

The Need for Academic Writing in Albania

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Abstract:

Introduction: This research analyzes the importance of academic writing in Albania and suggests introducing it as a mandatory course in all fields of study. The study aims to identify students' perceptions of academic writing and the importance of clear structure and guidelines in academic writing templates. The research collected data through 253 online questionnaires from students of private and public HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) in Albania, revealing that students lacked adequate skills in primary writing forms and were unaware of the steps required to use resources.

Methods: 253 Albanian university students participated in a study on academic writing abilities and methods. The study used a structured questionnaire with 23 closed-ended questions related to statements relevant to the concepts provided by the Literature Review on the issues of writing skills, methodology, and the required steps of academic writing.

Results: The study found that over half of the students surveyed did not study academic writing, which was mainly offered as an elective course for the undergraduate level. Less than half of the students confirmed that their universities offered a template for them to guide themselves through the studying process. The research also found a connection between the lack of academic writing in the curricula and academic integrity.

Discussion: The Ministry of Education and HEIs should provide theoretical and methodological guidelines for designing academic writing courses in Albanian. Academic writing programs in Albanian and English should be offered to faculty members and researchers. Academic Writing should be mandatory for every study program, collaborating with disciplinary professors and linguistics to improve the existing curricula and creating opportunities for students to express their critical thinking through writing skills.

Limitations: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this research faced limitations in accessing the syllabi of some faculties and restricted student gatherings.

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Therefore, the questionnaire was delivered online, and the results presented in the paper refer to the respondents' self-regulation while answering online.

Conclusions: The survey revealed that students from public and non-public higher education institutions lack basic writing skills, prefer internet guidance over professor's assistance, struggle with paraphrasing, summarizing, and referencing, and lack academic integrity. However, students showed a high interest in academic writing as a mandatory course in higher education institutions.

Key words: academic writing, higher education institutions, mandatory.

Introduction

Academic writing in Albania has been a topic of discussion since the fall of the Communist regime in 1990. For over fifty years, the education system was influenced by the Russian education model, which significantly impacted our approach to writing. As a student, I was taught that using elaborate language and expressing my ideas passionately as if they were my own would make my paper excellent. There was no concept of focus, organization, or word limit, and the only criteria for assessment were the number of mistakes and the teacher's general opinion. High school curriculums analyzed literature, including the most well-known authors and their masterpieces.

As professionals, we understand the immediate need to introduce academic writing into our higher education system. However, upon examining the curricula offered in most higher education institutions (HEIs), it becomes evident that there is a lack of a uniform writing format provided to students by leading universities. Given the inconsistent curricula of pre-university education systems, it is not surprising that many students struggle to write even a simple email, let alone a research paper.

In an editorial article published for Panorama Newspaper, a scholar of the Albanian language, Bahri Beci (2019), stated, "If we analyze the programs and texts more deeply, we will be convinced that the new programs and texts of language and literature approved so far are like warehouses without inventory." After reviewing the curricula of both public and private educational institutions in Albania, it was discovered that academic writing courses are not offered to students in most cases, and even when they are available, they are not mandatory. Additionally, there is no consistency among higher education institutions regarding including academic writing courses in their syllabi or the books used in these courses, mainly unpublished lectures or inaccessible books. Surprisingly, even faculties closely related to writing, such as the Department of Journalism and Communication, primarily use a curriculum based on foreign

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authors with different language structures. Gjovalin Shkurtaj (2017, p. 32), an Albanian language expert, has emphasized the urgency of this issue in his book "Linguistic Urgency," stating that foreign influences in Albanian syntax often appear more as influences in the structuring of thought than as linguistic influences. Shkurtaj (2017) scrutinizes the sectors of the Albanian language wherein foreign syntactic influences have impacted the Albanian standard language. These include the language used in official documents, books, media rhetoric, articles, and others. Emil Lafe (2014), another linguistics expert, stated, "The essence of language, the identity of language, is the grammatical system. Names are inflected, masculine, feminine, adjectives, verbs, first choice, second choice, etc. The grammatical system is like the language system."

