



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Students' Challenges and Barriers in the Completion of an Undergraduate Thesis in the Case of A Premier Local College in the Philippines

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Abstract

Writing a thesis has always been considered one of the most challenging aspects of being an undergraduate student. However, no research on the difficulties of undergraduate students in the setting of Local Colleges and Universities (LCUs) in the Philippines has been identified. The purpose of this sequential explanatory research was to evaluate the challenges and obstacles experienced by undergraduate students while finishing their theses. Students pursuing a Bachelor of Physical Education at City College of Angeles in the Philippines who have completed writing and defending their theses comprise the study's participants. After gathering data from 116 students via an online survey ($N_{\text{male}} = 59$, $N_{\text{female}} = 57$) for the quantitative phase, it was determined that infrastructure, communication, and time management presented a moderate amount of difficulty for students. Additionally, after the thematic analysis, three major themes and six sub-themes emerged: (1) Internet connectivity challenges and communication (connectivity issues and inadequate scientific resources, as well as communication with thesis groupmates), (2) Data gathering impediments (participant recruitment and rejection), and (3) Time Management issues (drawbacks of working students and thesis writing contrasted with other academic course works). Based on the findings, this report offers recommendations for tackling these obstacles and issues. Finally, the study's limitations and proposals for further research are presented.

Keywords

Challenges and barriers, Physical Education, Research excellence, Thesis Writing, Undergraduate Thesis

INTRODUCTION

A thesis is a written output of a systematic study that follows a period of supervised research in the college (Ermiati et al., 2021). The final output should be demonstrated by its originality, critical and independent thinking, proper construction, format, and documentation (Azmat & Ahmad, 2022). It promotes scientific thinking, formulation of research questions and objectives, managing and evaluating data, and reporting the overall study (Matin & Khan, 2017). The process of writing a thesis is described as complex because students are projected to combine their knowledge

and capabilities in understanding, examining, describing, and explaining problems vis-à-vis the scientific topic in which they are currently engaged. Thesis writing has been well-known to be the most rigorous phase of pursuing an undergraduate degree which is supported by various educational scholars (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2018; Merç, 2016; Subia et al., 2022). Published scholarly works concerning these issues are prevalent in various degree programs, particularly for post-graduate degrees such as Masters and Doctorate programs (Mohammadi & Zolqadr,

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2022; Shahsavari & Kourepaz, 2020; Sükan & Mohammadzadeh, 2022). Unfortunately, after assessing papers that were previously conducted concerning this issue, no studies were found focusing on the challenges and barriers of undergraduate students in writing a thesis, especially those students taking a teacher education degree in Physical Education. Additionally, there is a scarcity of conducted investigations in the Local Colleges and Universities (LUCs) sector in the Philippine context. Hence, a call for an investigation to fill the gap in this particular area should be performed. In the case of City College of Angeles, thesis writing courses of the Bachelor of Physical Education program are offered for two consecutive semesters (BPEd 117A and BPEd117B) during their 3rd-year, both the first and second semesters. Thesis Writing 1 or BPEd117A aims for students to apply the theoretical and practical aspects of research planning and methodology and enable them to apply various research strategies focusing on Physical Education, Health, and Music. At the same time, Thesis Writing 2 or BPEd117B is the pre-requisite of BPEd117A, which aims to apply various data gathering and analysis techniques and to write their discussion and conclusion based on obtained data and defend it to research panelists. Proposing and defending a thesis is a partial requirement of the degree.

Therefore, students are mandated to take and undergo these courses. Based on observations, students struggle to complete their undergraduate thesis for some crucial reasons. Indeed, research excellence is a one of the three components Higher Education Institutions are striving for. However, these challenges and barriers remain undiscovered and undocumented. In line with these, this study aimed to explore the various challenges and barriers of students in completing their thesis. Finally, this research has the implication to provide practical interventions for students struggling in carrying out their thesis writing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The inquiry is a *survey descriptive* study. In this method, data are collected in two (2) separate but consecutive stages over a given time frame (Draucker et al., 2020). The quantitative data was collected and evaluated first, and then the

qualitative data were obtained and analyzed (Toyon, 2021). This allowed the researcher to investigate additional difficulties encountered by undergraduates during the thesis writing process.

