final year students of the English Language and Education Department at Universitas Pahlawan, Riau province. Table 1 shows of the PSPP analysis.

Table 1. Research Writing Challenges

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
VAR001	18	3.33	1.03	1	5
VAR002	18	3.44	.78	2	5
VAR003	18	3.22	.88	2	5
VAR004	18	3.39	1.04	2	5
VAR005	18	3.11	.96	1	5
VAR006	18	3.28	.83	2	5
VAR007	18	3.22	.65	2	5
Valid N (listwise)	18				
Missing N (listwise)	0				

The result presented showed that the final year students found it highly difficult to carry out and conduct a comprehensive literature review. In addition, this part of the research writing process plays an essential role in producing a meaningful research. In other words, to conduct a successful research, a researcher must be familiar with the research variables. To understand the research variables, a comprehensive literature review is a necessity.

Further, the students also face challenges in justifying the potential contributions of their proposed research. The data presented reported that the students were not easily able to reflect the contributions of their research. However, this part is expected to be mastered by future researchers in order to broaden the scope of the research.

Last but not least, adhering to writing mechanics and formatting is the easiest part of research writing process. It could be agreed that this part seems like mere formatting without acknowledging the cognitive values of research. In other words, researchers do not really play a significant role in this aspect.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative analysis found three parts of the writing process that were highly challenging. The first part is conducting a comprehensive literature review. This finding is in line with the quantitative data presented. It was intentionally approved that the students found it difficult to gain and formulate the literature review.

Conducting a literature review is not merely a selection of related articles. The definition of variables and the selection of the related ideas require a high level of focus from the researchers. The selected related articles must be analysed and understood deeply in order to synthesize the ideas. After the synthesis process is complete, the researcher has to develop their own ideas based on this understanding. These kinds of process were really tough.

The second part is selecting research method and data collection. The students said that even they had completed the research methodology class; practically deciding on the appropriate research method was still troublesome. The students have to clearly define the research questions or hypotheses to select the appropriate research design. Moreover, determining the attributes that contribute to this part is also challenging.

The third part is composing coherent and cohesion paragraphs. Most of the students reported that they used AI tools to help them produce the paragraphs. The ideas were not originally from their own thoughts. They just made the outline and let the AI tools compose

the paragraphs. Editing was also not used as well. Thus, the paragraphs were not coherent in the end.

CONCLUSIONS

Conducting a comprehensive literature review, justifying research significance and producing coherent paragraph are the writing report challenges. These cognitive activities were highly difficult for final year students in university. Defining research variables to gain the related knowledge and conducting a comprehensive literature review are tough. The understanding and capability in deciding on a proper research design is also difficult. Last but not least, justifying the research contribution as an expectation to broaden the research topic is somehow challenging. It is suggested that the final year students have to be accustomed with research writing activities. By providing students with more opportunities to engage in research writing practices, universities can better prepare them for the demands of their final year projects and help them develop the critical thinking and analytical abilities required for successful academic writing.

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