

## Challenges facing students in writing theses at the Jordanian universities

Sara Mohammad El-Freihat \*, Al-Balqa' Applied University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Science, Irbid, Jordan

### Suggested Citation:

El-Freihat S. M., (2021). Challenges facing students in writing theses at the Jordanian universities. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(6), 3266-3277. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i6.6321>

Received from September 02, 2021; revised from October 15, 2021; accepted from December 01, 2021.

©2021 Birlesik Dunya Yenilik Arastırma ve Yayıncılık Merkezi. All rights reserved

### Abstract

The study examined the challenges facing students in the process of writing theses and identify differences in these challenges in light of gender, qualifications, mental status, career status, type of university. A survey descriptive design was employed as a questionnaire was administered to a random sample consisting of (438) master degree students. To achieve the study objectives, a questionnaire was used. The study showed that the level of challenges students face when writing thesis was moderate, and statistically significant differences in the level of challenges students face when writing thesis in light of gender, in favor of females; specialization, in favor of science; marital status, in favor of married; career status; in favor of employed, while there were no statistically significant differences in light of type of university. The main conclusions of the study is that material challenges were the most prevalent in the Jordanian universities. In light of the results, some recommendations were suggested

**Keywords:** Challenges, Writing Thesis, Jordanian Universities, University Students, Jordan.

---

\* Address of correspondence: Sara Mohammad El-Freihat, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Science, Al-Balqa' Applied University, Irbid, Jordan

Email address: [sara.freihat@bau.edu.jo](mailto:sara.freihat@bau.edu.jo) / Tel: 00962779566230

## 1. Theoretical Framework

The last few years have been marked by a huge increase in the numbers of graduate students wishing to obtain a high degree. Nonetheless, universities have been ignoring a major fact, which is that these students need to be well prepared to reach the final step for obtaining a higher degree; training students how to write their MA theses (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). Affirming the importance of training students how to write their MA thesis, Huang (2007) contends that reaching the phase of writing a thesis has been a major concern for students and faculty members alike. The author adds in this respect that the majority of students indicate that writing a thesis is one of the most challenging tasks in their academic work. Likewise, Wang and Li (2008) postulate that students encounter different problems when writing their theses, including the selection of appropriate title suitable to their interest in addition to different problems related to the supervision process such as lack of communication. Mapolisa and Mafa (2011) listed some of the challenges students face; the most important was the fulfillment of MA proposals requirements. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) showed that students do not have the adequate understanding about some of the main sections of the thesis such as the discussion of results and how to develop practical and theoretical implications. These results emphasize a major fact that students do not have the needed skills to fulfill the requirements of MA thesis. Attempting to examine the most important difficulties students encounter when writing their theses or dissertations, Turmudi (2020) classified these into academic language selection difficulties, time management, selection of suitable research methodologies, the identification of under researched problems, lack of motivation among students and finally relation with supervisor. Summarizing the obstacles students face when writing their theses or dissertations, Tiwari (2019) concludes by indicating that writing an academic work is not an easy task as students are exposed to several challenges ranging from identifying their research interest reaching to the collection and analysis of the findings then attempting to discuss them and develop implications and recommendations. The most important problems students encounter when writing thesis include lack of focus in the writing process. Students also do not have a language repertuar to provide clear sentences. They are also unable to cover the main topic of the dissertation and find it difficult to select the suitable methodology to write a coherent thesis (Kikula & Quorro, 2007). In the same vain, Kombo and Tromp (2011) work on finding the most common difficulties among MA students and found that the selection of the title is a major concern in addition to using poor language structure. It was difficult for students to communicate with their supervisors who are overloaded with paperwork and cannot find time to effectively supervise the research paper.

In the Arab world, Al-Qaderi (2016) outlined the most predominant challenges MA and PhD students face which were lack of well-equipped library for being able to access the needed references and resources to complete the writing process. The difficult circumstances students are experiencing in their social life were a main obstacle for them and this applies to different Arab societies.