Participants

The participants for the study are 4th-year undergraduate students who successfully defended and passed their thesis writing [PE117A (Thesis Writing 1) and PE117B (Thesis Writing 2)] and 3rd year students who are currently enrolled on these course at City College of Angeles, located in the City of Angeles, Philippines. Moreover, the participants for the study were selected via *Purposive Sampling*. This non-probability sampling technique is used because of the participants' qualities that are needed and fitted for this investigation (Lobo, 2022). One hundred sixteen (116) students voluntarily participated in the investigation, and all responses were accepted for analysis. As can be seen in Table 1, most of the respondents are males (N=59), constituting 50.9% of the overall sample population, compared to females (N=57), with 49.1%.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Variable	Item	N(%)
Gender	Male	59(50.9%)
	Female	57(49.1%)

Instruments and Data Gathering

Quantitative Phase

For the first phase, the data were collected via an *online survey* using Google Forms. Conducting an online survey has a great potential to gather an amount of data efficiently, cost-effective, and within a relatively short time frame (Li et al., 2021). The questionnaire that was utilized is based on the study of Mohammad El-Freihat (2021), which is a 21-item that measures undergraduates' challenges and barriers in the completion of a thesis based on three domains: *Infrastructure* (e.g., "There is a paucity of equipment needed for completing the undergraduate thesis"), *Communication* (e.g., "It is difficult to have the necessary channels to communicate with the academic supervisor"), and *Time Management* (e.g., "It is difficult to find free time to collect resources").

Qualitative Phase

To explore other challenges and barriers that undergraduate students faced during the completion of their thesis which cannot be measured by the survey questionnaire that was used in the first phase, an *open-ended question* was used (Swain & King, 2022).

Data Analysis

Quantitative Phase

A test of normality, reliability test, and bivariate correlation for inter-scale relationships

was performed. As can be seen in Table 2, the skewness and kurtosis obtained the threshold value [-2, 2] across all subscales. Therefore, the data are generally distributed across the three subscales. Additionally, the table explicates the reliability test results, which indicated that all subscales are highly reliable, with Cronbach’s Alpha value ranging between .87 to .89. Lastly, the bivariate correlations are also displayed in the table which displayed a significant relationship across all variables (p <.01).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, normality estimates, internal consistency coefficients, and bivariate correlations

	Gender	M ± SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3
Infrastructure	Male	2.82 ± .80	-.421	.783	(.89)		
	Female	2.77 ± .98	.161	-.056			
Communication	Male	2.70 ± .79	-.402	.840	.675**	(.87)	
	Female	2.33 ± .81	.243	-1.48			
Time Management	Male	3.14 ± .88	.042	.420	.585**	.637**	(.87)
	Female	2.80 ± .82	-.054	-.710			

* Statistically significant at p < .05. ; ** Statistically significant at p < .01.

Moreover, to describe the participants’ responses, descriptive statistics such as *Mean (M)* and *Standard Deviation (SD)* were used via IBM SPSS version 27. For the facilitation of the

interpretation of obtained data, a point-scale interpretation was adapted from Lobo et al. (2022) to describe per item response which is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive interpretations

Range of weighted mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Strongly agree	Very high
3.40 – 4.19	Agree	High
2.60 – 3.39	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderate
1.80 – 2.59	Disagree	Low
1.00 – 1.79	Strongly disagree	Very low

Qualitative Phase

The gathered data were analyzed by performing Thematic analysis. *Thematic analysis* is the procedure of classifying outlines or themes within the qualitative data (Nowell et al., 2017).

Ethical considerations

online survey were mentioned. Respondents may withdraw or request a debriefing at any time.

