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**Insights into Challenges Facing Doctoral Students
Case Study of EFL students at the Department of English Language
and Literature at Biskra University**

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah alone, the Sustainer of the entire world

This Dissertation is dedicated to:

My parents; my first and last teachers who have given invaluable educational opportunities

My beloved sisters Chalia, Cyria, Lidia, Tinhinane, and Milina

My brother Mazigh Mohamed Amine

My gorgeous and sweet nephews Ahmed Mehdi, Eline, and Anfel

My lovely Grandmother who keeps me safe with her duaa

The people who have supported me throughout my education.

Thanks for making me see this adventure through the end.

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Abstract

Successful completion of doctoral studies is challenging in nature. Many doctoral students as a result extend years or quitting their journey. Therefore, this research aims to reveal the challenges that face doctoral students in completing their doctoral studies, EFL doctoral students at Mohamed Khider Biskra University, department of English, as a case study. The research is based on the question “what are the challenges that EFL doctoral students at Biskra University face”, and relates on the hypothesis that there may be academic, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges. The research methodology involves the use of the descriptive exploratory approach. In order to collect data from the participants’ perspective and experience, a questionnaire is distributed to EFL doctoral students, and an interview is conducted with their supervisors at Biskra University department of English. From a total of 27 students only 17 answered the questionnaire, and from a total of 7 supervisors only 4 were available to have an interview with. The results from the research have provided an insight into the challenges faced by EFL doctoral students. The most critical of these challenges are psychological, personal, and institution challenges, followed by financial and academic challenges. However, supervision related challenges do not pose crucial concern to the doctoral students. All of these challenges interplay a negative impactful in completing the doctoral journey successfully. Therefore, more researches are needed to overcome and solve these challenges.

Key words: Challenges, EFL Doctoral Students, Thesis Writing.

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctoral system

EFLT: English Foreign Language Teaching

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General Introduction

Background of the problem

The doctoral diploma is the highest academic degree awarded to doctoral students who have achieved the doctoral journey successfully, and are ready to be independent researcher.

Succeeding in the doctoral contest is the first step in becoming a scholar in the Algerian universities. The doctoral journey from registration to thesis defend is long and full of challenges. According to the doctoral guide, thesis writing is the essential element that doctoral students are required to conduct. Which has to be an original research choosed collaboratively by the students and their supervisor. It is highly important to mention that the thesis topic cannot be modified during registration, expect in some exceptional cases. However, doctoral students do not have the right to choose their supervisor, rather the department determine them according to their allowance to supervise the third phase of the LMD system. In addition to the thesis writing, doctoral students have to gather one hundred eightycredits from different activities that form the training of the doctoral program. These activities include actual participation in scheduled conferences, and seminars, article publishing in ranked journals, and teaching assistant.

This educational journey is challenging for many EFL doctoral students. It was witnessed that the attrition rates in the doctoral program are increasing recently. The most challenging part in doctoral studies is thesis writing, since students are required to write and conduct research independently for the first time. This is often the point students continue or quit their doctoral program.

Completing doctoral studies is challenging in nature. It poses a formidable challenges for many doctoral students, as it demands high academic, psychological, physical, and financial performance. Nevertheless, not every doctoral student is able to bring their studies to

fruition. Previous researches have demonstrated that a considerable percent of doctoral students are impeded from completing their programs due to a diverse range of challenges.

Statement of the problem

Successful completion of doctoral studies is a complex matter. The doctoral journey is a long and challenging path that many students struggle with, as they face a variety of challenges. These challenges range from finding the right research topic to successfully completing the thesis. Furthermore, doctoral students are often expected to take on additional responsibilities such as teaching classes, writing papers, and presenting and participating at conferences, all of which add to the already overwhelming workload. The intensity of these challenges lead many doctoral students taking extended periods of time to complete their thesis writing. And, in some cases, to them never finishing or quitting and giving up. Although doctoral students are highly selected group. While there have been a number of studies conducted on the linguistic, psychological and socioeconomic challenges in the doctoral level, there is yet to be a holistic view of the doctoral thesis writing process. This research seeks to fill this significant gap by looking at the challenges faced in the EFL doctoral thesis writing at the Algerian Universities.

Research aim

The aim of this research is to reveal and understand the academic, psychological, and financial challenges that EFL doctoral students in Algerian universities may face in general and particularly at Biskra University. It is crucial to gain an understanding of the different challenges that may face EFL doctoral students in order to provide appropriate solutions to each one in the further studies.

Research objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. Identify and analyze the academic, psychological, and financial challenges that EFL doctoral students may face in Biskra University.
2. Examine the impact of these challenges on the students' academic performance.

Significance of the Research

The importance of the research study is that present a research gap, and tackles an issue face novice university researchers (doctoral students). In addition, this research is addressed to:

- Master students who are interested in pursuing higher studies; it will provide them with insight into the responsibilities, and challenges that come with pursuing a higher degree of education. That they will decide whether doctoral studies fits them or not.
- Advisors: being aware on the challenges that may face doctoral students, will help supervisors to have a clear vision on how to help and guide them.
- Policy makers. In the Algerian higher Institution, policy makers are responsible on making strategically important decision concerning the doctoral degree. This research seeks to draw the attention of decision makers to the challenges that the EFL doctoral students face, and elicit suggestions from faculty members to help EFL doctoral students in enhancing their progress.

Research Questions

The primary research question to be answered in this study is:

What are the challenges that EFL doctoral students face at Biskra University?

Secondary research questions include:

Are there academic, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

EFL doctoral students may face a variety of academic, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges in their thesis writing.

Research Methodology

The research method will be involved in this research is the descriptive exploratory approach, as it seems to be the appropriate method to achieve the research aims. The research aimed to reveal the challenges that face EFL doctoral students, from the students' and their supervisors experience and perspective. Two data collection tools are chosen due to the nature of the research. The questionnaire will be submitted to the EFL doctoral students, and the interview will be conducted with the EFL doctoral supervisors at Biskra University Department of English.

Population and sampling

The populations of this research will be the EFL doctoral students and their supervisors at University Mohamed Khider Biskra Department of English. The availability of the participants will determine the sample size of the research.

Structure of the research

The research will be divided into three chapters, theoretical and practical chapters. The first and second chapters concerned with the theoretical parts of the research reviewing in an in-depth related literature of the variables. The first chapter will tackle the thesis writing, as it is the most essential component in the doctoral

studies. Doctoral students are required for the first time to conduct an original work. Therefore, this chapter aims to highlight the doctoral thesis, and the thesis writing. The second chapter will focus on an in-depth reviewing related literature on the academic, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges that face EFL doctoral students. The last chapter is the practical field that deals with interpreting and analyzing and discussion the data will be obtained from the data collection tools.

Limitations of the Research

The present research had a number of limitations that should be highlighted. First of all, few previous researches were conducted on the challenges that face doctoral students, particularly in the Algerian context. Second, there is no research describing the doctoral journey in Algeria from registration till thesis defends. The researcher is a master two students who lack knowledge and experience about the doctoral journey in Algeria. Another limitation viewed in data gathering. It was challenging to contact with both participants in the study. Most EFL doctoral students in Biskra University are far away from the university. In addition, doctoral supervisors are always busy with their multi-administrative tasks, where it was hard to get an interview with them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research sought to reveal the challenges that face doctoral students in general, and particularly the EFL doctoral students at Biskra University. The research will involve an in-depth review of the existing related literature, the development of the research questions and hypothesis to be tested, and the use of descriptive exploratory approach to collect and analyze data. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide a better understanding of the challenges that face EFL doctoral students in their studies.

Chapter One: The Doctoral Thesis

Introduction

This chapter shed light on the EFL doctoral thesis writing as it is considered the most challenging part in the doctoral studies, where doctoral students at the first time are required to conduct an original research independently. Therefore, this chapter aims to introduce, describes the outline and the structure of the doctoral thesis, and provide some advice that was indicated by expert scholars concerning doctoral thesis writing. Most doctoral thesis includes an introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion. In addition to the preliminary sections.

1.1. Thesis

The thesis is a types of an academic papers. It is a Greek word that means "position", and refers to "intellectual proposition". The terms thesis and dissertation are used interchangeably. Both refer to work that has formal academic research project that has been done at a graduate setting of a Master or Doctoral degree. A doctoral thesis is a required lengthy piece of original academic writing by most doctoral programs on a particular subject, for completing and award a scholarly degree. According to Blair (2016), in his book 'Writing a graduate thesis or dissertation', thesis is the outcome sizeable body of study and scholarly writing produced with high autonomy and carry the responsibility of original knowledge contribution (p.1). The doctoral thesis is typically from 200 to 300 pages completed during three years can be extended for maximum two years. Blair (2016, p.1) stated that monograph thesis contains interlinking chapters, generally; introduction, review of the literature, research methodology, research findings and results, and a conclusion, identifying clearly the contribution to knowledge. He also remarked that the preferable format, length and criteria of a thesis, are determined by the student's field, supervisor and program. The aim of thesis writing is preparing the candidates to be an

independent researcher through acquiring research and academic skills, and showing the candidate's ability for criticality in thinking and writing regarding any topic and discussing it in depth. Thesis writing allows candidates following the academic path from novice to experts in the field.

1.2. Thesis writing

Thesis writing is a complex, and challenging task that have to be completed on time. It requires a great amount of effort, research, and dedication to create an original and well structured paper that meets the standards of the university. “Graduate students are expected to produce high quality, innovative research and do so in decreasing amounts of time” (Lee, 2007, as cited in Blair, 2016, p. xvii). The process of writing a thesis is a multi-stage endeavour that entails several key steps, including identifying gaps in literature, formulating a thesis statement, reviewing relevant literature, writing a research proposal, collecting and analyzing data, presenting and reporting findings in a clear and concise manner, and writing the final paper with a focus on critical review and editing. Time and effort must be invested along with strict attention to details in order to complete each stage successfully. It is crucial to highlight that the thesis reflect student's ability to think critically and creatively, as they are prepared to be independent researchers.

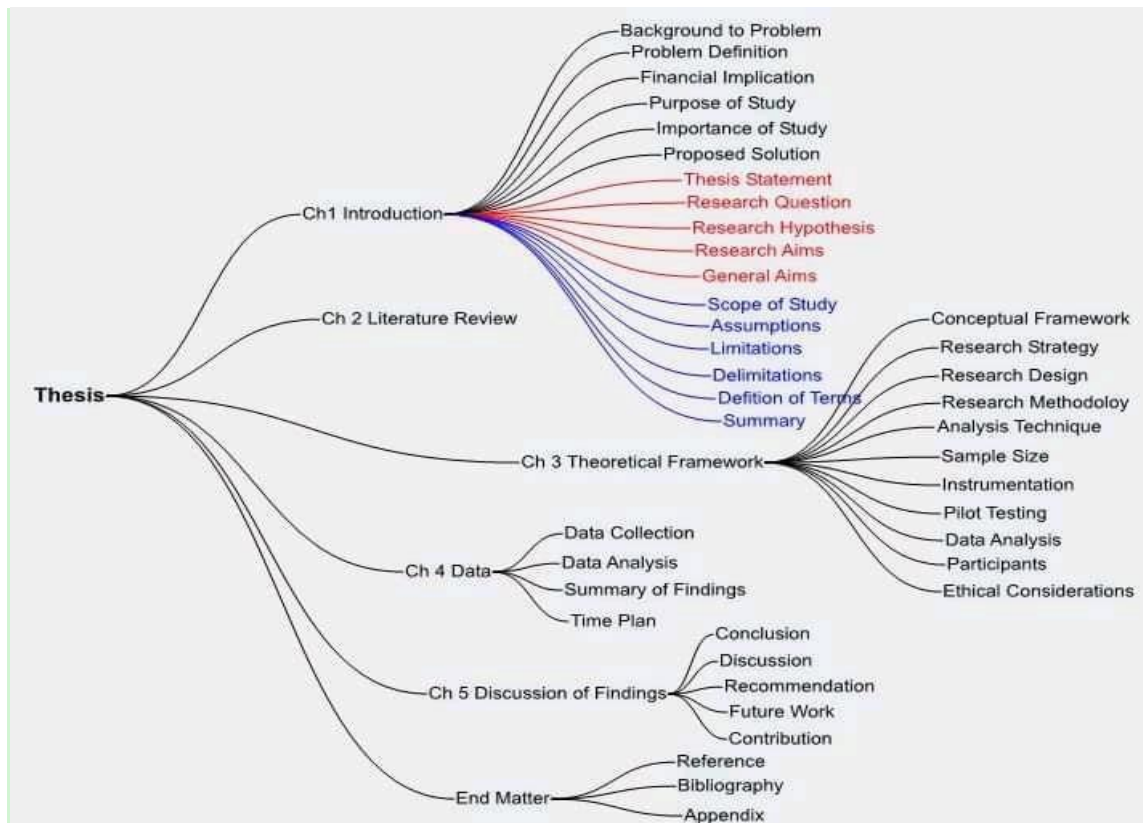


Figure 1: Mind Map Approaches to Thesis Writing

Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/c5/b1/dd/c5b1dd998bf9e8ff14261d87898a5477.jpg>

1.2.1. Front matter of the thesis

Front matter is the first section of a thesis. It is also called preliminary matter. Front matter refers to the introductory sections of a thesis; all the pages that come before the first page of chapter one. It is typically composed of several basic, optional and available sections, including: the title page, approval sheet, acknowledgments, abstract, copyright page, dedication, table of contents, and a list of figures, tables, and plates (Dangue, 2018, p.2). The front matter serves to provide information about the thesis, such as its title, author, institution, and a brief overview of the contents, as well as to provide a structure for the rest of the document. The front matter also sets the tone for the rest of the document and can provide

important context for the reader. It is important to ensure that the front matter is well written, organized, and comprehensive, as it meets the standards of the university.