### 1.1 Related Research

Using a sample of (80) master students and (20) lecturer, Manchishi, Ndhlovu and Mwanza (2015) studied the common mistakes committed and challenges faced by postgraduate students in writing thesis. The researchers used face to face interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with master students to collect data. The study showed that master students' mistakes in writing thesis included: broad and unclear topics, failure to state the problem, failure to identify the gap in the literature, using wrong methodology, misunderstanding research terminologies, wrong citation style and plagiarism. The study also showed that the challenges which students faced included unavailability of supervisors for consultations; negative comments from supervisors; limited time; lack of materials; and finally, lack of co-ordination. In Tanzania, Komba (2016) examined the challenges of writing theses and dissertations among postgraduate student. The study sample was (103) research papers, including (39) theses; and (64) dissertations. The study showed that the most common challenges students face when writing thesis included inappropriateness in presenting different chapters of the reports and lack of academic writing skills.

Another study by Al-Shammari (2018) in Kuwait examined the difficulties that face the students of graduate studies colleges when writing theses and dissertation proposals. The perceptions of (281)

students selected using random sampling method were examined by completing a questionnaire consisting of (29) items. The study found that the level of difficulties that face the students of graduate studies colleges when writing their theses and dissertation proposals was moderate. It was also found that the level of difficulties related to teaching staff and university services were moderate while the level of difficulties related to students was high. The study found no statistically significant differences in the study sample means scores in light of gender, marital status, GPA or type of college.

Tiwari (2019) investigated the common challenges students face when writing thesis in English Educational Tribhuvan University. The sample consisted of (15) students who have submitted their final draft of thesis. The researcher used the interview to collect data. The study found that unsupportive behavior of the supervisors and difficulties of selecting the appropriate field or area of the study were the most common challenges when writing the thesis. Likewise, another study by Puspita (2019) investigated the factors affecting students' difficulties in writing thesis. The research interviewed (49) students. The data analysis showed that the level of difficulties students face when writing thesis was high. Language deficits was the highest difficulty English students face, followed by sociocultural factors, then personality factors. While the interview found that the most common factors was lack of confidence in deciding the thesis topic and in writing a proper literature review; difficulty in understanding the university format of thesis writing; and difficulties in paraphrasing sentences from the source to the thesis writing were common among students

While Qasem and Zayid (2019) explored in Saudi Arabia the challenges that are faced by undergraduates when writing proposals and research projects. The study sample totaled (60) undergraduates from Department of English and Department of Computer Science. The study instrument included a questionnaire and informal interviews. The results of the study showed that the level of challenges students face when writing research or conducting research projects was high. The study identified various and common challenges when writing the research proposals and projects. These included difficulty in deciding the research topic, lack of adequate knowledge of the research methodology, challenges in finding related references, lack of interest in research, lack of understanding of the subject matter, lack of time, and research guiding. In another study, Lestari (2020) sought to find out the common difficulties undergraduate students face in writing their theses at The English Study Program. The sample of the study included (74) students, and the instruments of the study were questionnaire and interview. The results of the study showed that the difficulties that students face in writing a thesis were mostly difficulties related to students' English proficiencies; time management; the selection of the suitable research methodology; students' attitude; students' research topic; co-advisor relationship, students' plagiarism; students' personalities; the big number of supervised students; advisor workload; and finally, difficulties of students motivation, respectively. At one of private universities in Jambi City in Indonesia, Suyadi, Husnaini and Elvina (2020) investigated the problems faced by the students of English educational study program when writing a thesis proposal. The study used a sample of (12) students selected purposefully who responded to an open-ended interview. The result revealed that there were four factors students face when writing the proposal; these were psychological; socio-cultural; linguistics; and cognitive.