RESULTS

Quantitative Phase’s Results

Tables 4, 5, and 6 illustrate the participants’ responses concerning their challenges in

Respondents were needed to provide consent by accepting the accompanying statement in the Google Forms. In addition, respondents were informed about the study’s objectives, its tools, and the variables being measured. In addition, several minor dangers associated with completing the

completing their undergraduate thesis based on the three domains: Infrastructure, Communication, and Time Management, while Table 7 illustrates the overall level of the three domains by rank. Regarding infrastructure, most of the participants neither agree nor disagree with the majority of the

statements, which can be posited that there is a moderate level of challenges that are being faced by students ($2.80 \pm .891$). Additionally, concerning communication, most of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed across all statements, which indicated that students faced a moderate level of challenge when communicating with their respective research supervisors ($2.52 \pm .819$). Lastly, concerning time management, most of the students neither agreed nor disagreed with all the

accounts except for the statement “*I always have a busy schedule*” (3.57 ± 1.113), which they all agreed on. Based on the finding, students’ overall challenge in time management is moderate ($2.98 \pm .862$). In conclusion, the level of challenge faced by students in completing their undergraduate thesis according to the three domains is moderate, and the ranking is as follows: Time Management ($2.98 \pm .862$), Infrastructure ($2.80 \pm .891$), and Communication ($2.52 \pm .819$).

Table 4. Infrastructure

Statements	M ± SD	Interpretation
The library lacks adequate scientific resources	2.80 ± 1.073	NAND
The library doesn’t contain enough computers to access the database	2.68 ± 1.139	NAND
The college does not provide access to international resources	2.46 ± 1.122	D
The college does not have scientific labs for experimentation	2.97 ± 1.183	NAND
There is a paucity of equipment needed for completing the undergraduate thesis	$2.96 \pm .990$	NAND
The college lacks adequate scientific facilities needed	2.91 ± 1.213	NAND

Note: SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, NAND- Neither agree nor disagree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly disagree.

Table 5. Communication

Statements	M ± SD	Interpretation
There is no flexibility to contact the supervisor	2.35 ± 1.129	D
Using social media tools to contact supervisors is not an option in the supervisory relationship	2.61 ± 1.200	NAND
Academic supervisors prefer traditional communication channels	2.76 ± 1.108	NAND
There are no fixed hours to communicate with the academic supervisor	2.65 ± 1.210	NAND
It is difficult to have the necessary channels to communicate with the academic supervisor	2.66 ± 1.142	NAND
The academic supervisor does not respond to my calls when I need an advice	2.31 ± 1.008	D
The supervisor does not contact me if there is any debate	2.45 ± 1.098	D
It is hard to contact the academic supervisor when most needed	2.36 ± 1.114	D

Note: SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, NAND- Neither agree nor disagree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly disagree.

Table 6. Time management

Statements	M ± SD	Interpretation
I always have a busy schedule	3.57 ± 1.113	A
There is a contradiction between my schedule and one of my academic supervisors	2.84 ± 1.142	NAND
It is difficult to arrange my timetable with my academic supervisor	2.70 ± 1.057	NAND
The supervisor always has a heavy workload, so I cannot contact him	2.78 ± 1.127	NAND
It is difficult to find free time to collect resources	3.08 ± 1.166	NAND
Social activities keep me always busy that hinder my academic work	2.93 ± 1.140	NAND
I feel that I am always delaying my academic tasks	2.95 ± 1.291	NAND

Note: SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, NAND- Neither agree nor disagree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly disagree.

Table 7. Ranking of domains

Construct	M ± SD	Interpretation
Time Management	$2.98 \pm .862$	Moderate
Infrastructure	$2.80 \pm .891$	Moderate
Communication	$2.52 \pm .819$	Moderate

Qualitative Phase's Results

Emerging themes

Following an analysis of the statements made by the participants, there were found to be three (3) main themes and six (6) sub-themes that emerged throughout the process. These major themes and sub-themes are as follows: (1) Internet connectivity challenges and communication (connectivity issues, insufficiency of scientific resources, and communication with thesis groupmates); (2) Data gathering impediments (recruitment of the participants and rejection from the participants), and (3) Time Management issues (drawbacks of working students and thesis writing contrasted with other academic course works). Following is a discussion of each main subject as well as any relevant subthemes.