1.2.2. Introduction Writing

The introduction is the first chapter in any doctoral thesis. This chapter is an important section as it aims to orient the readers and provide a context for the research being conducted.

According to Faraydi (2017; 2018), the introduction of a doctoral thesis is a highly challenging and crucial section. The primary reason for this is attributed to the requirement of not only securing the reader's attention, but also effectively eliciting their interest in the research being conducted. Furthermore, it serves as evidence of the researcher's expertise and credibility in carrying out the investigated research. Moreover, the introduction should start with relevant general statements, before gradually narrowing down to focus on critical issues such as the research problem, questions, objectives, and hypothesis. It should also elucidate how the findings will contribute to existing knowledge, discuss the concepts utilized in the research, the objectives and methodology employed, and discuss the limitations of the research. The most important details in a research introduction chapter include the rationale of the research, the research's significance, and a roadmap for developing the introduction.

An ideal introduction chapter of the doctoral thesis includes a clear and brief statement of the problem, and relevant literature review, present the significance of the research in the field, and the research aims and objectives. In addition, it highlights the research questions and hypothesis the researcher intends to answer, and explain the methodology that will be used to conduct the research. Furthermore, it provides a roadmap of the thesis chapters, and presents the limitation of the research.

1.2.2.1. Stating the Problem

The problem statement is an important part of any scientific enquiry, as it states a specific condition that requires immediate attention and a possible solution. It must generate questions to answer, such as what is the problem, where is it, how can it be solved, why do you want to solve it, if it is a current issue, if it persists, who are affected adversely by it, and if it proves or disproves existing knowledge (Faraydi, 2018, p. 2538).

A statement of the problem is a clear and concise description of an issue that needs to be addressed or solved. It is used to define and frame the main idea of a research study, project, or objective. It is typically the initial step in recognizing and addressing a problem. It guides the researcher in focusing their efforts on the most important areas of the topic. The statement should be brief and to the point, outlining the problem and its implications. It should also be specific enough to be measurable and provide the research or project a clear direction.

According to Faraydi (2018), thesis students may find it difficult to decide what research to undertake, and that it is important to gain a clear understanding of the research literature on the topic of their interest in order to identify potential research problems. Therefore, he noted the most important criteria for good research problems. These criteria include expressing a relation between two or more variables, stating the problem in question form, and implying possibilities for empirical testing. The problem statement should also contain implications for testing its stated relations of variables, as well as the variables of the relation can be measured. Faraydi (2018, p. 2539) also highlighted the most important details in writing a problem statement. That it should be researchable, have relevant scholarly documents, be suitable for the researcher, bring practical benefits, and be challengeable. The selection of a research problem should be based on interest, knowledge, conceptual framework, and data availability.

1.2.2.2. Defining Research Objectives

The research objectives are critical for the success of the research study. It provides the research with a clear direction, and ensure that the presented research has a timeline for completion and researchable.

A research objective is a clear statement that provides direction to the study. It defines the scope of the study and sets guidelines and standards to be achieved. Research objectives can be general or specific in nature. The general objectives states what the researcher expects to achieve in general terms, while the specific objectives breaks down the general objectives into smaller, logically connected segments that address the different parts of the research problems (Masanja, 2019, p.35). According to Dangué (2018, p.16), Objectives are the desired or expected ends to be achieved through the research activity. They should be stated in simple language, use measurable concepts, be attainable, result-oriented, time-bounded, generate enthusiasm, and use local resource.

In conclusion, research objectives should be specific and achievable, listed in order of importance or potential contributions. They should fit into the problem statement and be presented according to priority. Two common errors in writing objectives researcher may fall in are vague generalities and not presented according to priority (Lebrerio, 2012, p.20).

1.2.2.3. Formulating Research Questions and Hypotheses

In doctoral thesis writing, a research question and hypothesis are important components of the research process. According to Faraydi (2018, p. 2542) research questions and hypotheses are the spine of the thesis writing process that determines the success or the failure of the research study. In addition, the research aim, purpose, and problem are clearly established through well structured research question and hypothesis.

The research question is an essential part of a thesis, as it focuses on the study, regulates the methodology, and guides all stages of investigation, analysis, and answers the problem statement. It should reflect and elaborate a deeper understanding of the topic, erase ambiguity, guide the type of investigation, identify the type of data, and lead to an analytical approach. Good research questions help eliminate serious problems from society (Faraydi, 2018, p. 2539).

Any doctoral thesis must incorporate research questions, as they represent the fundamental basis for the entire research process. They enable the researcher to concentrate on a specific domain and formulate a plan of action to obtain solutions to the inquiries.

Research hypothesis is prediction, intelligent or educated guess that gives the researcher a directional to answer the research question. It is a suggested answer of a result or relationship between two or more variables under specific conditions. Research hypothesis was defined as “a conjectural statement of the relation between two or more variables” (Kerlinger, 1973. as cited in Librero, 2012, p.21). Other authors defined it as a statement about the relation between two or more variables that are testable, measurable or potentially measurable and specify how they are related.

The common types of hypotheses are: null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_1). Null hypothesis states no significant difference between two parameters, while alternative hypothesis states a relationship between two or more variables. Librero (2012, p.22) highlighted that Hypotheses should be deduced to test the consequences, not to be proven, and to be able to recognize the consequences. In addition, It is important to ask how useful the hypothesis is, how it has roots in theory, and what place it has in a hierarchy of facts and theories. However, Faraydi (2018, p. 2542) stated that the hypotheses should be simple, relevant to the study, testable in the field, verifiable, and realistic for desirable

outcomes. They are important for validating research activity, determining whether assumptions are true or false, directing researchers, saving time and resources, collecting and applying relevant data, and leading to a meaningful conclusion.

The research hypothesis is an important part of the research study, as it provides the framework for data collection and analysis. A clear and concise research hypothesis is essential for the successful completion of a doctoral thesis. Without a valid research hypothesis, the results of the study may be inconclusive or misleading.

1.2.2.4. Emphasizing the Significance of the study

The significance of the study refers to the contribution of the study in the research filed. It is essential in any research study because it highlights the relevance of the research, potential outcomes and the main beneficiaries of the investigation.

The "Significance", a subjective concept that needs to be quantified scientifically, is the most crucial aspect of a study contribution. Creating new knowledge based on the previously existing knowledge through extensive and creative research. To measure the contribution, researchers must explain the importance of their research problem, their findings, transformation of the existing theory, generalizability, added values, experimental significance, research area, research method, and creativity in solving their problem (Faraydi, 2018, p. 2543).

Estolas et al. (1995, as cited in Dangué, 2018, p.19) emphasized the importance of the study, which should contribute to the accumulation of knowledge, building theories, finding solutions, and improving education, income, health, and inter-relations. A doctoral research is a scientific discovery of new knowledge that can benefit other researchers in the related field. Therefore, it has to add its significant in the field.

1.2.2.5. Identifying the Scope and Delimitation of the study

Scope and delimitations are important sections of a research paper. The scope defines the coverage and boundaries of the study. Delimitations are conditions beyond the researcher's control that limit the conclusions of the study (Dangue, 2018, p.19).

The Scope and Limitations of the Study section is important for researchers to identify the boundaries of their research. It discusses the weaknesses of the study in terms of methodology and generalizability of the results, as well as the size of sample, locale, and other factors. This section is often referred to as the Scope and Limitations of the Study (Lebrerio, 2018).

According to Mansanja (2019), the scope of the study is the area covered in the research, including themes and field. It also includes the amount of information to be included. Narrowing the scope of the study can be important as it allows the researcher to clarify the problem and investigate in depth, compared to a broader scope. However, Limitations of the study are influences that are beyond the control of the researcher. They are research shortcomings, unfavourable conditions or influences that might affect the investigation negatively and the researcher cannot control. These are any limitations which might influence the research methodology, results or findings and the conclusion of the study.

1.2.3. Literature review writing

The review of related literature and related studies is an essential component of any doctoral thesis. A literature review is used to define the boundaries of knowledge. To adequately support their research, the researchers must locate, read, assess, organize, and report on every relevant source; primary, secondary, and tertiary (Dangue, 2018, p.22).

A literature review is “an objective, critical summary of published research literature relevant to a topic under consideration for research. Its purpose is to create familiarity with

current thinking and research on a topic and may justify future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area” (Thompson Rivers University- Pamela Fry, as cited in Faraydi, 2018). It is a comprehensive and critical summary and evaluation of existing research that is relevant to the topic of the thesis. It involves identifying, summarizing and critically analyzing the relevant literature. It provides an overview of existing research on a particular topic and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of that research. It should include a synthesis of the literature and an analysis of the research’s implications. A literature review is an important part of the research process and is often the foundation upon which further research is based.

The literature review can be either empirical or theoretical. Empirical literature reviews is a critical assessment of the existing research on a particular topic. It uses existing empirical data from primary or secondary sources to evaluate a specific research question. This means that the review is based on facts and evidence rather than opinion or speculation. It is an important part of any doctoral thesis writing process, as it allows the researcher to analyze and synthesize previous findings in the field in order to identify gaps and suggest new directions for future research. Theoretical literature review is a review of books, articles, journals related to a research that helps establish what theories already exist, the relationships between them, their contribution in the field, and to develop the hypothesis to be tested. It involves the analysis of existing theories, models, and/or frameworks related to the research topic. The review of theoretical literature should provide theories, principles, and concepts related to the subject of the study, analyze underlying theories and their implications, identify independent and dependent variables, and develop a hypothesis (Masanja, 2019, p.65).

The literature review serves several crucial functions, including providing a comprehensive conceptual and theoretical framework for the study, providing information about previous researches that are related to the intended study, giving the study a sense of

confidence, providing insights into research methods, population, sampling considerations, instrumentation, and statistical computations in previous studies, as well as presenting findings, conclusions, and recommendations from previous researches that may relate to the present study. The review of literature and studies provide a purpose for one's research question or hypothesis and demonstrates the relationship between past work and the present investigation (Dangue, 2018, p.25).

A literature review is an important part of any doctoral thesis, and should be included as a core component of the research process. "The steps used to conduct and write a literature review mirror the research process" (Randolf, 2009, as cited in Blair, 2012, p.32). The review of literature helps the researcher to gain an understanding of the research and identify potential gaps in the literature. Therefore, it is important to highlight that a literature review should be well-researched, critical, and comprehensive, and should establish a basis for further researches. It is essential for a literature review to have a well-organized structure, with each section providing a critical analysis of the literature identified, and should provide evidence from a variety of sources, such as academic journals, books, newspapers, websites, and other sources.

Finally, the literature review should not be a simple summary of the literature, but should also demonstrate a clear understanding of the debates and controversies that exist in the field. The literature should also be contextualized, meaning that it should be discussed in relation to the research question and the overall research problem.