Academic Writing is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a formal and factual style of writing that is used for essays, research papers, and other academic texts. If we take an example from Western curricula, we would probably consider the system they have created for their standard language as a crucial factor in their education systems. Mary R. Lea from the Institute of Educational Technology, UK, and Brian Street from King's College London highlight that: "Learning in higher education involves adapting to new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting, and organizing knowledge. Academic literacy - reading and writing within disciplines - constitute central process through which students learn new subjects and develop their knowledge about new areas of study." (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158) In many Western universities, writing is a crucial aspect of obtaining a degree. As such, both native and non-native English speakers are required to take a course in academic writing for a duration of one or two terms. According to Leki and Carson (1994, p. 83), universities implicitly support the idea that being able to write well is essential for academic success. Often, the only mandatory course for L2 and NES students is a term to a year of composition. Academic writing is beneficial for developing analytical thinking and the ability to express ideas concisely and logically. These skills are crucial for possessing practical academic writing skills. Furthermore, it is essential to adapt one's message to different audiences to communicate effectively (Leon, 2023).

However, Albanian higher education institutions (HEIs) take a different approach to the importance of writing and academic writing courses. In these institutions, academic writing is an elective course, and students are not required to take it.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- (i) To describe students' perception of the importance of academic writing in Albania.
- (ii) To identify the importance of clear structure and guidelines in the academic writing templates: abstract, content, results, descriptive papers, etc.
- (iii) To identify the literature used in HEIs in Albania.

The research questions of this research are as follows:

- (i) What are the differences in the assisting process for the writing process among first-year to third-year undergraduate students?
- (ii) Is there a relationship between the lack of academic writing and the level of academic integrity in HEIs?
- (iii) What is students' perception regarding Academic Writing as a mandatory course for HEIs?

1 Literature review

Academic writing can be challenging because it requires a vast range of skills, including a deep understanding of linguistics and the ability to break down complex ideas into simple components. While teaching Composition to first-year bachelor students at New York University in Tirana, we were inspired to research this topic. The program is taught in English and follows the American curriculum. Many of previous students had trouble with academic writing when they went to other universities. Our research showed that many of the top universities in Albania use Umberto Eco's book "Come si fa una tesi di laurea, Le materie umanistiche" (1997) as a resource for their curricula. A curriculum for students in Albania featured various authors, including Bardhyl Musaj, who wrote a book called "Si te shkruajme ese" in 2004, which is no longer available. However, most of the other authors' works were unpublished lectures or written by Western authors. While this may seem like a search for excellence, the curriculum did not align with the structure of the Albanian language. In contrast, Western universities' curricula for first-year bachelor students include entire chapters on grammar and syntax rules of formal writing, which introduces students to the formal language used in academic settings. In the third edition of the book "Introduction to Academic Writing," authors Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue (2007) emphasize that writing in English for academic purposes may differ from writing in one's native language. The words, grammar, and way of organizing ideas may differ from what one is accustomed to in their native language. Although the English style of writing may appear clumsy, repetitive, or even impolite, it is neither better nor worse than other styles; it is simply different. According to Servet Çelik from the University of Trabzon in Turkey, students who have a limited vocabulary, take longer to write, and are restricted to

using a simplistic writing style may find it challenging to express themselves adequately, negatively affecting their self-efficacy. Students are often required to write comments on situations in Psychology or describe experiments in Chemistry.

However, they are expected to have acquired a standard formal writing format, which is often not the case. In an article, Irina Korotkina (2014) discussed the problem of writing in Albania, stating that it was "holistic, involving educational, administrative, and methodological issues, which could not be solved by separate actors and need consolidation." This writing issue is not limited to Albania, as Russia has been dealing with a similar problem for several years. In her article "Academic Writing in Russia: Evolution or Revolution" (Korotkina, 2014), she provides a personal and first-hand account of her experience with the immediate need for improvement in writing. She explains that she was only exposed to the fundamental notion of composition or academic writing when she became a professional. Although she faced some obstacles, she overcame them and improved her writing skills. After exploring recent research papers on academic writing, it has become evident that this issue is prevalent in several countries, particularly those with different approaches than Western countries. The pressure to align with EU standards has significantly improved academic writing in the Balkans, mainly Romania and Bulgaria. This process has not only highlighted the importance of harmonizing and synchronizing university curricula but has also emphasized the role of higher education in creating active citizens who can positively contribute to the growth of human society. This was stated in the Bologna Process - Bucharest Communiqué of 2013. Academic writing is mandatory in some countries in higher education institutions (HEIs). The issues students face in these countries are the same as those encountered by students studying writing skills, such as summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, etc.