Theme 1: Internet connectivity challenges and communication

Sub-theme 1.1: Connectivity issues and inadequacy of scientific resources

Based on the statements of the participants, most of them are experiencing poor internet connection which thwarts them from productively performing their tasks of finding reliable sources and references on the web which can be of great help for their respective theses. Examples of responses are as follows:

BPEd10: *"The significant challenge that I have experienced during the completion of my undergraduate thesis is lack of sources."*

BPEd69: *"Barriers include lack of internet connectivity to search for related studies."*

BPEd75: *"In my view, the most challenging part we experienced is the lack of internet, time and difficulty finding related literature connected to our study. We also have difficulty finding the review of related literature because some RRLs are not connected to our study, which is why it is also time-consuming."*

BPEd78: *"Internet Connection is the main problem I experienced in doing our thesis because sometimes the connection and data are not cooperating when making and finding resources I need."*

Sub-theme 1.2: Communication with thesis groupmates

Another significant finding is the difficulty of virtual communication with their fellow thesis groupmates. Due to internet connectivity problems, conducting meetings and consultations with their classmates has been one of the main challenges for them. Examples of responses are:

BPEd10: *"The significant challenges that I experience during the completion of my undergraduate thesis are a need for sources and sometimes a lack of communication with my groups."*

BPEd14: *"The internet connection and communication to my fellow groupmates."*

BPEd33: *"During our thesis completion, my groupmates and I always had difficulty setting a date/time for us to meet virtually due to various reasons such as internet issues."*

BPEd34: *"The meeting setup. Because there are times that it is tough to explain through Google Meet or other social media platforms, and sometimes they misunderstand what I am saying. Therefore, the communication is not just good."*

Theme 2: Data gathering impediments

Sub-theme 2.1: Recruitment of the Participants

Based on the findings, most participants have argued that one of the main challenges hindering them from finishing their undergraduate thesis is the difficulty of recruiting respondents/participants for the study. One of the significant problems that emerged which delays undergraduate students to move forward into the data analysis phase. Since the thesis writing of the participants commenced during the onslaught of COVID-19, most of the statements of the participants can be accounted for it. Cases of responses are:

BPEd31: *"The significant barrier for me is the availability of our participants; since they are students and most of them are graduating and working students, we need help in scheduling our time of interviews with them since most of the time they are busy."*

BPEd51: *“The challenge I experienced during our thesis was the study participants. Since it is still pandemic, the sources are limited, so we need to double our time to meet our goal.”*

BPEd79: *“The most significant barrier that hindered us in completing our undergraduate thesis is that we collected and facilitated our data gathering face to face. It took us much time to complete our target participants. We went from schools to barangays, which delayed us from completing our thesis.”*

Sub-theme 2.2: Rejection from the participants

Moreover, some of the undergraduate students have also raised concerns about rejection from the participants to partake in data gathering and not answering questionnaires/interviews seriously. Some of the responses from the participants are mentioned below:

BPEd05: *“Some participants rejected the researchers to conduct an interview.”*

BPEd21: *“The challenge we encountered while completing our thesis was the lack of respondents, and some respondents needed to answer our questionnaire more seriously.”*

BPEd24: *“During the thesis completion, it is hard for me and my group to gather data because the survey can only be done online wherein there are target respondents who are not willing to answer the questionnaire.”*

BPEd58: *“Collecting the respondents' responses because some of them just ignore our messages.”*

BPEd79: *“Respondents are not taking the questionnaire seriously. Principals do not want to allow us to gather data even though we have complete authorization letters from the Division Office. Prospect participants who do not want to cooperate.”*