1.2.4. Developing a Research Methodology

The methodology section of a doctoral thesis is a vital part for the students to show their understanding of the study, and ensure that the results of the research are accurate and reliable. And it is critical for examiners to recognize the student's ability to be an independent

researcher. This chapter is critical as it provides a clear link between the aim of the study, research questions, research approaches, and research methods. Additionally, it serves to provide detailed and clear description of the research methodology. Which it includes the research design or method, sample and population of the research, data collection tools, and analysis techniques. Ideally, this chapter should be well written to ensure that the readers grasp the steps undertaken to reach the conclusion of the thesis. The primary aim of this section is to provide readers with an explicit comprehension of the research process and the collated data.

Faraydi (2019) noted that a majority of doctoral candidates struggle to finish their thesis on time due to lack of expertise in writing methodology correctly, scientifically and how to analyze them properly.

Research design is an essential part of any research process, as it provides a roadmap for the research process, from research question formulation to data collection and analysis. It is a blueprint of the scientific study. This section describes exactly what type of study was undertaken. Research design includes the methods and procedures used to answer research questions in the most efficient manner possible. The commonly used methods in social science are quantitative research; counting and measuring, qualitative research; conversation with participants, and mixed method research (Faraydi, 2019; Gay et al, 2009; Astuti S.S et al, 2017). In research design, it is important to decide on the type of design will be used in the research investigation. The common types of research design that helps to outline the research study are descriptive, correlational, quasi-experimental, experimental, and causal-comparative.

Another section in this chapter is population and sample of the study. Population in statistics refers to data on the study of interest. It can be a group of individuals, objects, or

events have common characteristics that are the interest of the researcher. However, when the population size is too vast to include all members or observations in the test, a sample is utilized. The sample is a smaller and more manageable representative of a larger group; a subset of a larger population that shares traits with that group. However, Sampling is the process of selection the accurate representation of group from a population of interest. There are two types of sampling probability (representative) and non-probability sampling. The former is a technique that provides an equal chance to the participants from the population. It includes random, stratified random, systematic, and cluster sampling. The latter is a technique that does not provide an equal chance to the participants of the population. It includes convenience, purposive, quota, snowball, and volunteer sampling. Lebrerio (2012, p.77) declared that while selecting a sample, the researcher have to consider four factors; homogeneity, size of population, cost, and precision.

1.2.5. Resulting and discussing data

Results and discussion chapter is considering the core of the research study, as it provides an overview of the findings and its implication in the field. The results and discussion may be presented in two chapters or combined into one chapter. Scholars relate that it is a matter of preference, where others relate it that it depends on the nature, type, and methodology of the study, as well as to the norms and standards of the university.

The results chapter also referred to the findings and analysis chapter. This chapter presents and describes the analysis of the data collected using data visualization reports such as graphs, figures, tables, and charts. It serves to report the findings of the study without speculation to the reasons of the outcomes or interpreting the results. According to Faraydi (2019, p.778) it documents the results scientifically, report the information collected and analyze the findings without bias. It is important to note that reporting data is different in

quantitative and qualitative researches. Data are present from statistical analysis in qualitative research, while in quantitative research present data by coding and categorising topics and themes. This chapter is highly important as it provides a clear link between research problem, research questions, research hypothesis, and the research findings. Ideally, the results should be well organized, written in the past tense and seek ethical in reporting data, as both positive and negative results are significant contribution to existing knowledge.

The discussion chapter interprets and explains the meaning of the results, put them in a context, and discuss the significant and the implication of the results that help to answer the research questions and achieve the research aims. Ideal written discussion chapter should include an introduction remind the readers with the research problem, research questions, research hypothesis, and the research aim, highlight the main findings related to the research questions, interpret and explain the results for the reader, concluding the chapter with a brief summary of the key findings in relation to the research questions. In addition, this chapter should not repeat the results or report new information and findings.

1.2.6. Concluding main points

Thesis conclusion is the final section of a doctoral thesis. That provides a concise and comprehensive outline of the presented research. It is a summary of the thesis, which tends to summaries the main points and presents the findings of the research. It also highlights the significant of the thesis study in the field. The section is optimally written in an organized, concise manner and follows a scientific style. Ideally, this section provides a brief description of the key findings of the research, an assessment of the significance of the research, and recommendations for further researches. In addition, conclusion section must not present any new information or materials. However, it must only replicate the points established earlier in the thesis. It is important to note that the conclusion should not introduce any new

information or arguments, but should simply reinforce the points made earlier in the thesis. According to Faraydi (2019,p.779) writing a thesis conclusion is challenging, since it serves as a critical section of the thesis that shows the researcher's ability to synthesize and communicate complex information effectively. Furthermore, thesis conclusion discusses the why, the what, and the how of the research study. In addition, it present an answer to the research questions in a scholarly manner and make a point that the research is worthy of reading. Additionally, thesis conclusion should discuss how the findings have bridged the gap in the particular area of knowledge and provide information for other researchers to conduct further studies. Finally, this section should be carefully written, as it is the final impression that the reader will have of the work.

1.2.7. End matter

End matter in thesis writing is a set of components that come at the end of the document. These components mainly include a bibliography, list of appendices, a glossary as well as an index. The end matter in a thesis holds a significant role within the document and should be accorded due importance. A bibliography, for instance, is a compilation of sources, often books, articles, and websites that were referenced while conducting research and writing the thesis. It should include all sources cited in the body and should be formatted according to the style guide of the institution. An appendix is a section at the end of a document that contains additional information or material attached at of the thesis. This section may contain tables, figures, calculations, graphs, and other detailed or time-consuming data that is unsuitable for inclusion within the main body of the paper. Lastly, the glossary is a list of terms and their corresponding definitions employed throughout the thesis. These terms may be related to the field of study or the specific research undertaken. An index is a list of topics, people, and places mentioned in the thesis, along with the page number of each occurrence. It

helps readers quickly locate information within the thesis. End matter is an important part of a thesis and should be included in the document for readers to easily locate additional information.

Conclusion

A doctoral thesis is a research work written by doctoral students to award their doctoral degree. It is the most crucial component in the doctoral program, and typically is the longest piece of academic writing students are required to complete in their academic journey.

Thesis writing is challenging in nature, as it requires years of hard work, and research in the field of the study. The doctoral thesis contains several chapters that set the research framework of the study. These chapters are typically viewed in introduction that sets the background of the study, research questions and hypothesis, the contribution and limitation of the study. Additionally, to the literature review and the theoretical framework that set the theoretical context of the research. Furthermore, the methodology, data, and discussion chapters, which is the practical part of the research that aims to answer the research question and proof the research hypothesis. Also, it provides a clear link between research questions and the results of the study.

Chapter Two: The Doctoral Challenges

Introduction

The completion of doctoral studies is challenging for many doctoral students, as it requires years of academic, psychological, physical, and financial sacrifices. However, not every doctoral student completes their studies. Previous researches have indicated that a significant number of doctoral students fail to complete their programs due to a variety of challenges. Therefore, the current chapter presents a description of the various challenges; academic, psychological, and socioeconomic that EFL doctoral students face while doing their doctoral program.

2.1. Academic challenges

The academic research field sees a growth interest in the academic challenges at the doctoral level. Several studies on the challenges that doctoral students face have been published in journals and at conferences. The academic challenges that doctoral students face presented in: academic writing challenges, research challenges, supervision-related challenges, and institution challenges.

Goa (2021, p.511) presented that the challenges includes in the academic domain are the relationship with the supervisor(s), peer and faculty support, and research challenges. Furthermore, According to Inouye and Mc Alpine (2019, as cited in Gupta et al., 2022, p.2), the complexities of academic writing are exacerbated during the doctoral level due to the expectation of a systematic comprehension and extensive awareness of the respective field of study, expertise in research methodologies related to that field, and the ability to effectively communicate intricate notions with peers and the larger academic community.

2.1.1. Academic writing challenges

Several publications have appeared in recent years documenting the academic writing challenges at the doctoral level. According to Pidgeon and Andres (2005, quoted in Gupta et al., 2022, p.2), many English as an Additional Language (EAL) doctorate students face several academic writing challenges. Gupta (2022), despite the substantial scholarly attention devoted to the challenges of doctorate studies, there has been limited study dedicated toward understanding academic writing challenges from the viewpoints of doctoral students and their supervisors.

Academic writing constitutes a crucial aspect of any successful graduate curriculum, particularly within the realm of doctoral studies. Doctoral students are anticipated to compose their theses in a scholarly, critical, and personal manner. Therefore, a clear understanding of the concept of the academic writing is required. Academic writing defined by Irvin (2010 as cited in Hamzaoui, 2021, p. 3.), as “a form of evaluation that requires students to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting”. In terms of clarity and conciseness, however, it is important to note that Turner (2011, as cited in Hamzaoui, 2021, p.3) mentioned that “tightly ordered logical exposition, concision in choice of lexis, clarity, and economy of style continue to be the rhetorical norms within which academic writing pedagogy and expectations of a smooth read, operate”.

As researches reported in Goa (2021, p.510) the English proficiency requirements for the disciplines of humanities and social sciences were found to be more stringent than those for STEM fields (Chang & Kanno, 2010; Le & Gardner, 2010), that strong the prove of the complexity of research writing in the English foreign language field. Academic writing proficiency stands out as the predominant skill that characterizes a doctoral program and is crucial for a future career in academia. Academic writing proficiency is required in order to

meet the demands and the expectations of the academic community for effective communication. This proficiency is essential across various forms of academic writing such as the doctoral thesis, research proposals, conference articles, abstracts, literature reviews, and journal articles.

The undertaking of research writing is still a significant challenge for many students, particularly for those engaged in the composition of a scholarly thesis. Scholars have given attention on the challenges and problems that may impede their pursuit of a degree (Goa, 2021, p.505). In his report, Hamzaoui (2021, p.9) remarked that research writing presents a formidable challenge for the majority of Algerian students who are studying English as a foreign language (EFL), due to the multifaceted skills it demands, including the selection of a topic, planning, conducting research, critical thinking, accurate language usage (including grammar and vocabulary), and style. Moreover, Academic writing, according to Fukao and Fujii (2001, as cited in Hamzaoui,2021, p.3) requires students to be able to combine abilities such as obtaining material, structuring thoughts logically, summarizing, and paraphrasing resources, editing, and final proofreading.

The ability of expressing information and ideas in writing is critical to the academic and professional success of graduate students (Gupta et al., 2022). Hamzaoui, (2021) reviewed the studies that have been conducting the academic writing challenges at the graduate level. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) have underscored the challenges doctoral students encounter in composing research papers, specifically with regards to language usage and the articulation and interconnection of concepts (p.3). Correspondingly, Ho (2013), Singh (2015), and Komba (2015) acknowledged that these challenges occasionally in structuring the constituent parts of the thesis (p.3).

The literature concerning international graduate students asserts the myriad of difficulties they encounter in their academic writing, as evidenced by the work of Alostath (2021, p.17); Shaw (1991), Casanave and Hubbard (1992), Paltridge (2002), Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006), Holmes et al. (2018), Huerta et al. (2017), Alsaedi (2017), and Zeiger (2021). Scholars delve into the diverse challenges that graduate students face and classify them into distinct categories. Specifically, two principal themes were identified: discourse-level, and sentence-level problems. The former encompass the quality of the content, progression of ideas, structure of paragraphs, and overall writing abilities. The latter encompass the appropriate utilization of grammatical rules, academic vocabulary, orthography, and punctuation.

Writing to report different scientific researches in a scholarly manner can be overwhelming and challenging for many students. Writing a thesis sections; introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, data report and analysis, conclusion, and recommendations require different styles, structures, tenses, and verbs. Goa (2021, p.510) reported the findings of Son & Park (2015), Sato (2016), and Chatterjee-Padmanabhan & Nielsen (2018) that reveal the unfamiliarity of discipline-specific discourse as a source of the academic writing challenges, such as adapting the writing style for academic purposes.

The majority of academic writing challenges and difficulties graduate students experience are related to their linguistic competence, and sentence structure including: vocabulary, grammar, lack of mastery of academic writing style, and punctuation (Divsar, 2018; Boufeldja and Bouhania, 2020; Alastah,2021).Scholars have reported that EFL students in higher education are more likely to face linguistic challenges.