An article by Irina Ivanova (2020) found that students in these countries have problems with general understanding, referencing, acknowledging sources, and other research-related aspects. However, the academic writing situation in Albania's HEIs is different. For example, many bachelor studies are barely present, even when offered as an elective. The curricula are unsuitable for research and adapted to the Albanian language framework. In an analysis written for Sot Newspaper in 2016, scholar and author Ramazan Sherja (2016) emphasized that Albanian textbooks, particularly those offered to preschool education institutions, avoid the development of theoretical linguistic knowledge and practical side of literary theories, leaving no premise to do as many written tasks as possible with linguistic character. Sherja argues that the Albanian Language and Literature are taught as a single subject, which diminishes the importance of teaching linguistic and grammatical concepts of the language, especially to senior high school students. According to the Education

Developmental Institute (IZHA, 2018), changes were made by adding two extra hours to the timetable but still as an elective course. Academic writing and research work are interdependent, as evidenced by a policy paper published by Besfort Lamallari, Gentola Madhi, and Miada Shpuza in April 2016, titled "Academic (Dis) Honesty in Albania: Concerns on Plagiarisms." The study analyzed articles from various pedagogues and identified severe issues with listing sources, their completeness and accuracy, compliance with the requirement of paraphrasing, citations without quotation marks, and in-text references.

2 Methodology

This study investigated the writing skills, methodology, and steps required for academic writing among undergraduate and graduate students in Albanian universities. The researchers used a quantitative approach and a structured questionnaire of 23 statements. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed to students via email and social media accounts over a period of six months. A total of 253 students from public and private higher education institutions, aged between 18 and 23 years old and from different fields of study, participated in the survey. The respondents included both first-year Bachelor's and first-year Master's students from both private and public HEIs. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions related to the statements provided by the literature review.

3 Results and discussion

In regards to understanding the perception of the writing process in Albania, particularly academic writing, students were asked if they had studied academic writing or any other form of writing skills. Out of the responses received, 48.2% answered "yes," 35.6% answered "no," and 16.2% were "not sure." 131 students, or 51.8%, did not have previous exposure to academic writing. This reveals that academic writing was mainly offered as an elective course for undergraduate students in their respective higher education institutions' curricula.

Table 1

Have you studied Academic Writing or other writing skills?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
4 - Have you studied Academic Writing or other writing skills?	122	48,2%	Yes
	90	35,6%	No
	41	16,2%	Not sure

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Based on the descriptive data from the cross-tabulation of SPSS version 23, we can see a difference in the percentage of students who have studied academic writing. Specifically, among 1st-year bachelor students, 33.2% responded "Yes" while 21.7% said "No" out of a total of 67.6%. On the other hand, among 3rd-year bachelor students, only 9.9% answered "Yes" while 11.9% said "No" out of a total of 22.5%. This inconsistency in the results could be related to the differences in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) curricula.

Table 2

Circle the period/year of the study cycle you are in - Have you studied Academic Writing or any other form of writing skills?

			<i>Have you studied Academic Writing or any other form of writing skills?</i>			<i>Total</i>
			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	
<i>Circle the period/year of the study cycle you are in</i>	3rd year high school	Count	5.0	2.0	4.0	11.0
		Expected Count	5.3	3.9	1.8	11.0
		% of Total	2.0%	0.8%	1.6%	4.3%
	1st year bachelor	Count	84.0	55.0	32.0	171.0
		Expected Count	82.5	60.8	27.7	171.0
		% of Total	33.2%	21.7%	12.6%	67.6%
	3rd year bachelor	Count	25.0	30.0	2.0	57.0
		Expected Count	27.5	20.3	9.2	57.0
		% of Total	9.9%	11.9%	0.8%	22.5%
	1st year master	Count	8.0	3.0	3.0	14.0
		Expected Count	6.8	5.0	2.3	14.0
		% of Total	3.2%	1.2%	1.2%	5.5%
Total	Count		122.0	90.0	41.0	253.0
	Expected Count		122.0	90.0	41.0	253.0
	% of Total		48.2%	35.6%	16.2%	100.0%

After analyzing students' responses regarding the academic writing format provided by their universities, it was found that 37.5% had a clear structure or format to follow. In comparison, 19.4% stated that their institutions did not offer any such format. Meanwhile, 43.1% of the students were uncertain whether their universities provided any template to guide them through the writing process.