## **1.2 Problem of the Study**

Writing a thesis is one of the most challenging problems in academic life. It starts with various hardships beginning from the selection of the thesis title until the collection and analysis of different resources and related studies pertaining to the title. But, one of the most difficult tasks a graduate student faces are the communication with the supervisor and allocating resources that may help finish the academic work. Despite the fact that writing a thesis is an important aspect of the academic experience of graduate students, there is still a theoretical gap in previous studies since there is a common assumption among academia that students do not face many difficulties when writing their theses. But, reviewing previous studies indicates that there is paucity in related studies, especially in developing countries where graduate students may face enormous challenges represented by lack of adequate resources that may help them complete the final format of their theses. Some studies showed that students may face several problems when writing their theses. At the international level, Lestari (2020) found that the most important challenges MA students face related to difficulties of students' English proficiencies; time management;

research methodology; students' attitude; students' research topic; co-advisor relationship, students' plagiarism, students' personalities, In the Arab world, in Saudi Arabia, Qasem and Zayid (2019) revealed that the most common challenges while writing thesis includes difficulty in deciding the topic, lack of good knowledge of the methodology, challenges in finding related references, lack of interest in research, lack of understanding of the subject matter, lack of time, and research guiding. Surprisingly, the researcher found no previous study in Jordan addressing the difficulties that Jordanian graduate students may face when writing their MA theses and this is what motivated her to write this research paper.

As a university professor, the researcher noticed that MA students face many difficulties when writing their theses and this may be due to several reasons. This has a negative effects on their academic writing; which is something may need more exploration in academic research. Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the level of challenges graduate students face when writing a thesis?
- 2- Are there differences in graduate students' perceptions with respect to the most common challenges students face when writing a thesis due to their gender, specialization (humanities, science), marital status (single, married), career status (employed, unemployed)?

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from its attempts to shed light on the most important challenges faced by MA graduate students when writing their theses. It is hoped that the results of this study can help graduate students and supervisors overcome such problems in their future quests. Furthermore, this study may inform universities to help graduate students how overcome these difficulties, which may improves the quality of their academic work.

### 1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to identify the challenges facing MA graduate students in the process of writing theses at the Jordanian universities, and to reveal the differences in the level of challenges facing students in light of gender, specialization, marital status, and career status.

### 1.5 Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study is the small number of the sample and this may limit the generalization of the results obtained. Furthermore, this study was confined to four universities in the middle and north regions of Jordan.

## 2. Method and Materials

### 2.1 Design of the Study

The study design is based on an analytical descriptive design through the use of a survey instrument to assess the level of challenges face students in writing theses.

### 2.2 Participants

The population of the study consisted of all master students at the Jordanian universities. The sample of the study consisted of (438) master degree students selected using random sampling method, table (1) shows the study sample distribution based on its variables.

**Table (1): Distribution of the Study Sample Based on the Study Variables**

| Variable       | Participation | Frequency | %   |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|-----|
| Gender         | Male          | 184       | 42% |
|                | Female        | 254       | 58% |
| Specialization | Humanities    | 289       | 66% |

|                    |            |     |      |
|--------------------|------------|-----|------|
|                    | Science    | 149 | 34%  |
| Marital Status     | Single     | 213 | 48.6 |
|                    | Married    | 225 | 51.4 |
| Career Status      | Employed   | 279 | 63.7 |
|                    | Unemployed | 159 | 36.3 |
| Type of University | Private    | 173 | 39.5 |
|                    | Public     | 265 | 60.5 |
| Total              |            | 438 | 100% |

As seen in table (1), the number of male graduate students was (184, 42%) and the number of females (254, 58%). As for specialization, the number of students in the humanitarian faculties was (289, 66%), while the number of students from the scientific faculties was (149, 34%). With respect to marital status, (225) were married (51.4%) while (213) were single (48.6%). As for career status (employed, unemployed), (63.7%) of the students were employed (N=279) and the remaining were unemployed (N=159, 36.3%). The number of students from public universities was (N=265) and from private universities (N=173, 39.5%).

### 2.3 Data Collection Instrument

To achieve the study objectives, the researcher developed a questionnaire by referring to a set of previous studies such as Lestari (2020), Wang and Li (2008) and Al-Shammari (2018) consisting in the preliminary format of (24) items distributed on (3) domains: infrastructure, communication, and time management. Each domain included (8) items describing the challenges facing graduate students when writing a thesis.