Scholars in Hamzaoui (2021,p.3) have observed that certain students who are required to compose a thesis in English as a foreign or secondary language continue to encounter

formidable linguistic challenges, such as grammatical and punctuation difficulties, along with a deficiency in lexicon to articulate concepts and perspectives. Similarly, Divsar (2018, p.197) has documented in her investigation that the dominant challenges faced by Iranian TEFL students in the domain of thesis writing are primarily of a linguistic nature, including grammatical and organizational problems, as well as an inadequacy in the mastery of academic writing conventions.

The literature on the international graduate students suggests the diverse difficulties they face are in their academic writing. Chatterjee-Padmanabhan and Nielsen (2018, as cited in Goa, 2021, p.511) noted that international doctoral students who utilize English as a second language may find the implicit conventions of scholarship within educational contexts and comprehension of tacit expectations to be particularly daunting.

Divsar (2018), Boufeldja and Bouhania (2020), showed that EFL graduate students face linguistic challenges as a dominant challenge, including grammatical and organizational problems, lexical issues, using accurate grammar rules, and academic vocabulary usage.

2.1.2. .Research challenges

Doctoral students face a range of research challenges when writing a thesis. Including identifying a gap in the literature, topic selection, research methodology challenges such as; data collection and analysis, designing experiments, interpreting and presenting the results in a clear and concise manner. In addition, finding reliable sources of information, integrating ethics in the research, and publication.

Goa (2021, p.511), highlighted that research challenges is at the top challenges students may face, due to the nature of conducting research. Helm (1989, as cited in Ekboth, 2012, p.68) noted that the challenges that face graduate students from completing their thesis

writing primarily relate to the research design, data collection and processing and writing of the research report.

The research findings of Hamzaoui (2021, p.4) study have demonstrated that individuals studying English as a foreign language have experienced challenges in either the stage of research or during the process of thesis writing. Specifically, the challenges were viewed in identifying areas of interest, selecting a topic, formulating research problems, and composing a literature review. These challenges are due to the students' lack of experience and lack of knowledge in the field.

Similarly, Odunze (2019, p.5) highlighted data collection as a major challenge student's face in research, arguing that students challenge in access to enough data. She noted that students struggle to comprehend how to interpret the gathered data. In order to determine whether a finding supports the researcher's questions and hypotheses, biases, and whether the result can be generalized or not, a researcher must compare their findings to previous research, evaluate the methodology of the books studied, analyze the data using suitable tools, and determine whether the discovery addresses these issues. Additionally, Odunze (2019, p.5) indicated that selecting the appropriate data collection tool or procedure to obtain the necessary data can be a daunting task for many students.

Alshehry (2014, as cited in Hamzaoui, 2021, p.4) identified ethical issues as a difficulty in research writing. Citation is a challenging task for many EFL students and researchers. Jomaa & Bidin (2017, p.5) said that "citing information from articles, theses or dissertations is challenging, particularly for researchers who write in English as a second or foreign language". They relate the issue of citation to what, who, how, and when to cite. However, their study; Perspective of EFL doctoral students on challenges of citations in academic writing revealed that challenges in citation included addressing the credibility of

information in published sources, adopting a stance toward the citations, insufficient knowledge about using citations, and second language difficulties. Another challenges in citation presented in lack of knowledge with regard to the APA and MLA referencing styles, lacks agreement between in-text citation and references, and the fail to present the sources in writing (Alostath, 2021, p.19; Alshery, 2014, as cited in Hamzaoui, 2021, p.4).

Publication is another challenge that faces EFL doctoral students in Algeria. As it may take years to be just reviewed and accepted from the journal, then to be published. However, it may not be accepted which makes the student in a difficult time. Since publishing articles in ranked journal is a necessity for earning a doctoral degree.

2.1.3. Supervision related challenges

The concept of supervision in the academic education witnessed various definition from different points of view. Pearson and Brew (2002, as cited in Swanson and Watt, 2011, p.2) stated that “supervision is a process to facilitate the student becoming an independent professional researcher and scholar in the field”. Supervision is an academic, formal, professional process that prepares students to be independent research in the field of the study.

Prior researches (James and Baldwin, 1999, as cited in Swanson and Watt, 2011; Swanson and Watt, 2011; Bacwayo et al., 2017) have indicated that supervisor-supervisee relationship affect the quality of research, and determine the success or the failure of the process. Swanson and Watt (2011, p.9) stated that “a good match between student and supervisor, both academically and personally, is a key catalyst for the development of a successful relationship and progress of a graduate student”. According to recent research conducted in Goa (2021, p.509), students may encounter equitable and collaborative associations with their supervisors. However, it is important to acknowledge that obstacles may arise from imbalances in power dynamics, tensions, and disparities in research and

expectations. Conversely, Goa (2021, p.509) observed in previous studies that the inaccessibility of active researchers who were supervisors impeded the research advancement of students.

Many researchers; Kearsley (1998), Frischer and Larsson (2000), Spear (2000), Ekboth (2012), Sadeghi and Khajepasha (2015), Hamzaoui (2021), indicated that one of the most challenges doctoral students face are due to supervisory practices.

Kearsley (1998, as cited in Ekboth, 2012, p.68) argued that the overworking supervisors and the acute shortage of qualified supervisors lead that students were not able to get enough time with their supervisors. Similarly, Ekboh (2012, p.72) reported that the significant challenges of the supervisor-related factors were that the supervisors includes in: supervisors were too busy with extensive commitment to be effective with their roles, and non-availability of supervisors. The common complaints of the supervisee on their supervisors found in Spear (2000, as cited in Ekboth, 2012, p.69) study indicated in: poor contact with supervisors, as they are charge of extensive commitment, responsibilities and administrative duties; such as, having many supervisees, lecturing, and being far away from the University for External Examination or conferences. Likewise, Hamzaoui (2021, p.7) indicated the challenges related to supervisors are due to the poor contact with the supervisor, not being regularly in contact with the supervisor.

Research scholars in Mapolisa and Mafa (2012, p. 1675) highlighted the following supervisor related challenges in the supervision of students' research projects: Lack of research experience, relevant research skills and or knowledge, and awareness on students-supervisors responsibilities. Additionally, the limited meetings, interest given to the supervisee, and their topics, little practical help and direction given, failure to return work promptly, and absence from work leaving no co-supervisor.

Another significant challenges related to the supervision is the changing of the supervisor. Students in some universities are allowed to choose their supervisors based on their expertise and knowledge about the topic. While in some universities, students do not have the right to choose their supervisors, rather the department determines them.

2.1.4. Institutional related challenges

Another challenges doctoral students' face in their academic journey is related to their academic institution. Much of the related literature that has conducted the academic institution challenges doctoral students face reviewed in Mapolisa and Mafa (2012, p. 1676). According to (Mouton, 2001; Shumba, 2004, Nyawaranda, 2005; Pearce, 2005), obstacles related to the institution, such as a lack of internet access, a lack of computer access, and a lack of research materials, limit students' ability to conduct research. Moreover, Goa (2021, p.511) said "Lacking local connections could make it difficult for some students to access data sources, conduct interviews, and collect documents for their studies".

The findings of Ekpoh's (2016) study agree with Igun (2010), Achimuju, Oluwagbemi and Oluwarati (2010) studies. That found the significant number of the postgraduate challenges are due to Institutional-related factors. These factors include inadequate internet facilities, unwarranted delays in departmental processes, non-compliance with schedules, insufficient research environment, and poor social services (e.g., accommodations and inadequate study facilities). Whereas, Thondhlana, et al (2011, as cited in Mapolisa and Mafa, 2012, p.1679) highlighted the practice of imposing research topics on the students as one of the critical challenges that affect students' progress in research work.

Students encounter various challenges including a poorly equipped library which necessitates expending considerable time and effort in searching for appropriate books, journals, and reports with minimal assistance from the library. This challenge is exacerbated

by the inadequate equipment and resources available to students (Odunze, 2019). Identically, Al-Qaderi (2016) highlighted that the lack of a well-equipped library with unrestricted access to e-resources and web sites is a significant challenge for undergraduate researchers.

2.2. The psychological challenges

The psychological challenges that face doctoral students have been gaining importance in recent years. According to Duru and Yılmaz (2018, p.299), postgraduate students face a variety of psychological challenges such as, mobbing, burnout, dissatisfaction, stress, anxiety, depression, social isolation, loneliness, sleep issues, suicide, and neurological problems.

2.2.1. Stress and anxiety

Anxiety and stress were the major challenges that higher education researchers face in the psychological domain in many researches. Ahuja and Kumar (2015, as cited in Duru and Yılmaz 2018, p.301) research study revealed that postgraduate students had high levels of both anxiety and stress. Similarly, the statistics in Naveed and Ameen (2016, as cited in Duru and Yılmaz 2018, p.301) showed that 60.10% of postgraduate students had mild anxiety.

Doctoral thesis requires many years of research, study, and effort. This can be stressful and brings anxiety for many doctoral students. The doctoral thesis is the source of anxiety for many doctoral students according to Divsar (2018, p. 196), as it reflects their abilities in writing and conducting research independently. Furthermore, Duru and Yılmaz (2018, p.302) highlighted that anxiety and stress are among the psychological problems that face both master and doctoral students.

Pyhältö et al (2012) pointed out that doctoral students experience high distress and anxiety. This is result from frequent evaluation, competitive atmosphere, supervision pressure,

learning, lack adequate academic research and writing skills, workload, imbalance between research work and private life.

2.2.2. Motivation

Motivation is an important factor in the doctoral studies that gives the students the required desire to complete their research. Researchers classified motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that plays an important role to help students achieve successful completion of the doctoral program. However, many doctoral students suffer to stay motivated as their journey is long and challenging.

Studies had reported that many doctoral students get demotivated and motivation loss, due to the lengthy duration of the doctoral program. In addition, the competitive scholarly atmosphere and the complex routine of study, research, and work affect the doctoral students' motive. Hamzaoui (2021, p.8) reported that doctoral students are not motivated towards their thesis topic, as many doctoral students are imposed on their topics.

Lack of support from family, peers, supervisors is a critical factor that low doctoral students' motivation. Goa (2021, p.511) highlighted the importance of the support system in increasing the success of doctoral students.

Hamzaoui (2021), Goa (2021), and Divsar (2018) reported in their studies lack of motivation as one of the main challenges that face doctoral students.

2.2.3. Health issues

Doctoral students' well-being has received scholar's attention recently, especially after the covid-19 pandemic. Sitting in the desk all the day studying is not an easy feat. Many researchers in the medical field reported that it is unhealthy as it caused many diseases that affect students' health.

Doctoral students are more vulnerable to neurological problems, due to stress, anxiety, and long working hours. In addition, the health issues affecting body organ, prolonged activity, unhealthy diet, and insufficient resting (Duru and Yılmaz, 2018). Mazumdar et al. (2012, as cited in Duru and Yılmaz, 2018, p.301) reported that common health issues among female postgraduate students viewed in headache, blood pressure, back pain, neck pain, loss of appetite, and skin rashes. Whereas, male postgraduate students are more likely to face poor sleep patterns, hair loss, erratic moods, heart diseases, and depression.

The covid-19 pandemic was a major challenge that affects students' health both physically and mentally. Many doctoral students got ill from the covid-19 virus. Cutri and Lau (2023) said "COVID-19 has caused massive research disruptions to PhD students such as laboratory closures, financial issues, and limited face-to-face supervision". They declared that writing a thesis in isolation during the lockdown due to the covid-19 pandemic was stressful. Additionally, it had brought many challenges such as, financial insecurities, writing struggles, submission pressure, social isolation, self-doubt, and motivation issues.

2.3. Socio-Economic challenges

Doctoral students come from different backgrounds. Ekpoh (2016, p.68) believes that the background factors undoubtedly impact the ability and academic achievement of the doctoral students. He claims that doctoral students enrolled in the doctoral program display a wide array of backgrounds, showcasing variances in age, experience, ability, marital status, and other factors. While some are fortunate enough to receive funding or scholarship support, others must rely on self-financing. Additionally, some students are employed, leading to the potential issue of divided interests and lower levels of commitment.