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Table 3

Do you think your school/university/college has a straightforward format/structure of writing for students to use during their studies?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
8 - Do you think your school/university/college has a straightforward format/structure of writing for students to use during their studies?	95	37.5%	Yes
	49	19.4%	No
	109	43.1%	Not sure

As per objective number 1 and question 7, which asked how students managed to write their course assignments, reports, analysis, research papers, and other such documents, 45.1% of the respondents (114 out of 253) admitted that they "Google it." In comparison, 39.1% confirmed that their professor or tutor provided them with a format, and 15.8% reported seeking help from senior students. When the responses to research questions 8 and 7 were analyzed, it was observed that there is a clear correlation between the absence of a standard writing format and the approach students take when dealing with various assignments, which is to "Google it."

Table 4

How did you manage to write your course assignments/reports/analysis/research papers, etc.?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
7- How did you manage to write your course assignments/reports/analysis/research papers, etc.?	114	45,1%	Google it
	40	15,8%	Ask older students
	99	39,1	The teacher/professor/ tutor offered me a format.

To further elaborate and understand the data in Table 3 relating to the research question (i), the results were analyzed using descriptive analysis in SPSS version 23 and presented in Table 4. Crosstabulation was used to observe if there were any changes in the results between 1st-year bachelor students and those in their 3rd year. The data indicated that 67.6% of 1st-year bachelor students referred to Google to manage their writing process, while 28.1% (out of 67.7%) received assistance from professors. The difference in percentage between those receiving assistance from their instructors and those using Google was insignificant.

When observing the responses of 3rd-year bachelor students, it is worth noting a significant difference. Out of the total respondents, 22.5% of students manage their assignments using the Internet, while 12.6% rely on this source of information. Interestingly, 5.9% of them seek assistance from their professors to improve their writing skills. This outcome can be interpreted as a sign of

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increased independence among 3rd-year bachelor students. However, they will likely require specific guidance and support since they must work on a thesis dissertation to complete their bachelor's degree.

Table 5

Circle the period/year of the study cycle you are in - How did you manage to write your course assignments/reports/analysis/research papers, etc.?

			<u>How did you manage to write your course assignments/reports/analysis/ research papers, etc.?</u>			
			<u>Google it</u>	<u>Ask older students</u>	<u>The teacher/ professor/tutor offered me a format</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Circle the period/year of the study cycle you are in</i>	3rd year high school	Count	1.0	2.0	8.0	11.0
		Expected Count	5.0	1.7	4.3	11.0
		% of Total	0.4%	0.8%	3.2%	4.3%
	1st year bachelor	Count	75.0	25.0	71.0	171.0
		Expected Count	77.1	27.0	66.9	171.0
		% of Total	29.6%	9.9%	28.1%	67.6%
	3rd year bachelor	Count	32.0	10.0	15.0	57.0
		Expected Count	25.7	9.0	22.3	57.0
		% of Total	12.6%	4.0%	5.9%	22.5%
	1st year master	Count	6.0	3.0	5.0	14.0
		Expected Count	6.3	2.2	5.5	14.0
		% of Total	2.4%	1.2%	2.0%	5.5%
Total	Count	114.0	40.0	99.0	253.0	
	Expected Count	114.0	40.0	99.0	253.0	
	% of Total	45.1%	15.8%	39.1%	100.0%	

Referring to the data from Table 6, connected to the format and the first steps to writing an assignment, 38.7% reported having been delivered a scheme by the professor. In comparison, 35.6% answered that they had an unclear scheme, 20.6% reported following the basic structure “Intro, Body, Conclusion,” and 5.1% reported having googled or referred to older students.

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Table 6

When you start an assignment, do you have a standard structure of all the steps?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
9 - When you start an assignment, do you have a standard structure of all the steps?	98	38.7%	Yes, I have a clear scheme delivered by the instructor/ professor/teacher/tutor.
	90	35.6%	Yes, but not very clear. I ask around, google it.
	13	5.1%	No, just Google or ask former students.
	52	20.6%	Yes, just follow the structure: Intro, Body, and Conclusion.

(i) *Importance of guidelines and structures for Academic Writing.*

Referring to objective number two on the importance of the guidelines and orientation, students' perception is reported as the following: A significant percentage of 66.8% of the respondents were confident to write essays of descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory formats, while 10.7% were confident in writing reports. Regarding research papers, the percentage was notably low (14.2%), followed by 8.3% of the ones who were satisfied with writing an analysis.