Theme 3: Time Management issues

Sub-theme 3.1: Drawbacks of working students

Time management has also been one of the prevalent issues that emerged during the analysis of responses. Based on the breakdown, students who have experienced a lot of time management problems are those who are working. Students

experienced difficulty in balancing their time in work and academics, most especially on their thesis writing. Moreover, the school is a local college and it can be expected that most of the students are from the marginalized sector. It is not a surprise that most of the students in the program are also doing side jobs to provide for their personal and family needs. Some of the examples of the responses:

BPEd29: *“Time management when deciding to meet and do our assigned work. Since some of our research members are working.”*

BPEd49: *“For me, we are not same free time schedule as my groupmates because we are all working students.”*

BPEd55: *“One of the challenges and my experience when doing research is when the tasks come together, and sometimes the problem is the members because they are working and not helping us to complete the task.”*

BPEd68: *“I am a working student dad. Myschedule was my problem not just on our research but also on other subjects.”*

Sub-theme 3.2: Thesis writing contrasted with other academic course works

Aside from the thesis writing needed to be accomplished, there are also other academic courses that requires submission of various outputs which challenged students to work with their time management skills and balancing their academic priorities. Bombarded with various academic tasks from other courses while conducting thesis writing has been a great challenge which was displayed based from the statements of the participants. Examples of responses:

BPEd12: *“There are still some errands to consider, not just the thesis. We are taking other subjects, so other activities are present.”*

BPEd60: *“Yes. Specifically, the thesis is not the only thing we students focus on. There are different things we need to focus on, such as working and doing different activities of subjects; that is why we have difficulty completing the research.”*

BPEd94: *"For me, it is because of time management. There is a time when all the activities should be finished as early as possible because it affects the completion of the thesis."*

BPEd105: *"Being bombarded with so many activities and passion you need to attend for it is your motivation to pursue your dreams. I know time management is a must, but sometimes, it is too much. Everything is rushed, and that is what I am feeling right now. Everything should be finished as soon as possible. As a college student, I understand having many activities. However, I am just being honest with my answer and feelings. It is better to speak what is real than being blind."*

DISCUSSION

Quantitative

Using the information gathered in the quantitative phase, it was determined that undergraduates had only encountered mild difficulties in areas like infrastructure, communication, and time management. In this light, it can be assumed that the students' experiences with the aforementioned three domains have been neutral. The finding of the study have supported by the report of Mohammad El-Freihat (2021) which uncovered that students from Jordanian universities have also experienced a mild difficulty as measured by the three domains.

Even if the average level of yield across all the statements under the *infrastructure* domain was only moderate, it is still crucial for the college, and especially the library, to offer a wide variety of resources (i.e., research papers, books, periodicals) that students can use for their undergraduate theses. In addition, there are many resources that a typical student cannot access online (e.g., research papers and journals that require a paid subscription, e-books, etc.), which presents a significant barrier to them finishing their papers on time. The library is a gateway to knowledge and new insights (Soulen & Tedrow, 2022), and students will be able to learn how to conduct proper research if the school library gives access to additional electronic references and materials, hence, contributing to improved students' performance. Libraries are essential to fostering a culture of creativity and innovation because of the opportunities they provide for education, the spread of knowledge, and the

development of fresh ideas and points of view. It also contributes to the reliability of the historical record of human learning. Having a library that is both successful and of excellent quality can be a crucial element in attracting and maintaining great researchers. Students have disputed the common perception that they cannot access international materials in the college library. This suggests that the library is making an effort to supply students with high-quality materials and references that can be used in the creation of robust theses. Moreover, additional facilities that students can use for conducting experiments (e.g., laboratories) are highly suggested to be taken into consideration by the management of the college. Students' experiences of focal phenomena in laboratories may be shaped by the experimental technologies employed, in a human-mediating tools-world fashion, by highlighting or hiding specific features of reality (Bernhard, 2018). Some areas of physical education are extremely experimental, therefore having a well-equipped laboratory has educational benefits beyond the simple fact that students have a positive experience conducting their experiments, which may result in novel finding on their field being studied during thesis writing. Students benefit from this since it enhances their learning through exposure to real-world scenarios. The goal of a lab is not to win a competition by providing the "correct answer," but rather to teach students how to acquire knowledge, through observation and the interpretation of results (Gericke et al., 2022; Pareek, 2019; Watts et al., 2022). The availability of computers and other essential tools (e.g., internet connection) for student researchers should also be enhanced. Given the fact that most of the students in the college belongs to the marginalized sector; learning and study can both be conducted on computers via the internet. Students can save and organize their research materials on computers, as well as access helpful information online for their thesis. The availability and accessibility of education have been vastly improved by the advent of computers, which have provided access to an endless number of educational resources. It has been prevalent from other published scholarly works that the influence of computer has a positive association on students' motivation and academic achievement (Harris et al., 2016; Nouri et al., 2022; Simões et al., 2022).