2.3.1. Financial challenges

Financial concern of the doctoral students witnessed an interest recently especially after the covid-19 pandemic. Financial support is crucial for completing doctoral studies. Doctoral students need financial support for their studies. Conducting research requires financial investment. In addition, many conferences require registration funds to participate in it, which can be expensive for many doctoral students.

Financial constraint is another challenge that faces doctoral students. Many doctoral students have part or full time jobs while conducting their doctoral studies to relieve financial pressure (Goa, 2021, p.511). Most doctoral students are full time students spending years in conducting researches in their field. Therefore, they are financially supported from their parents, or they support themselves in working part time jobs, or teaching.

Many Algerian doctoral students are enrolled in universities far away from their home. Distance from university are considered one of the major financial challenges doctoral students faces, as they have to travel from home to university and vice versa. This condition led doctoral students to cover all the travelling and personal costs. In addition, doctoral students have to deal with expensive cost of obtaining research materials such as computer, premium app and libraries software, books, journals, and articles. Ekpoth (2016, p.72) reported that cost of academic materials, text books, accommodation and feeding. In addition to, the expensive cost of research material are financial challenges for many doctoral students that constitute a real challenge for doctoral student's success.

The ministry of higher education and scientific research in Algeria offer small financial support in a form of scholarship to jobless doctoral students. It is important to mention that the value of this scholarship have not changed since 2009. However, employed

doctoral students do not have the right in this scholarship as they considered financially independent. Also, they do not have the right in short term scholarship abroad.

2.3.2. Personal Challenges

Many studies had indicated personal challenges among the challenges that face doctoral students. Doctoral students face variety of personal challenges such as, lack of time management, lack of research skills, lack of balance between research work and private life.

Time is a crucial factor in the doctoral studies, as doctoral students are required to complete their thesis and doctoral journey in limited time. However, most doctoral students lack of time management that affect their thesis submission on time. Proper allocation of time is a crucial consideration in academic research, particularly when accounting for the concurrent demands of a research supervisor's and a student's course schedule. The undergraduate student population, in particular, confronts the challenge of balancing numerous competing demands, including coursework modules, assignments, tests, exams, and research projects. The effective management of such a complex schedule can prove a formidable obstacle, as many students struggle to maintain pace with these varied demands (Goa, 2021).

Doctoral students have different backgrounds in age, education, employment, abilities, marital status, and family responsibilities. However, doctoral studies require a lot of time, effort, and full concentration. That can be challenging for many doctoral students who have other responsibilities such as, family and job responsibilities. Balance between private life and research work not an easy feat. Goa (2021) reviewed that many doctoral students struggle to balance between study and research work and their private life.

Doctoral students as novice researchers may lack the required research skills that are significant to contribute their researches. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Microsoft skills (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint), and ICT skills are the common research skills that many doctoral students lack of knowledge in using them. Ekpoth (2016, p.72) found in his study that many doctoral students lack of ICT knowledge of research method. Whereas, Divsar (2018, p.201) reported that many doctoral students Lack of SPSS knowledge; to run statistical analysis and related formulas, and to report the SPSS results and tables.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the most challenges that may face doctoral students in their academic journey that could impact doctoral students' degree completion. The most challenging part in doctoral studies is thesis writing, as students are required to write and conduct research independently for the first time. Scholars relate the challenges that face novice researchers in the academia to many aspects and factors, such as academic, financial, data collection, supervision, university administration, accommodation, family background, and personal problems. These challenges are often the point students continue or quit their doctoral program. To sum up, these challenges are viewed in academic challenges that includes; academic writing challenges, research challenges, supervision related challenges, and institution related challenges. In addition to, the psychological, and socio-economic challenges.

**Chapter Three:
The Research
Findings
and Data Analysis**

Introduction

The previous chapters present the theoretical framework of the research. However, this chapter presents the practical framework of the research. Where the methodology, the population and the sample of the study, as well the data tools and gathering, the analysis and the discussion of the data are presented and described. Additionally, recommendations for the research are carried out at the end of the chapter.

3.1. Review of Research Methodology

3.1.1. Research Method

Due to the nature of the study, the research methodology involved the use of the descriptive exploratory approach. The study aimed to reveal the challenges that face EFL doctoral students, through a questionnaire and an interview distributed and conducted to EFL doctoral students and their supervisors respectively at Biskra University department of English. In order to, collect data from the participants' perspectives and experience on the topic.

3.1.2. Population and Sampling

The populations of the study were the EFL doctoral students and their supervisors at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra department of English. The availability of the participants determined the sample size of the study. Seventeen (17) doctoral students were participated in this study from a population of twenty seven 27students. However, only four (4) doctoral supervisors were participated from a population of seven 7 doctoral supervisors at the department of English Biskra university.

3.1.3. Data Gathering Tools

According to the nature of the presented study, two data gathering tools have been chosen to reveal the challenges that face EFL doctoral students.

The first data gathering tool is the questionnaire. It was developed and designed after an in depth literature review on the challenges that face doctoral students. In order to collect data from the perspective of the EFL doctoral students. The questionnaire was designed in a Google form, and was self-administrated to the EFL doctoral students at Biskra University by the researcher via email. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that only 17 students fill out the questionnaire from the population of twenty seven 27 doctoral students.

The second data gathering tool is the interview that was conducted with the EFL doctoral supervisors at Biskra University department of English. The aim of the interview is to collect data from the supervisors' perspective, and gather their suggestion to overcome those challenges.

3.2. Doctoral Students Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed after an in depth review of related researches for EFL doctoral students at Mohamed khider Biskra University department of English. It was distributed in an online form to the EFL doctoral students via email. It aims to gather the challenges that face EFL doctoral students at Biskra University from their experience and perspective. We have received 17 responses from a total of 27 doctoral students enrolled in the doctoral phase.

3.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to reveal an in-depth the challenges that face EFL doctoral students at Biskra University according to their experience and perspective. It contains 33 questions divided into four sections.

The First Section was about the personal information and includes one question that was designed to gather data about doctoral students' registration year.

The Second Section includes the academic challenges that face EFL doctoral students. This section is divided into four parts; academic (7 questions), research (8 question), supervision (6 question), and institution related challenges (5 question). The first two parts were closed questions in a form of likert scale that provide the following options: strongly challenging (SC), challenging(C), somewhat challenging (SC), and not challenging (NC). However, the last two parts are yes/no questions.

The Third Section was about the psychological challenges that EFL doctoral students face. It includes three yes/no questions.

The Last Section includes two yes/no questions on the socioeconomic challenges EFL doctoral students face, followed by an open question to reveal other potential or not mentioned challenges that EFL doctoral students face in regards to their experience and perspective.

3.2.2. Aim of the Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire aims to reveal the challenges that face them from their experience and perspective.

3.2.3. Administration of the Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was administrated to the doctoral students at Biskra University, department of English, via email in an online form.

3.2.4. Analysis of doctoral students' Questionnaire

In order to answer the research questions, the obtained data from the doctoral students' questionnaire were analyzed using frequency count and percentage.

Section one: Personal Information:

This section attempts to gather personal information about the EFL doctoral students at Biskra University concerning the registration year. It aims to see the registration year's progress of the EFL doctoral students. In order to know if there are students who extended years in their doctoral studies, which strong the prove that EFL doctoral students face challenges in their doctoral studies affect the successful completion of their studies.

Question 01: what is the year of your study?

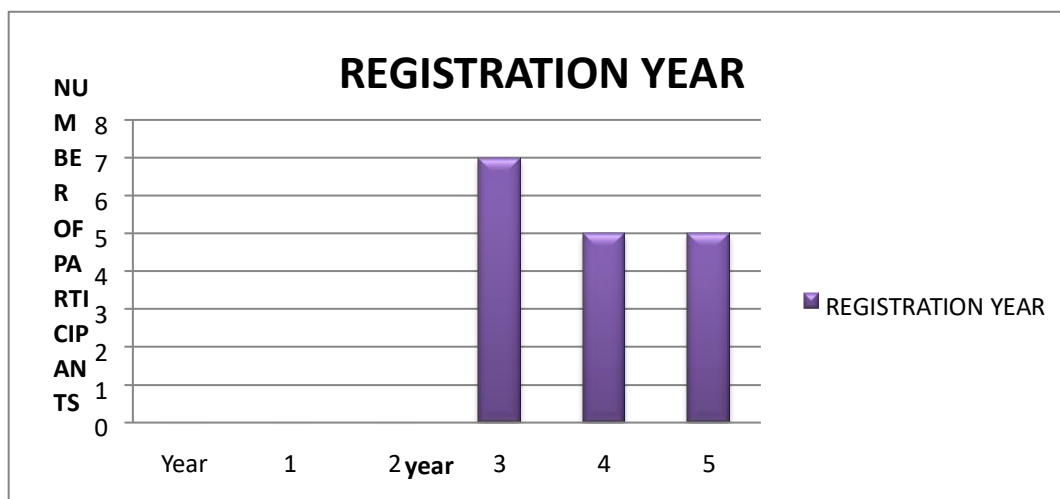


Figure 2: Registration Year Distribution

The graph show the registration year of doctoral students enrolled in English department at Biskra University. This question aims to reveal the number of doctoral students who expends extra years in the doctoral program. Which prove that they face challenges to complete their journey. The results indicates that (41.18%) of doctoral students from the sample registered in the third year. Whereas, (29.41%) of doctoral students from the sample are registered in the fourth year with one year extension, and (29.41%) of doctoral students from the sample registered in the fifth year with two years extension.

Section two: the academic challenges:

This section aims to reveal the academic challenges that face EFL doctoral students at Biskra University. These academic challenges are divided into four parts, each part took different aspects; academic writing, research, supervision, and institution.

Part one: Academic writing challenges

The first part in the academic challenges. It aims to reveal the academic writing challenges EFL doctoral students face in regards the linguistic competence, thesis sections writing, and the academic writing skills.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution on the Academic Writing Challenges

Statements	VC	C	SC	NC
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
1. Writing research proposal is	4 (23.5)	5 (29.4)	6 (35.3)	2 (11.8)
2. Writing literature review and theoretical framework is:	4 (23.5)	6 (35.3)	5 (29.4)	2 (11.8)
3. Writing discussion and result sections are:	3 (17.6)	7 (41.2)	6 (35.3)	1 (5.9)
4. Expressing my own voice is:	4 (23.5)	6 (35.3)	6 (35.3)	1 (5.9)
5. Paraphrasing and summarizing is:	3 (17.6)	2 (11.8)	7 (41.2)	5 (29.4)

6. Writing sentences and paragraphs according to English grammar correctly(ex, tenses, subject, verb agreements) is:	0	2 (11.8)	9 (52.9)	6 (35.3)
7. Planning and organizing ideas in writing is:	3 (17.6)	1 (5.9)	12 (70.6)	1 (5.9)

The results in table 1 shows that the most academic writing challenges EFL doctoral students face are viewed in: writing research proposal (23.5%), Writing literature review and theoretical framework (23.5%), expressing one's own voice (23.5%). Identically followed by writing discussion and result sections (17.6%), paraphrasing and summarizing (17.6%), planning and organizing ideas in writing (17.6%). However, writing sentences and paragraphs according to English grammar correctly (0%) did not pose any challenge to the EFL doctoral students.

Part Two: Research Challenges

Table 2: Frequency Distribution on the Research Challenges

Statements	VC	C	SC	NC
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
8.Choosing the title of the thesis is:	7(41.2)	5(29.4)	3(17.6)	2(11.8)
9.Identifying a gap in the literature is	8(47.1)	4(23.5)	5(29.4)	0
10.Selecting a topic is	5(29.4)	4(23.5)	8(47.1)	0
11.Selecting the right methodology is	7(41.2)	8(47.1)	2(11.8)	0
12.Collecting the data is	3(17.6)	6(35.3)	6(35.3)	2(11.8)
13.analysing the data	6(35.3)	4(23.5)	7(41.2)	0
14.interpreting the results is	2(11.8)	8(47.1)	7(41.2)	0
15.publishing an article is	9(52.9)	3(17.6)	3(17.6)	2(11.8)
16.citing and giving credibility to the source is	1(5.9)	2(11.8)	2(11.8)	12(70.6)

In terms of the research challenges, table 3 indicates that the most challenges face EFL doctoral students are: publishing an article(52.9%), Identifying a gap in the literature(47.1%) , Choosing the title of the thesis (41.2%), Selecting the right methodology (41.2%), analyzing the data (35.3%), Selecting a topic (29.4%), Collecting the data (17.6%) , interpreting the results (11.8%), citing and giving credibility to the source (5.9%).