#### 2.3.1 Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, a panel of experts in the different fields working at various Jordanian public and private universities were asked to give their remarks about the items included in the instrument. After reviewing their remarks, the instrument in its final format consisted of (23) items, distributed on (3) domains: infrastructure, communication, and time management. One item was omitted based on the remarks of the experts.

#### 2.3.2 Reliability of the Tool

To verify the reliability of the study instrument, the test-retest method was used by administering the instrument in the first time to a sample consisting of (30) master degree students from the same population and out of the original sample of the study. The same questionnaire was re-administered to the same sample after two weeks. Then, Pearson Correlation was calculated between students' mean scores on the two administrations of the instrument.

Furthermore, Cronbach alpha Coefficient for internal consistency reliabilities was calculated. Table (2) shows test-retest and internal consistency reliabilities for the individual domains and the total instrument. As seen these values are appropriate to achieve the objectives of the study.

**Table (2): Test-Retest, Cronbach Alpha for Individual Domains and Total Instrument**

| N | Domain         | Cronbach Alpha | Test-Retest<br>Pearson R |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Infrastructure | 0.76           | 0.91                     |
| 2 | Communication  | 0.81           | 0.88                     |

| N | Domain          | Cronbach Alpha | Test-Retest<br>Pearson R |
|---|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 3 | Time Management | 0.79           | 0.90                     |
| 4 | total score     | 0.86           | 0.90                     |

## 2.4. Data Collection

In data collection process, the following procedures were employed:

1. Reviewing the related literature to establish theoretical as well practical background about the study.
2. Developing the instrument of the study and. Also, the reliability of the questionnaire will be tested using a pilot sample.
3. Preparing the final format of the questionnaire.
4. Obtaining the permission letter from Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate to conduct the study.
5. Testing the validity of questionnaire by consulting a panel of experts.
6. Conducting the pilot study on (50) EFL teachers who did not participate in the study to ensure the reliability of the instruments.
7. Administrating the questionnaire of the study after the representative sample is defined from the population.
8. Writing the research.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

To answer the first question of the study, means and standard deviations were calculated. As for the second question of the study, multi variance analysis was employed.

## 3. Results and Discussion of the Study

### 3.1 Results of the First Question: What is the level of challenges students face when writing a thesis?

To answer the first question of the study, means and standard deviations of the level of challenges students face when writing a thesis were computed as presented in table (3).

**Table (3): Means and Standard Deviations of of the Level of Challenges Students Face when Writing a Thesis, Ranked in a Descending Order**

| Rank | N | domain          | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level    |
|------|---|-----------------|------|----------------|----------|
| 1    | 1 | Infrastructure  | 3.15 | .782           | Moderate |
| 2    | 2 | Communication   | 2.65 | .955           | Moderate |
| 3    | 3 | Time Management | 2.60 | .963           | Moderate |
|      |   | total score     | 2.79 | .842           | Moderate |

Table (3) shows that "Infrastructure" receives the highest mean (3.15) regarding the level of agreement with a moderate level, followed by "Communication" with mean (2.65) with a moderate level, while "Time Management" ranked last with mean (2.60) and a moderate level. This table also shows that the total mean is (2.79) with a moderate level of challenges.

Furthermore, Mean and standard deviation of each item in each domain were calculated as shown in the following table.