Students report no issues with connecting with their research supervisor, which is an interesting finding based on the *communication* domain. This suggests that students have a positive time writing their theses, especially when they have questions that need answering and can quickly contact their research supervisor for help. However, there have been numerous studies that were reported having difficulties in dealing with research supervisors. Several studies have already demonstrated that thesis candidates receive insufficient supervision from their advisors (Boufeldja & Bouhania, 2020; Qasem & Zayid, 2019; Silinda & Brubacher, 2016). As an example, the study of Lestari (2020) revealed that, as a result of teachers' heavy workloads, students often struggle to get in touch with their research supervisors. In this regard, research supervisors should also provide more hands-on support to students in completing their undergraduate theses. Emerson (2019) has stated that "communication as empowerment" is a vital role of research supervisors to encourage positive outcomes by motivating student researchers to complete their degrees with minimal problems and maximum satisfaction.

Lastly, it was found that most of the students are having difficulty in managing their times under the *time management* domain. Previous studies accentuated the time management skills has a significant and direct relationship on academic performance (Adams & Blair, 2019; Ahmad et al., 2019). Nonetheless, most students are having difficulty in managing their time because of the excessive amount of course loads they are currently confronting in addition to the writing of their theses. Previously conducted studies have also emphasized that there is a significant relationship between the number of course loads and academic performance of the students (Attewell & Monaghan, 2016; Huntington-Klein & Gill, 2021). Surprisingly, time management is a skill that can be taught, and several studies have underlined this fact to undergraduates. Because of this, students need to learn how to effectively manage their time as soon as they set foot on campus. Researchers have found that students who learn to manage their time well early in their school careers have more success later on (Alyami et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2021).

Qualitative

As have mentioned in the findings, there are three (3) themes and 6 sub-themes emerged during the process which are (1) Internet connectivity challenges and communication (connectivity issues and inadequacy of scientific resources, and communication with thesis groupmates), (2) Data gathering impediments (recruitment of the participants and rejection from the participants), and (3) Time Management issues (drawbacks of working students and thesis writing contrasted with other academic course works).

Internet connectivity challenges and communication

Participants' statements suggest that a lack of a reliable internet connection is a barrier to finding relevant studies for undergraduate theses (AlMarwani, 2020; Medaille et al., 2021; Nurkamto et al., 2022), and to having productive discussions with group members, which is corroborated by earlier research (Natividad-Franco, 2021; Nurkamto et al., 2022). Considering that the majority of the participants come from socially excluded demographics, this is a common theme among their statements. Additionally, as have mentioned earlier, poor internet connection really hinders students in conducting research, most especially during the pandemic. Previous research has already emphasized that students' ability to succeed academically, including in the area of thesis writing, is hindered by slow or nonexistent internet connection. The study of Apuke and Iyendo (2018) have reported that North-Eastern Nigerian students overwhelmingly agreed that having ready access to the internet meant they could do their research ahead of time, allowing them to scour the web for relevant articles and materials from a variety of free, online sources. Also, the usage of the internet in educational settings has made it much simpler to access a wide variety of resources and to collaborate on research. Moreover, poor internet connection thwarts students to productively collaborate with their groupmates. Slow internet connection is highly evident most especially in the Philippines. In comparison to other emerging countries in Asia today, the Philippines' Internet infrastructure is severely lacking, especially in terms of Internet connectivity (Salac & Kim, 2016). The majority of the participants' concerns can be explained by the fact that they have to spend more time than necessary looking for

relevant scholarly articles for their research due to connection issues.