Part Three: Supervision related challenges

Table 3: Frequency Distribution on the Supervision Related Challenges

Statements	Responses			
	YES		NO	
	F	(%)	F	(%)
17. Does your supervisor lack commitment?	2	11.8	15	88.2
18. Do you face communication problems with your supervisor	3	17.6	14	82.4
19. Does your supervisor lack expertise and interest in your topic?	3	17.6	14	82.4
20. Does your supervisor unduly slow in reading thesis drafts?	3	17.6	14	82.4
21. Does your supervisor give you less time, guide, and support?	5	29	12	70.6
22. Do you want to change your supervisor?	0	0	17	100

The main supervision related challenges that EFL doctoral students face are reviewed in less time, guide, and support given from the supervisor (29%, n=5). Followed identically (17.6%, n=3) in communication problems with supervisor, lack of expertise and interest in the topic, and the unduly swollenness in reading thesis drafts. The last challenge viewed in the supervisor's lack of commitments (11.8%, n=2). With regards to the challenges that minority of the participants face, all of them (100%) agreed that they do not want to change their supervisors.

Part Four: Institution related challenges

Table 4: Frequency Distribution on the Institution Related Challenges

Statements	Responses			
	YES		NO	
	F	(%)	F	(%)
23. Does your institution imposed you a research topic	0	0	17	100
24. Are you anticipated to the faculty lab?	10	58.8	7	41.2
25. Does your faculty library provide high speed internet?	5	29.4	12	70.6
26. Does your faculty provide accessing reliable database?	6	35.3	11	64.7
27. Does your faculty provide access to digital libraries?	8	47.1	9	52.9

Table 4 indicates in order of priority the most institution related challenges EFL doctoral students face was in providing high speed internet (70.6%), accessing reliable data base (64.7%), access to digital libraries (52.9%), and the lab anticipation (41.2%).

Surprisingly, EFL doctoral students are not imposed on a research topic from their institution, 100% of the students indicated that they were not imposed on a research topic.

Section Two: Psychological Challenges

Table 5: Frequency Distribution on the Psychological Challenges

Statements	Responses			
	YES		NO	
	F	(%)	F	(%)
28. Do you face stress and anxiety due to thesis writing?	15	88.2	2	11.8
29. Do you lack of motivation while writing your thesis?	11	64.7	6	35.3
30. Do you face health issues that affect your progress?	9	52.9	8	47.1

The results obtained from this section demonstrated that the majority of EFL doctoral students revealed that they face psychological challenges. Over than 88% revealed they face stress and anxiety due to thesis writing. In addition, 64.7% demonstrated that they lack motivation while writing their thesis. However, health issues seem to be another psychological challenge that faces EFL doctoral students. Where, 52.9% indicated that they face health issues that affect their progress.

Section Three: Socioeconomic Challenges

Table 6: Frequency Distribution on the Socioeconomic Challenges

Statements	Responses			
	YES		NO	
	F	(%)	F	(%)
31. Do you face financial constraint?	5	29.4	12	70.6
32. Do you face personal challenges (e.g., lack of time management, lack of research skills; Spss, word, excel, ppt, lack of balance between research work and private life)?	13	76.5	4	23.5

The finding in this table demonstrated that most EFL doctoral student (70.6%) do not face financial constraint, whereas, (29.4%) do face financial constraint mainly, the financial challenges EFL doctoral students face is due to the students' background.

The findings of the second question revealed that most EFL doctoral students face personal challenge. Result demonstrated that 76.5% (n=13) do face personal challenges.

Question.33: Are there other challenges you face as a doctoral students? Please identify them.

This open-ended question aimed to gather data from doctoral students' experience and perspective about the challenges they face. EFL doctoral students at University of Biskra

indicated different challenges they have face. A doctoral students in the fifth registration declared that the doctoral journey is challenging as they face many challenges that forced them to alter their topic and title.

From the answers gathered, we observe that some students face challenges in the research domain, they have declared that face challenges concerning the methodology, data analysis, research skills, and publication.

Supervision related challenges were one of the challenges participants indicated. Most challenges concerning the supervisor were due to their unavailability. Student declared that their meetings with their supervisor are rare as they always very busy, which affect their progress stating “if you do not adequately guided and assisted while writing your thesis, it can be quite frustrating and challenging”.

Another challenge demonstrated in the result was the lack of the institution support. Many students demonstrated they are not institutionally supported. This support includes in lack of internet and library facilities, limited amount of sources, lack of accessibility or facilities to access high technological websites. Doctoral student said “you must share library with other students, who can occasionally be very loud and noisy, as there are no special libraries for doctoral students, I must use my internet since there is no access to it”.

Additionally, lack of training in the theoretical year. Students claimed that the theoretical year almost covers contents that do not help them in their journey, and do not provide them with the necessities skills they needed such as; enhancing presentation skills, and how to get an article published.

Psychological challenges were among the most challenges demonstrated in the results. These challenges viewed in lack of motivation, lack of confidence, lack of consistency, and health

issues. Some students asserted that they face challenges due to their health issues, particularly those who suffer from chronic disease declared that it wastes their time and energy that affect their progress.

Financial challenges were highlighted in the responses. Some students declared that they do not receive any financial sort from the institution as they are employment students. Furthermore, the personal challenges indicated in time management, lack of balance between research work and private life; as many students demonstrated that they have many family responsibilities and professional commitments. Finally, from the received answers some students demonstrated that the mentioned challenges in the study reflect their situation.

3.2.5. Discussion of the Questionnaire Results

The aim of this survey was to reveal the challenges faced by EFL doctoral students at Biskra University, including students from varying branches, classes, age, and gender. A total of 17 responses were received. Our procedure synthesizes that students from different branches have an equal chance to get enrolled in the doctoral program. Additionally, almost 60% of the respondents extended years to complete their studies, which indicated that they face challenges hinder their successful completion of their studies. In regards to the students' age, participants are varying in age. This elucidate that age is not critical issue to get enrolled in the doctoral program. The results compare between students' gender, it was determined that females are more enrolled in the doctoral program then males.

This discussion of the questionnaire' results proceed as follows. First, the results indicates that the challenges face EFL doctoral students in academic writing ordered priority is due to the lack of knowledge in writing thesis sections, then due to the academic writing skills, and last due to the linguistic competence.

Second, the respondents revealed that they do face research challenges. These challenges reviewed in research methodology, data analysis, research skills, and publication. According to them, these challenges are due to the lack of training, particularly in the theoretical year.

Third, the EFL doctoral students at the University of Biskra do not face serious challenges related to the supervision process. The outcomes of these results showed that supervision in the English department at the University of Biskra exhibit a high level of proficiency and dedication in carrying out their duties in terms of supervising theses for EFL doctoral students. The results are in line with the study of Ekpoth (2016) which demonstrated that, the supervisors related factors did not presents any challenges to the research endeavors of postgraduate students. Which present the dedication and the effectiveness of the supervision process in the doctoral phase.

The results on the supervisors challenges face minority of EFL doctoral students may be results from unavailability of the supervisor due to the multi-responsibilities they have such as; lecturing, having many supervisee, participation in conferences and researches writing. However, it may result from the unfamiliarity of the students to the supervisor-supervisee relationship, responsibilities, and duties. Where, mostly it is the doctoral students who have to take the responsibility to get in touch with their supervisors.

Furthermore, the institution related challenges seems to be one of the most challenges EFL doctoral students face. The institution seems that it does not provide high facilities to the doctoral students in regards of internet, data base, accessing to digital libraries, and lab anticipation. The institution related challenges may occur due to the limited budget the department gets to enhance the doctoral journey.

The findings of the survey revealed that the psychological challenges are the most challenging aspect that faces EFL doctoral students. Stress, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation are the affective factors that play an important role in the psychological state of the students. Additionally, the health factor is crucial aspect to carry out researches and studies.

The results also show that majority of doctoral students do not face financial challenges, may be due to that the Algerian education is free. Students do not have to pay tuition to study. In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research provides a scholarship to the unemployed doctoral student to carry out their studies. Even though it does not cover all their needs. Another reason that most EFL doctoral students do not face financial challenges is that the field of Humanities and Social Sciences does not required huge budget to carry out researches. However, some respondents declared that they face financial constraints. In addition, employed doctoral students are not satisfied on the rules that indicate their inaccessibility for the financial aid.

The findings revealed that most EFL doctoral students face personal challenge. The doctoral journey is overwhelming and requires personal presence, commitment, and skills. Even though doctoral students are highly selected group, they still lack many skills in regards to the doctoral studies. Time management, research skills are crucial aspect EFL doctoral students have to acquire and deal with for their career. In addition, doctoral students are human beings and are socially connected with their private life. Most of doctoral students face a challenge in balancing between their private life and their research work, as the doctoral journey requires full time and commitment to be completed in limited time.

3.3. Supervisors' interview

The supervisors' interview is the second data gathering tool used to answer the research questions of this study. It aimed to select reliable data about the challenge that face EFL doctoral students from their supervisors' perspective and experience in supervising doctoral students.

3.3.1. Aims of the interview

A structured interview was designed to EFL doctoral supervisors at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra department of English in order to reveal the challenges EFL doctoral students face from their doctoral supervisors' point of view, perspective and experience.

3.3.2. Description of the interview

The interview contained 11 questions, the first one were about the personal information of the supervisors' expertise in supervision of the doctoral students. Whereas, the others questions (Q2-Q7) was about the different challenges that face EFL doctoral students from their supervisors' perspective and experience with their supervisee. In addition, the rest questions (Q8-Q11) were about their suggestions to solve the challenges and how to motivate doctoral students to overcome those challenges.

3.3.4. Administration of the interview

The interview was conducted with 4 doctoral supervisors in the department of English at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra. Due to the unavailability of the doctoral supervisors, as they have charges in the department to be done in due time. The administrations of the Interview took two forms, the first one was recorded with two doctoral supervisors; the allowed time was different from one supervisor to another, as they did not

gave the same amount of information. However, the second form was administrated to two doctoral supervisors via email to be answered.

3.3.5. Analysis of teachers' interview

The gathered data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

Question 1: how long have you been supervising doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: 5 years

Supervisor 2: 15 years

Supervisor 3: 2 years

Supervisor 4: 5 years

The question was about the supervision expertise of the doctoral level at the university. It aims to know about the novice supervisors from the experienced one. The experience of the supervisor is considered as being the most needed requirement for the completion and the success of any thesis project. What is noticeable from the answers is that the expertise of the doctoral supervisors is varying from one to another.

Question 2: what are the academic writing challenges that face EFL Doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: *“First, for the academic writing challenges, doctoral students should be good in writing, which means that they should have a good level in academic writing and have certain awareness of the academic writing requirements. Regarding writing in general and regarding thesis writing in particular, this is for writing”.*

Supervision 2: *“The first problem is academic writing, as far as some doctoral students who passed the contest. They are accepted, admitted, but sometimes they show some kind of poor writing skill. In the sense that they passed the tests or the contest because they have learned by heart or they have prepared a set of essays, they have written beforehand*

the set of essays. And they do have readymade sentences, phrases, clauses, expressions they use in the contest. But when they are before their thesis and their research, it's difficult for them to summarize, to paraphrase from sources. Especially in my specialty, because in literature and in civilization we undertake great deal of bibliographical research. So we work on sources and it's difficult for the students to paraphrase and summarize one, and two they do have very quiet limited register of vocabulary, so it's difficult for them to take from their own lexical background they have acquired, because usually it's limited. So they do face problems as far as academic writing. But that's why usually we try to encourage them and advise them to read a lot so that they can require more Lexis and vocabulary, especially the vocabulary. Of course there's a problem of grammar and so on. But, usually throughout their reading and writing, rewriting and correction and so on, they can cope with that and they can overcome those problems that are the early stage of their research. They do find problems, but the more they progress in their research, usually they can overcome those problems. Normally. I'm talking about doctoral students from the LMD. I'm not talking about the science students; Magister students who are preparing doctoral thesis”.