**Table (4): Means and Standard Deviations of the Domain items, Ranked in a Descending Order**

| Rank                  | N  | Item  | Mean        | Std. Deviation | Level           |
|-----------------------|----|---|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 6                     | 1  | The library lacks adequate scientific resources.  | 2.70        | 1.259          | Moderate        |
| 5                     | 2  | The library doesn't contain enough computers to access the database.                              | 2.87        | 1.238          | Moderate        |
| 4                     | 3  | The university doesn't provide access to international resources.                                 | 2.95        | 1.209          | Moderate        |
| 1                     | 4  | The university doesn't have scientific labs for experimentations.                                 | 3.48        | 1.054          | Moderate        |
| 2                     | 5  | The university doesn't provide scientific materials for experimentations.                         | 3.42        | 1.075          | Moderate        |
| 3                     | 6  | There is paucity in equipment needed for completing the thesis.                                   | 3.38        | 1.121          | Moderate        |
| 7                     | 7  | The university lacks adequate scientific facilities needed.                                       | 3.25        | 1.136          | Moderate        |
| <b>Infrastructure</b> |    |   | <b>3.15</b> | <b>.782</b>    | <b>Moderate</b> |
| 6                     | 8  | There is no flexibility to contact the supervisor.  | 2.64        | 1.203          | Moderate        |
| 8                     | 9  | Using social media tools to contact supervisors is not an option in the supervisory relationship. | 2.53        | 1.234          | Moderate        |
| 7                     | 10 | Academic supervisors prefer traditional communication channels.                                   | 2.56        | 1.144          | Moderate        |
| 4                     | 11 | There are no fixed office hours to communicate with the academic supervisor.                      | 2.69        | 1.115          | Moderate        |
| 9                     | 12 | It is difficult to have the necessary channels to communicate with the academic supervisor.       | 2.49        | 1.076          | Moderate        |
| 5                     | 13 | The academic supervisor doesn't respond to my calls when I need an advise.                        | 2.68        | 1.422          | Moderate        |
| 2                     | 14 | The supervisor does not contact me if there is any debate.  | 2.71        | 1.321          | Moderate        |
| 1                     | 15 | It is hard to contact the academic supervisor when most needed.                                   | 2.89        | 1.274          | Moderate        |
| <b>Communication</b>  |    |   | <b>2.65</b> | <b>.955</b>    | <b>Moderate</b> |
| 4                     | 16 | I always have a busy schedule.  | 2.54        | 1.245          | Moderate        |
| 2                     | 17 | There is a contradiction between my schedule and the one of my academic supervisor.               | 2.63        | 1.195          | Moderate        |
| 3                     | 18 | It is difficult to arrange my timetable with my academic supervisor one.                          | 2.58        | 1.388          | Moderate        |
| 1                     | 19 | The supervisor always has a heavy work load, so I can't contact him.                              | 2.85        | 1.248          | Moderate        |
| 7                     | 20 | It is difficult to find free time to collect resources.   | 2.50        | 1.058          | Moderate        |
| 5                     | 21 | Social activities keep me always busy that hinder my academic work.                               | 2.55        | 1.377          | Moderate        |

| Rank                   | N  | Item   | Mean        | Std. Deviation | Level           |
|------------------------|----|--|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 6                      | 22 | I feel that I'm always delaying my duties academic task. | 2.54        | 1.220          | Moderate        |
| <b>Time Management</b> |    |  | <b>2.60</b> | <b>.963</b>    | <b>Moderate</b> |

3.2 Results of the Second Question: Are there differences in students' points of view with respect to the most common challenges students face when writing a thesis due to their gender, specialization (humanities, science), marital status (single, married), career status (employed, unemployed)?

To find out whether there are statistical significant differences ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the means of students' points of view with respect to the most common challenges students face when writing a thesis due to their gender, specialization (humanities, science), marital status (single, married), career status (employed, unemployed), t-test analysis was conducted and the results are shown in the following tables.

### 1. Gender

**Table (5): T-Test Results of Students' Response due to Gender**

|                 | Gender | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | t      | Df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------------|--------|-----|------|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| Infrastructure  | Male   | 184 | 3.03 | .815           | -2.661 | 436 | .008            |
|                 | Female | 254 | 3.23 | .747           |        |     |                 |
| Communication   | Male   | 184 | 2.50 | .909           | -2.750 | 436 | .006            |
|                 | Female | 254 | 2.76 | .976           |        |     |                 |
| Time Management | Male   | 184 | 2.43 | .862           | -3.062 | 436 | .002            |
|                 | Female | 254 | 2.72 | 1.015          |        |     |                 |
| Total Score     | Male   | 184 | 2.65 | .796           | -3.038 | 436 | .003            |
|                 | Female | 254 | 2.90 | .861           |        |     |                 |

Table (5) shows that there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to gender, in favor of females.