Data gathering impediments

Considering the previous section, it is indeed safe to say that data analysis is one of the trickiest parts of writing an undergraduate thesis. Recruiting will be challenging to carry out because data collection from target respondents/participants is entirely discretionary. The findings of this study have been corroborated by other published research papers (Azmat & Ahmad, 2022; Djatmika et al., 2022; Subia et al., 2022), since there have also other factors that should be highly considered when gathering data from people under studies. For example, Rimando et al. (2015) found that doctoral students face a number of difficulties when collecting data, including the fact that some respondents or participants may be reluctant to disclose private information. Another instance, some potential participants may be wary because of a lack of trust in the researchers, particularly those who are working in the community-based research, who they have yet to get to know and appreciate (Holden et al., 2015). Not only that, but poor timing is also cited as a reason why potential participants decline study invitations (Arfken & Balon, 2011; Mfutso-Bengo et al., 2008). If respondents or participants are unable to take part in the investigation, it is likely because the timing conflicts with other obligations they must attend. It is clear from the information shown above that student researchers may be in a precarious situation when it comes to enlisting participants and responses for their investigations. Intriguingly, a plethora of studies have highlighted different and efficient methods of recruiting respondents/participants for the study. To begin, the research instructor has to have a comprehensive discussion on the main fundamental processes involved in conducting a research project, most notably the process of participant recruiting. This is done so that prospective volunteers can be successfully invited without infringing any ethical procedures, such as seeking for ethical approval from the office in-charge of conducting investigations (Davis et al., 2022; Gelling, 2016). By securing ethical approval, student researchers show that their study adheres to the minimum requirements for conduct as set forth by the scientific community (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). It is the responsibility of the

researchers to disclose to the participants who have access to their information and exactly what is being performed with it. Additionally, in inviting prospect respondents/participants, information about the researcher and the study's purpose should be included in the invitation (Rajabzadeh et al., 2021). The participant should know who are the researchers and why they are being contacted in order to properly reply to such an invitation. In addition, student researchers should put out all of the relevant information, such as granting consent by the individuals in the process of conducting the study and additional benefits and hazards that participants may face during the course of the investigation (Barrow et al., 2022; Eyal, 2020; Gordon, 2020). Respect for individual autonomy can best be shown through obtaining informed permission, making it a crucial ethical need in research (Musmade et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2020). Lastly, it is crucial to assure the respondents/participants that their information will be kept private and utilized exclusively for the goals of the study itself (Badampudi et al., 2022; Surmiak, 2018). In order to help students, become comfortable with the methodical process of data collection and to get the most out of potential participants, the research instructor might teach them the aforementioned suggestions as stated earlier.

Time Management issues

Participants reported significant challenges in juggling employment and school, particularly when writing their undergraduate theses. Eastgate et al. (2022) and Tumin et al. (2020) are just two of many examples of scholarly studies that demonstrate how difficult it may be for college students to juggle their academic and professional responsibilities (Mutya et al., 2022; Tsurugano et al., 2021). It has already been established that the majority of the college population is comprised of members of socially vulnerable groups who often have to hold down part-time jobs to make ends meet. Additionally, juggling all academic courses (e.g., thesis writing and other courses; Lestari (2020) has been a prevalent issue among college students, with prior research (Appleby et al., 2022; Kennett et al., 2019; Ulriksen & Nejrup, 2021) showing that many students sacrificed significant personal events in order to meet the demands of their coursework. On a positive note, as have mentioned earlier, as soon as they step foot on

campus, students need to start learning how to manage their time efficiently.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the challenges and barriers students have faced during the completion of their undergraduate thesis in a sample of 4th-year Bachelor of Physical Education Students at City College of Angeles via a sequential explanatory approach. Based on the findings, participants have only experienced moderate challenges concerning Infrastructure, Communication, and Time Management. For a more in-depth explanation, the structured questionnaire has only focused on the use of the library and related facilities for experimentation, communication with the research supervisor, and time management (mostly concerning with research supervisor and thesis writing). However, based on students' statements, other challenges emerged that the structured questionnaire used for the study was unable to measure. Other challenges identified during the process are Internet connectivity and communication, Data gathering impediments, and Time Management issues.