Supervisor 4: “weak academic writing”

In regards to the academic writing challenges, supervisor (1) demonstrated that doctoral students are required to have good level in academic writing, particularly in thesis writing. Accordingly, supervisor (2, 4) claimed that many doctoral students have weak academic writing, lack of paraphrasing and summarizing, limited register of vocabulary, and grammar problems. Supervisor (2) relates these challenges as doctoral students get enrolled in the doctoral program with readymade essays in the contest. That these essays are academically approved regarding on their actual level in academic writing. However,

according to supervisor (2) these challenges are capable to overcome through reading and self working on their problems, as these challenges are mainly occurs in the beginning of their journey.

Question 3: what are the research challenges that face EFL Doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: *“Second, for the research challenges, of course they should be knowledgeable enough in research, and aware of the different research requirements. That means they should be able to justify their decisions, whenever they take a decision regarding research, and choices regarding the research requirements. Also, they should have a certain research background, knowledge about research, what research is, how to conduct research, what are the research requirements. Another challenge regarding research, it is that they have to develop their research skills; how they can gain research knowledge, how they can develop their research skills, how they can have the research awareness”.*

Supervisor 2: *“It depends on the students as they do have diverse different, some students have a problem of writing, of doing research. Some students have problem of methodology, but he I think this should be linked to the supervisor. Especially during the first phase of the research, because it’s the role of the supervisor to work with the students and guide them with regard to the methodology, research objectives, and research design”.*

Supervisor 3: *“They face problems with research process (the choice of the supervisor, the choice of the topic, the research methodology). During the research process, they encounter obstacles, mainly related to publication”.*

Supervisor 4: *“lack of research knowledge and skills”*

Another academic challenge in regards to the research domain was in the research process regarding the choice of the supervisor, and topic, lack of research methodology and publication according to supervisor (3). However, supervisor (4, 2, and 1) asserts it to the lack of research knowledge, skills, and requirements.

Question 4: what are the supervision related challenges that face EFL Doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: *“There should be collaboration between the supervisor and supervisee. There should be confidence; supervisee should be confident in their supervisee. Supervisor should follow his or her supervisee. I think there should be mutual understanding, mutual positive collaboration between the two partners on one hand, the supervisor and the other ones, the supervisee. I think this relationship is very crucial to enable the supervisor to do his or her research investigation appropriately. This relationship can have a good result by the end of the supervision journey, which is the end of the doctoral research journey”.*

Supervisor 2: *“As far as I am concerned as a supervisor. Well, there are some students who do not get in touch with me a lot. There are some doctoral students who do not do that for weeks, and months. So that's the problem. And since usually the supervisor is very busy because he or she does have many other tasks and responsibilities; teachings, writings, lectures, writing articles, do have their own master's students, other doctoral students to supervise and so on. It's a task of the supervisee to seek help and guidance from the supervisor because I cannot know what are the needs of my doctoral students if he or she does not get in touch with me, sends me her/his work, especially when I do have many other responsibilities. The problem is with the relationship between supervisor and the supervisee. I think the initiative should be the initiative of the doctor students. Now it depends also. When you have a supervisor who does have only one or two doctoral students, he may get in touch with them. I mean he takes the initiative to get in touch with them because he does have only*

one or two. So yes, he's free to guide them and to put his full attention on their work. Now for other supervisors who have 5, 6, 7 doctoral students, I personally do have 9 doctoral students, LMD and science. We have the other tasks. Usually it's very overwhelming. And here it's the job, it's the task, it's the duty of the student to get in touch with me, because if he does not get in touch or she doesn't get in touch with me, I'm not going to pay attention to them. That's the problem. So it depends only on the number of doctoral students who are supervised by the supervisor”.

The challenges in regards of the supervision resulted in lack of contact from the supervisee. Supervisor (2) saw that it is the role of the students to get in touch with their supervisor, as they are usually busy with administrative responsibilities. Additionally, supervisor (1, 2) relates the challenges to the lack of supervisor-supervisee relationship and collaboration.

Question 5: what are the institution related challenges that face EFL Doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: *“There should be assistance from the institution. The institution has an important role, for example, funding research, providing some stays for these researchers to get overseas in order to develop their research skills, to get more knowledge in research and in their research topic. Of course the institution can help enhance the research tasks of any doctoral students by giving the appropriate and the suitable assistance”.*

Supervisor 2: *“Now, as far as the institution, normally there are some problems with the institution, especially during their first year. The problem is to find where to stay during their first year. Sometimes they do have problems of accommodation and usually the institution does not commit self a lot with regard to that. So it's the job of supervisor or the students*

himself/ herself to try to find the room at the level of the dormitory and so on. However, there's no big problem with regard to the institution, usually are minor problems”.

Supervisor 3: *“Doctorate students first face challenges with the administrative procedures (subscription, documentation, registration, and training).*

The institution challenges resulted from supervisor (1, 2) in the lack of assistance from the institution. Supervisor (2) clarified from their experience that their supervisee does not get the institution assistance to find an accommodation in their first year. Where, it was related to the administrative challenges in subscription, documentation, registration, and training from the perspective of supervisor (3).

Question 6: what are the psychological challenges that may face EFL doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: *“psychological feature, psychological aspect is very important in any research investigation considering that research, in fact it is a difficult and problematic issue. So the more the supervisor or the doctoral students feels at ease, comfortable, the more he can do his research study appropriately and in a good way”.*

Supervisor 2: *“The main problem is procrastination. It's a lack of motivation. Time is consuming and usually they always delay their work. It's very difficult for them to start. Psychologically speaking, Starting is a problem. Usually psychological problems appear at the beginning or during their research when they make a break and if the break is a long break. It's sometimes difficult for them to resume their research after a long break. That's one of the psychological problems. Another kinds of psychological problems may be linked to their social and family problems, jobs, problems of whether they work or they don't work, both can affect them. Usually students who work, they do have problems. That affects their psychology, and their state of mind. We do have students who had family problems, responsibilities, or*

deaths in their family, especially with the CoronaCOVID-19. Those factors have affected their work, research. These are the main psychological problems that may occur. Another psychological problem is seeking perfection. One of my doctoral students is never satisfied with what she writes. And it's her fifth year and she hasn't sent me anything as she is seeking perfection”.

Supervisor 3: *“Stress and blockage are the main ones. Inability to find balance between personal life and research”.*

Supervisor 4: *“lack of self-confidence, time, and administration pressures”.*

All the interviewed supervisors agreed on the impact of the psychological state on the research progress. From their experience with their supervisee, doctoral supervisors assert that their students have stress, and lack of motivation due to lack of confidence, lack of time, lack of balance between research work and private life, seeking perfection, and procrastination. Additionally, the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, the family, social, and job requirements and responsibilities. From supervisor’s responses, we deduce that psychological challenges have a huge impact on the doctoral student’s progress and successful completion of their studies.

Question 7: what are the socioeconomic challenges that may face EFL doctoral students?

Supervisor 1: *“There should be funding of the research project, funding of the researcher. Doctoral Student should feel at ease so that this helps him even psychologically to go ahead in his on her research study”.*

Supervisor 2: *“Well, as far as I am concerned, I have not met students who talked about their social economic problems. So as far to the economic challenges usually they don't need*

a great deal of money. Well, perhaps they may need some money for to participate in conferences, but since most of the conferences nowadays are online, so even for that they can participate from home. So I think there's no big economic challenge with regard to our specialty. I'm not talking about the hard sciences, the exact sciences, they may find challenges. Because they need to get in touch with laboratories, they need to undertake experiments and so on. They need money to buy materials, chemical materials and so on. But as far as we are concerned, we do not have this problem in languages, in literature, civilization or even in TEFL (English as a foreign language teaching)".

Supervisor 3: *"Unemployed doctorate students are often seen as time-waisters as they wait for years to get recruited. Many of them face financial problems as the grant they receive is not enough to cover all their needs".*

Supervisor 4: *"lack of money, lack of specialized books, lack of advice".*

Majority of supervisor (1, 3, and 4) agreed that doctoral students face financial challenges, as researches needs financial aid. Specially that most of doctoral students are unemployed. Supervisor (3) shed light on the financial aid unemployed doctoral students get from the institution, which does not cover all their needs. However, supervisor (2) thinks that doctoral students do not need money for their researches as the field of human sciences do not require huge budget.

Question 8: Doctoral students face variety of personal challenges (time management, lack of research skills, balance between research work and private life) what do you suggest to overcome these challenges?

Supervisor 1: *"Forced to look for appropriate and right strategies. Whenever they encounter a difficulty, they have to look for the solution; how to overcome this difficulty. I think research*

is a difficult journey. It's full of difficulties, problems, obstacles. So a good researcher is the one who is good in solving and overcoming these problems, that they may not negatively affect his or her research work”.

Supervisor 2: *“When rigor. They have to make a timetable, schedule, organize themselves, and they have to stick to what they schedule. Even when they are tired, have work, have a problem or they are not really in it motivated, because motivation can be triggered. Students usually have to oblige and force themselves. It is a commitment and then it is organization, planning and stick to that plan. This is very important. I'm talking about time management, research, but balance between research work and private life they have to give their research importance and time. As far as the research skills, well normally doctoral students do have enough background. They do have sufficient intellectual, mental and linguistic skills. They usually do have sufficient skills to train themselves to learn on their own. They have reached a certain level of autonomy normally that may enable them to train themselves and to improve their research skills on their own, without the help of other people, they may seek help guidance from their supervisor. This is very important. They have to throw themselves. They have to learn by themselves, even the methodology. We were students and doctoral candidates and most as to the best of my knowledge and to the best of my memory, most of the research skills we acquire with regard to writing methodology, the procedures, stages to go through, the task to perform throughout. I mean, we learned that by ourselves. We read a lot, and we use the Internet. All the skills we have acquired, we have acquired them by our own”.*

Supervisor 3: *“I suggest having a work plan that is flexible, realistic and manageable. I also recommend having a peer support and family encouragement”.*

Supervisor 4: *“planning, schedule, use of research methodology books, meeting with people other than the supervisor”.*

Doctoral supervisors have suggested some strategies for doctoral students to overcome the personal challenges. Commitment and organization are essential for time management. Students have to make flexible schedules, plans, and stick to it even when they are not motivated or available. Concerning lack of research skills, doctoral students have to self-teach themselves the needed research skills. Seek help from experts in the field or supervisors, and get engaged with them to learn from. In regards of balance between research work and private life, doctoral students have to give an importance to their research.

Question 9: Do you think that the challenges that EFL doctoral students face are related to: Academic, psychological, or socioeconomic.

Supervisor 1: *“All of them are concerned. Maybe academic concerns, challenges are the number one, but all of them, they interplay in the research journey and any doctoral students should know how to overcome any difficulties encountered at all these levels”.*

Supervisor 2: *“Some are academic; some are social, psychological, and economic. And it depends on the students, their level, family and social situation. Also it depends on their situation; they work, do not work, they have a family or not, they are single or they are married, they do have children. Is the doctoral student a woman or a man. Single man or single woman is not like a married woman and it's not like a married woman who has children. So it depends on the different. There are some students who are very good level, others do have an acceptable level. Usually students who take the test and pass it are very good students. But research is something else. You do not need to be a very good and smart student, to be a good researcher. Research needs motivation, it needs interest, commitment. If you are committed, if you are interested, if you are motivated, you may go far and you may work very well. Now if you are smart, very good writers. But if you are a lazy person, we*

don't go very far. If you are not committed, you won't go very far. Even if you are very smart, good writer, because the research is not writing the research you have to go to seek sources, to read a lot, To do experiments to make, to undertake a great deal of observation, to travel. So I mean you do have to work, so research is not very important”.

Supervisor 3: *“Most of them are psychological”.*

Supervisor 4: *“All of them”*

According to supervisors (1, 4) all the challenges; academic, psychological, and socioeconomic do interplay in the doctoral journey. However, supervisor (1) shed light on the academic concern as a major challenge. Conversely, supervisor (3) relates it to the psychological challenges, whereas, supervisor (2) claims that it depends on the doctoral social background and academic level.

Question 10: how you motivate your students to overcome these challenges?