### 2. Specialization

**Table (6): T-Test Results of Students' Response due to Specialization**

|                 | Specialization | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | t      | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------------|----------------|-----|------|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| Infrastructure  | Humanities     | 289 | 3.04 | .782           | -3.995 | 436 | .000            |
|                 | Science        | 149 | 3.35 | .744           |        |     |                 |
| Communication   | Humanities     | 289 | 2.57 | .934           | -2.353 | 436 | .019            |
|                 | Science        | 149 | 2.80 | .983           |        |     |                 |
| Time Management | Humanities     | 289 | 2.49 | .911           | -3.130 | 436 | .002            |
|                 | Science        | 149 | 2.80 | 1.030          |        |     |                 |
| Total Score     | Humanities     | 289 | 2.70 | .812           | -3.290 | 436 | .001            |
|                 | Science        | 149 | 2.97 | .872           |        |     |                 |



Table (6) shows that there were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to specialization, in favor of scientific faculties.

### 3. Marital Status

**Table (7): T-Test Results of Students' Response due to Marital Status**

|                 | Marital Status | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | t      | Df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------------|----------------|-----|------|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| Infrastructure  | Single         | 213 | 3.06 | .803           | -2.241 | 436 | .026            |
|                 | Married        | 225 | 3.23 | .754           |        |     |                 |
| Communication   | Single         | 213 | 2.52 | .918           | -2.687 | 436 | .007            |
|                 | Married        | 225 | 2.77 | .977           |        |     |                 |
| Time Management | Single         | 213 | 2.46 | .871           | -3.026 | 436 | .003            |
|                 | Married        | 225 | 2.73 | 1.027          |        |     |                 |
| Total Score     | Single         | 213 | 2.67 | .800           | -2.874 | 436 | .004            |
|                 | Married        | 225 | 2.90 | .867           |        |     |                 |

Table (7) shows that there were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to marital status, in favor of married.

### 4. Career Status

**Table (8): T-Test Results of Students' Response due to Career Status**

|                 | Career Status | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | t     | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------------|---------------|-----|------|----------------|-------|-----|-----------------|
| Infrastructure  | Employed      | 279 | 3.23 | .779           | 3.009 | 436 | .003            |
|                 | Unemployed    | 159 | 3.00 | .768           |       |     |                 |
| Communication   | Employed      | 279 | 2.76 | .976           | 3.267 | 436 | .001            |
|                 | Unemployed    | 159 | 2.45 | .887           |       |     |                 |
| Time Management | Employed      | 279 | 2.70 | .986           | 2.939 | 436 | .003            |
|                 | Unemployed    | 159 | 2.42 | .896           |       |     |                 |
| Total Score     | Employed      | 279 | 2.89 | .858           | 3.311 | 436 | .001            |
|                 | Unemployed    | 159 | 2.62 | .787           |       |     |                 |

Table (8) shows that there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to career status, in favor of employed.

### Type of University

**Table (9): T-Test Results of Students' Response due to Type of University**

|                | Type of University | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | t    | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|------|----------------|------|-----|-----------------|
| Infrastructure | Private            | 173 | 3.19 | .815           | .895 | 436 | .372            |
|                | Governorate        | 265 | 3.12 | .760           |      |     |                 |
| Communication  | Private            | 173 | 2.66 | .962           | .200 | 436 | .842            |
|                | Governorate        | 265 | 2.64 | .953           |      |     |                 |

|                 |             |     |      |      |      |     |      |
|-----------------|-------------|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|
| Time Management | Private     | 173 | 2.60 | .922 | .127 | 436 | .899 |
|                 | Governorate | 265 | 2.59 | .990 |      |     |      |
| Total Score     | Private     | 173 | 2.81 | .839 | .393 | 436 | .695 |
|                 | Governorate | 265 | 2.78 | .846 |      |     |      |

Table (9) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to type of university.