The following results may provide new insights into practical interventions that can be employed for students who are completing their undergraduate theses—firstly, concerning infrastructure, such as improving the library by providing enormous reliable sources from trusted repositories that students may use in their respective areas of study. This will ensure that students' manuscripts are based on reliable sources, not predatory ones. Concerning communication with the research supervisors, as mentioned earlier, instructors should provide a more hands-on approach to collaborating with students to guide them throughout their thesis writing journey. Research supervisors are responsible for students' outcomes, specifically their manuscripts, which should be of high quality. Fostering positive communication with the students will result in higher motivation and satisfaction. Regarding time management, the college may introduce various time management systems to students as soon as they enter the premises. This will ensure that in students' early years in college, they will be able to practice managing their time in a way that is able for them to satisfy the needs and pressures of various academic course

works, most especially the rigorous process of thesis writing.

Aside from these practical interventions mentioned earlier, this study highly proposed other strategic interferences addressing the challenges that emerged in the study's qualitative phase. Addressing the first theme, internet connectivity challenges and communication, the college may provide various pieces of training in evaluating resources from the internet. The training should be focused on teaching students how to judge resources based on their reliability and credibility. Also, the college may strategically plan to provide free access to students using computers in the library. This is helpful for students who need more facilities and equipment to finish their outputs. As mentioned earlier, students enrolled in college belong to a marginalized sector. Hence, it is only imperative for the college to provide free access to struggling students in their thesis writing. Moreover, inculcating the 'value' of teamwork in students is highly suggested. The college may provide interventions by providing team exercises to students to help foster solidarity. Furthermore, regarding data-gathering impediments, it is highly suggested that students be guided accordingly by providing an in-depth explanation of various data-gathering plans and strategies they can effectively use since this specific phase is one of the most rigorous parts of thesis writing, as mentioned by various scholars. Finally, concerning time management issues for working students and those struggling to balance other academic courses with thesis writing, specifically for working students, the college may reconceptualize 'work,' and its vital role in students' learning and engagement. In line with this, transforming employment into an experience that can develop students' intellectual growth is highly emphasized. Lastly, like the previous suggestion, introducing a time management system in the early years may produce positive outcomes for students facing difficulties balancing all their academic courses.

Furthermore, this present study has certain drawbacks that must be considered highly. First, this study is limited to a sample of Bachelor of Physical Education students at City College of Angeles. Thus, the findings of this investigation cannot generalize the entire students of other Higher Education Institutions from various sectors, such as from the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) or even Private Higher Education

Institutions (PHEIs). Ergo, this study highly suggests conducting a similar study by collecting data from the HEIs of various sectors to determine if the findings support or refute the claims of this investigation. It is suggested to adopt the questionnaire that was used on this or any instrument that will encompass other challenges which will help researchers to provide a more feasible solution. Finally, adopting a multi-informant approach is highly recommended by amassing research supervisors' reports, as these significant individuals may provide profound information specifically about the various challenges and barriers their students are facing in thesis writing which may be used for a more cohesive practical intervention beneficial for the students.

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Conflict of interest

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Ethics committee approval:

Respondents participating in the study gave their consent by accepting the accompanying statement in Google Forms. In addition, the participants were informed about the aims, tools and measured variables of the study.

Author Contributions

Study Design, Data Collection, Statistical Analysis, Data Interpretation, Manuscript Preparation, Final review and editing, performed by the author.

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