Supervisor 1: *“Usually I assistance, psychological assistance, psychological support usually helps them to get more confidence to know that they are not alone. And also usually discussion, contentment, constant discussion, getting in touch with my supervisee, usually we look for solutions whenever we encounter. Usually the supervisor tries to help the psychologically and even to look for practical and for actions when it comes to look for solutions for any difficulty or problem encountered by the supervisor”.*

Supervisor 2: *“We discuss with them, talk to them and we try to find, diagnose, discover, and identify their problems. And also sometimes you need to be tough with them when you do have deadlines two months to send me your chapter. You have to finish your chapter deadlines, so sometimes you need to be tough with them”.*

Supervisor 3: *“Keeping their spirits up and never giving up as the journey of research demands stamina and strong faith. I also keep in touch with them checking up their well-being as a way to show support and encouragement”.*

Supervisor 4: *“I advise them not to give up the fight”*

All the supervisor agreed on the psychological support to motivate their students through getting in touch with them regularly, having discussion, look for solutions to their problems in order to make them feel that their supervisors are behind them. In addition, being tough with them through setting deadlines.

Question 11: In what way can the challenges to doctoral research be solved?

Supervisor 1: *“I think there is no problem without solution. The supervisee has to be motivated, has to be confident, to work hard, to look for usually the solutions for any difficulties he or she encounters. So of course with the hard work, with perseverance, patience, critical thinking, and motivation; internal, extrinsic, of course the supervisee can overcome any difficulties”.*

Supervisor 2: *“It depends on the challenge. Every challenge does have specific demands, the nature of the challenge. It depends on the doctoral students itself, so it depends on the challenge, the doctoral student and of course the supervisor”.*

Supervisor 3: *“These problems can have many solutions as long as the student is aware that The doctorate journey is very demanding and needs patience, determination and hard work”.*

Supervisor 4: *“The challenges are themselves part of the research journey”.*

The supervisors demonstrated that the doctoral journey are challenging in nature. The students have to be aware on their challenges, and with hard work, motivation, determination, perseverance, and supervisors' assistance those challenges may get solved.

3.3.6. Discussion of the findings of the interview

The results obtained from both data collection tools have provided nearly similar outcomes. The results also as it was expected are in line to the research hypothesis and answer the research questions.

The results of the interview obtained from the supervisors' experience and perspective are similar to the students' experience and perspective obtained from the questionnaire. The results of the interview indicate that doctoral face many challenges in their studies. Most of doctoral students in the beginning of their journey face academic writing challenges due to the lack of academic writing background and training. However, supervisors assert that these challenges get decreased whenever they worked on themselves and progressed in their researches. These results are controversial to the previous studies on the challenges faced by international doctoral students, which reported the academic writing challenges as main challenges they face. In the same regards, doctoral students also face research challenges; methodology, data analysis, and publication were among the most challenging aspect both participants declared. Concerning the supervision related challenges, supervisors indicated that many supervisees do not get in touch with them regularly. This lack of contact probably is because doctoral students lack of knowledge about the supervisor-supervisee relationships. Majority of supervisors highlighted the impact of institution related challenges, where the institution seems that it does not provide required facilities to the doctoral students. It was deduced that these institution related challenges is due to the lack of funding.

All the supervisors agreed on the psychological challenges as a main concern in the successful completion of doctoral studies. These challenges indicated in stress, lack of motivation, lack of confidence, procrastination, and lack of commitment, blockage, starting and seeking perfection. These psychological challenges are impactful from the students' social backgrounds and their academic level. It seems that supervisors lack of knowledge about their supervisee social economic challenges, as their supervisee do not tend to talk about. However, majority of them see that students have to get financially assisted as the nature of conducting research requires financial budget. In addition, the financial grant devoted to the unemployed doctoral students does not cover the tuition costs.

In order to overcome the challenges faced by EFL doctoral students. Doctoral supervisors provided some strategies. Doctoral students have to take their research seriously and work hard to achieve their goals. They also have to take the initiative to get in touch with their supervisors, experts in their field, and to learn by themselves the required skills. Commitment and consistency are essential in conducting research. Also, they have to find a way to balance between private life and research work and give it importance. Finally, doctoral students, their supervisor, and the institution have to work hand by hand to overcome and solve the different challenges for a successful completion of the doctoral studies

Conclusion

This research was confined to the EFL doctoral students and their supervisors' experience and perspective in Mohamed Khider Biskra University through questionnaire and interview. The results from this research have provided an insight into the challenges faced by doctoral students. Based on the findings of this research, we deduce that EFL doctoral students at Biskra University face many different challenges in their academic journey that affect their successful completion of the doctoral journey. The most critical challenges are the

psychological, personal, and institution related challenges. Academic writing and research challenges seem to get decreased the more students progressed in their researches. While, the financial challenges are seem to be more related to the students' background. However, it was found that supervision related challenges do not pose crucial concerns to the doctoral students.

These findings that were obtained from both questionnaire and interview are in line with the research hypothesis, and answered the research questions. Doctoral students may face different challenges affect their successful completion of their studies on time. The majority of these challenges are vary and impactful according to the students' academic, psychological, social, and financial background. However, all of these challenges interplay a major negative impactful in the successful completion of the doctoral studies.

Recommendations

In view on the results obtained from this research, some recommendations are suggested below to help doctoral students to successfully complete their studies on time:

- The ministry of higher education and scientific research should review and reconsider the budget of the grant that does not cover the tuition costs.
- The institution has to provide facilities in resources, internet, special libraries, and access to digital and premium software for doctoral students.
- Conducting seminars and workshops for doctoral students to enhance academic and research skills periodically on doctoral thesis writing and research methodology.

General Conclusion

The present research attempts to get an insight about the challenges that face doctoral students in the Algerian universities. In order to answer the research questions and confirm the research hypothesis, the researcher used a case study in conducting this research. The EFL doctoral students' challenges were choose as a case of study. The findings of this research from both questionnaire and interview indicated that all the academic, psychological, and socio-economic challenges interplay in the doctoral journey.

The research is divided into three chapters. The first and second chapters concerned with the theoretical parts of the research. The first chapter highlighted the doctoral thesis, as the thesis writing is the essential and critical components in the doctoral studies. It provides valuable information about the thesis concept, structure, and writing, as well as the challenges faces students in writing thesis sections. The second chapter provided an overview into the challenges faced by doctoral students, which affect their successful completion of their studies. These challenges were categorized into three main sections. The first section highlighted the academic challenges, which was divided into four parts; academic writing, research, supervisor and institution related challenges. The second and third sections reviewed the psychological and the socioeconomic challenges respectively. The third chapter is the practical part of the research. This chapter concerned with the analysis and discussion of the obtained data from the two data collection tools; questionnaire for the students, and interview for their supervisors in Biskra University department of English. Finally, this research recommends further researches to conduct on the radical solutions for the challenges that face doctoral students in their studies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: EFL Doctoral Students' Questionnaire

Dear doctoral students, this questionnaire is an attempt to collect data for accomplishment of a master dissertation about "the challenges that face EFL doctoral students".

Therefore, we would be so grateful if you provide us with precise, clear, and complete responses. Please choose the appropriate answer, and write full statement(s) whenever it is necessary.

Be sure that your answers will be anonymous, and would be used for research purposes only.

Thank you, for your time, effort, and collaboration

Section one: Personal Information

1-what is the year of your study?

.....

Section two: Academic Challenges

Part one: Academic Writing Challenges

Statements	Very Challenging	Challenging	Somewhat Challenging	Not Challenging
1. Writing research proposal is				
2. Writing literature review and theoretical framework is:				
3. Writing discussion and result sections are:				
4. Expressing my own voice is:				
5. Paraphrasing and summarising is:				
6. Writing sentences and paragraphs according to English grammar correctly(ex, tenses, subject, verb agreements) is:				
7. Planning and organizing ideas in writing is:				

Part two: Research challenges

Statements	Very Challenging	Challenging	Somewhat Challenging	Not Challenging
8.Choosing the title of the thesis is:				
9.Identifying a gap in the literature is				
10.Selecting atopic is				
11.Selecting the right methodology is				
12.Collecting the data is				
13.analysing the data				
14.iterpreating the results is				
15.publishing an article is				
16.citing and giving credibility to the source is				

Part Three: Supervision Related Challenges

Statements	Responses	
	YES	NO
17. Does your supervisor lack commitment?		
18.Do you face communication problems with supervisor		
19. Does your supervisor lack expertise and interest in your topic?		

20. Does your supervisor is unduly slow in reading thesis drafts?		
21. Does your supervisor give you less time, guide, and support?		
22. Do you want to change your supervisor?		

Part Four: Institution Related Challenges

Statements	Responses	
	YES	NO
23. Does your institution imposed you a research topic		
24. Are you anticipated to the faculty lab?		
25. Does your faculty library provide high speed internet?		
26. Does your faculty provide accessing reliable database?		
27. Does your faculty provide access to digital libraries?		

Section Three: Psychological Challenges

Statements	Responses	
	YES	NO
28. Do you face stress and anxiety due to thesis writing?		
29. Do you lack of motivation while writing your thesis?		
30. Do you face health issues that affect your progress?		

Section Four: Socioeconomic Challenges

Statements	Responses	
	YES	NO
31. Do you face financial constraint?		

32. Do you face personal challenges (e.g., lack of time management, lack of research skills; Spss, word, excel, ppt, lack of balance between research work and private life)?		
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37/ Are there other challenges you face as a doctoral students? please identify them:

.....

Appendix 2: EFL Doctoral Supervisors Interview

This interview is a part of a research study carried out in order to prepare a master dissertation. That aim to reveal the challenges that may face EFL doctoral students. We would be grateful if you collaborate in order to provide us with your perceptions about this topic; your answer will be a vital part in our study; therefore, we want your permission to take notes and sound recording.

Q01.How long have you been supervising doctoral students?

.....

Q02.what are the academic (academic writing, research, supervisor, institution) challenges that face EFL Doctoral students?

.....

Q03.what are the psychological challenges that may face EFL doctoral students?

.....

Q04.what are the socioeconomic challenges that may face EFL doctoral students?

.....

Q05.Doctoral students face variety of personal challenges (time management, lack of research skills, balance between research work and private life) what do you suggest to overcome these challenges?

.....

Q06.Do you think that the challenges that EFL doctoral students face are related to: Academic, psychological, or socioeconomic.

.....

Q07.how you motivate your students to overcome these challenges?

.....

Q08.In what way can the challenges to doctoral research be solved?

.....

الملخص

يعد إكمال دراسات الدكتوراه بنجاح تحديًا بطبيعته. نتيجة لذلك، يقوم العديد من طلاب الدكتوراه بتمديد سنوات دراستهم أو إنهاء مسيرتهم الدراسية. لذلك يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن التحديات التي تواجه طلاب الدكتوراه في استكمال دراسات الدكتوراه الخاصة بهم ، تم اعتماد طلاب الدكتوراه في جامعة محمد خضر بسكرة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كحالة دراسة. يعتمد البحث على السؤال "ما هي التحديات التي يواجهها طلبة الدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة بسكرة" ، ويتعلق بالفرضية القائلة بأنه قد تكون هناك تحديات أكاديمية ونفسية واجتماعية واقتصادية. تضمن منهج البحث استخدام المنهج الوصفي الاستكشافي. من أجل جمع البيانات من وجهة نظر المشاركين وخبراتهم ، تم توزيع استبيان على طلاب الدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، وأجريت مقابلة مع مشرفيهم في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة. من إجمالي 27 طالبًا أجاب 17 طالبًا فقط على الاستبيان، ومن إجمالي 7 مشرفين فقط 4 كانوا متاحين لإجراء مقابلة معهم. قدمت نتائج البحث نظرة ثاقبة للتحديات التي يواجهها طلاب الدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أغلب التحديات التي يواجهها الطلبة هي التحديات النفسية والشخصية والمؤسسية ، تليها التحديات المالية والأكاديمية. ومع ذلك ، فإن التحديات المتعلقة بالإشراف لا تشكل مصدر قلق بالغ لطلاب الدكتوراه. كل هذه التحديات لها تأثير سلبي في إكمال رحلة الدكتوراه بنجاح. لذلك ، هناك حاجة لمزيد من الأبحاث للتغلب على هذه التحديات وحلها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصعوبات، طلبة الدكتوراه قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كتابة مذكرة دكتوراه.