#### 4. Discussion

The study results shows that the level of infrastructure challenge ranked first with a moderate level ( $M = 3.15$ ). This result may be due to the fact that universities in Jordan lack the adequate resources that can help students complete their MA theses. As known, developing countries face financial crises in general and Jordan is one of them. Furthermore, universities do not pay much attention to academic research as the resources are mainly allocated to other resources such as salaries. For these reasons, students find it more difficult for them to have adequate infrastructure resources that can help them as they do not find enough resources and references. Additionally, communication and technology problems such as access to the internet and the international data basis there are considered a major resources repertuar is difficult to access for students from the different universities as enrolment in these data basis requires financial resources.

Followed by communication challenge with a moderate level ( $M = 2.65$ ). This result may be explained by the fact that building effective communication channels between students and their supervisors is a hard endeavor for both. As the sample of the study was restricted to students, who are supposed to be able to use modern technology as a tool for communication, this result may be due to the fact that supervisors are still lacking the adequate knowledge on how to capitalize the different technological applications to communicate with their students. Knowing that students prefer using modern technologies in communication such as social media websites, they find it difficult to use traditional methods of communication with their supervisors and this may explain why they rate communication problems in the second place in challenges they face when writing their theses.

While time management challenge ranked last with a moderate level ( $M = 2.60$ ). This result can indicate that MA students have the necessary time management skills to overcome those problems resulting from the inability to use time effectively. In general, MA students have reached an age that make them acknowledge the importance of time management as time is an invaluable resource that should be capitalized to the most so students can complete their academic work. Furthermore, writing an MA thesis is not restricted by a deadline in most Jordanian universities, and this implies that MA students can take long time in writing their final theses.

As for the second question of the study, the results showed there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to gender, in favor of females. It is known that female students experience more pressures than males in oriental societies such as Jordan. It is known that writing an MA thesis needs to go to different places and as Jordan is a conservative society limiting the mobility of females due to family traditions it is more difficult for females to complete MA thesis that need in most cases going on field trips to collect information and to visit organizations and institutions representing the sample of their study. Additionally, respondents do not feel comfortable when interacting with females in various settings such as making an interview with them, thus, females resort to their relatives as a means for collecting their data

It was found in the study that there were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to specialization, in favor of scientific faculties. Writing a scientific MA thesis requires the use of scientific laboratories and materials since Jordanian universities face financial challenges, they cannot afford to provide students with the needed pro materials that are the key pillar for completing the scientific experience. Also, conducting a scientific experience needs modern devices that

are not available in universities and this maximizes the difficulties faced by scientific MA faculties' students in completing writing their MA thesis.

The current study indicated that there were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to marital status, in favor of married. Being married requires that the family life should be the first priority in life. Writing an MA thesis is a burden for those who are single, and this means it is like a rock on the chest of those who are married who have to make a balance between their family life and writing an MA thesis. This imposes further difficulties including providing adequate financial resources to pay for the tuitions and supporting ones family. This is the case for married male MA students and this problem can be more for females who have to be house hold and raise their children in addition to writing an MA thesis. This may explain why married feel that they face more challenges in writing their theses compared to single.

Furthermore, that there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to career status, in favor of employed. Working for specific hours is exhausting as going to work at 8: 00 AM and finishing at 3: 00 PM means that the individual has been drained out and he cannot put all his effort in writing the thesis. It also implies that he has to stay for long hours at night to fulfill the requirements of writing a thesis and visiting his supervisor to discuss the different aspects of the thesis. This requires that he/she has to finish work and go to the university to meet the supervisor and ignore the family life so as he/she complete the thesis. This imposes further problems since it is difficult to make balance between family life and academic life.

Finally, the study showed that there are no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in students' responses in all variables due to type of university. This result may be explained by universities in Jordan face the same conditions. As both public and private universities experience financial crises and that there are no demographic influences distinguishing public and private universities with respect to demographic characteristics of supervisors and students, this leads to lack of differences between the two in the type of challenges faced when writing an MA thesis.

## 5. Conclusion

As the results of the study showed that the level of infrastructure challenge ranked first with a moderate level in light of the results, it is suggested to provide students with adequate infrastructure (Equipment, laboratories, devices) as they are the main tools for completing an MA thesis. furthermore, there is a need for designing courses that should be an integral part of academic syllable in MA programs to guide students in the future when writing their theses. Future research should examine the challenges faced when writing an MA thesis from supervisor's perceptions.

## References

- Al-Qaderi, I. (2016). *How to write a research paper: Exploring the challenges faced by Yemeni undergraduate students in writing their graduation research projects*. California: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Al-Shammari, L. (2018). *The difficulties that face the students of graduate studies College in Kuwait University during the preparation of their theses and dissertation from their own perspective*. Unpublished MA thesis, Kuwait University, Kuwait. [http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Dissertation/KuKU/ku-oulya\\_2018\\_241266\\_shamril\\_authsub.pdf](http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Dissertation/KuKU/ku-oulya_2018_241266_shamril_authsub.pdf).
- Bitchener, J. & Basturkmen, H. (2006). Perceptions of the difficulties of postgraduate L2 thesis students writing the discussion section. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 5(1), 4–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2005.10.002>.
- Huang, R. (2007). A Challenging but worthwhile experience: Asian international student perspectives of undertaking a dissertation in the UK. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 6(1), 29-38. DOI:10.3794/johlste.61.130.
- Kikula, I. & Quorro, M. (2007). *Common Mistakes and Problems in Research Proposal Writing*. Cairo: Dar Al Salam.

- El-Freihat S. M., (2021). Challenges facing students in writing theses at the Jordanian universities. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(6), 3266-3277. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i6.6321>
- Komba, S. (2016). Challenges of writing theses and dissertations among postgraduate students in Tanzanian higher learning institutions. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 5(3), 71-80. DOI:10.5861/ijrse.2015.1280.
- Kombo, D. & Tromp, D. (2011). *Proposal and thesis writing*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Lessing, A. & Schulze, S. (2003). Lecturers' experience of postgraduate supervision in a distance education context. *SAJHE/SATHO*, 17(2), 159-168. DOI:10.4314/sajhe.v17i2.25309.
- Lestari, D. (2020). An analysis of students' difficulties in writing undergraduate thesis at English education program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. *Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics*, 9(1), 17-29. DOI:10.24127/pj.v9i1.2588.
- Mafa, O. & Mapolisa, T. (2011). Supervisors' experiences in supervising postgraduate education students' dissertations and theses at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2(10), 1685-1697. <http://www.aessweb.com/download.php?id=1481>.
- Manchishi, P., Ndhlovu, D. & Mwanza, D. (2015). Common mistakes committed and challenges faced in research proposal writing by University of Zambia postgraduate students. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 2(3), 126-138. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Common-Mistakes-Committed-and-Challenges-Faced-in-Manchishi-Ndhlovu/5850f8d90ed405fae5d7d33761307806b06873b1>.
- Puspita, C. (2019). *Factors affecting students' difficulties in writing thesis*. 3rd English Language and Literature International Conference (ELLiC) Proceedings, Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang, 27 April 2018, Central Java, Indonesia. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/206945-the-analysis-of-the-factors-affecting-un.pdf>
- Qasem, F. & Zayid, E. (2019). The challenges and problems faced by students in the early stage of writing research projects in L2, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. *European Journal of Special Education Research*, 4(1), 32-47. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.2557036.
- Suyadi, S., Husnaini, H. & Elvina, E. (2020). Undergraduate students' difficulties in writing a research proposal: A case study. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 7(3), 838-843. <http://www.ijstr.org/final-print/mar2020/Undergraduate-Students-Difficulties-In-Writing-A-Research-Proposal-A-Case-Study.pdf>.
- Tiwari, H. (2019). Writing thesis in English education: Challenges faced by students. *Journal of NELTA Gandaki (JoNG)*, 1, 45-52. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v1i0.24458>.
- Turmudi, D. (2020). English scholarly publishing activities in the industrial revolution 4.0: What, Why, and How?. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 3(1), 52-62. DOI:10.12928/eltej.v3i1.1890.
- Wang, T. & Li, L. (2008). Understanding international postgraduate research students' challenges and pedagogical needs in thesis writing. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 4(3), 88-96. <https://doi.org/10.5172/ijpl.4.3.88>.