Table 7

Circle which of these formats you are confident you do well.

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
10 - Circle which of these formats you are confident you do well.	169	66.8%	Essay (descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, etc.)
	27	10.7%	Reports
	36	14.2%	Research papers
	21	8.3%	Analysis

According to the data, 62.1% reported needing to be more familiar with the terminology used for the first steps of the writing process. 35.2% of the respondents were familiar with all the required terms, while 2.8% needed to know the terminology.

Table 8

Are you familiar with these terms: Outline, prewriting, paraphrasing, freewriting, brainstorming?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
11 - Are you familiar with these terms: Outline, prewriting, paraphrasing, freewriting, brainstorming?	89	35.2%	Yes, all of them
	157	62.1%	Some of them
	7	2.8%	No, none

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In line with objective number 2, question 16, “Would it be useful for you to have a clear format of writing for you to follow, for emails, memos, documents, papers, assignments, etc.?” a significant of 86.2% responded, “Yes, absolutely.” In comparison, only 11.2% considered it “not necessary,” and 2.8% answered that they were unsure about it.

Table 9

Would it be useful for you to have a clear writing format for emails, memos, documents, papers, assignments, etc.?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
16 - Would it be useful for you to have a clear writing format for emails, memos, documents, papers, assignments, etc.?	218	86.2%	Yes, absolutely
	28	11.1%	No, not necessary
	7	2.8%	Not sure

Observing the data from question 17, “Do you think not knowing how to write/cite/paraphrase something leads people to copy things/materials from the internet/books/journals?” A considerably high percentage of 47.8% responded, “Yes, absolutely.” In comparison, 34% answered with “yes, probably,” and 5.5% considered it unrelated.

Table 10

Do you think not knowing how to write/cite/paraphrase something leads people to copy things/materials from the internet/books/journals?

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage %</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
17 - Do you think not knowing how to write/cite/paraphrase something leads people to copy things/materials from the internet/books/journals?	121	47.8%	Yes, absolutely
	32	12.6%	No, not necessarily
	86	34%	Yes, probably
	14	5.5%	No, it is not related

Reviewing research question number (ii) whether there is a relation between lack of academic writing in the curricula and academic integrity, the responses from the SPSS 23 with cross-tabulation showed that out of 72.3% of the responders which during their writing process they just selected and then used the materials, 32.6% considered as absolutely relatable to the absence of writing skills. While out of 22.9% of the responses that used paraphrasing and summarizing the materials found, 10.7% considered it ‘Yes, absolutely,’ and 10.7% “Yes, probably” connected to the lack of academic writing (Table 11).

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Table 11

Do you think not knowing how to write/cite/paraphrase something leads people to copy things/materials from the internet/book/journals? - Do you know how to use the selected materials, what to do with them?

			<u>Do you know how to use the selected materials, what to do with them?</u>			<u>Total</u>
			<u>I select the most important facts and use them.</u>	<u>I copy the materials and include them in the paper</u>	<u>I paraphrase or summarize what I find</u>	
<i>Do you think not knowing how to write/cite/paraphrase something leads people to copy things/materials from the internet/ book/ journals?</i>	Yes, absolutely	Count	90.0	4.0	27.0	121.0
		Expected Count	87.5	5.7	27.7	121.0
		% of Total	35.6%	1.6%	10.7%	47.8%
	No, not necessarily	Count	24.0	5.0	3.0	32.0
		Expected Count	23.1	1.5	7.3	32.0
		% of Total	9.5%	2.0%	1.2%	12.6%
	Yes, probably	Count	57.0	2.0	27.0	86.0
		Expected Count	62.2	4.1	19.7	86.0
		% of Total	22.5%	0.8%	10.7%	34.0%
	No, it is no related	Count	12.0	1.0	1.0	14.0
		Expected Count	10.1	0.7	3.2	14.0
		% of Total	4.7%	0.4%	0.4%	5.5%
Total	Count		183.0	12.0	58.0	253.0
	Expected Count		183.0	12.0	58.0	253.0
	% of Total		72.3%	4.7%	22.9%	100.0%

(iii) What kind of perception do students have of providing Academic Writing as a mandatory course for HEIs?

Referring to objective number 1 of this research study, on the importance of academic writing in the university, and to research question number (iii), students' perception was analyzed from descriptive statistics. For questions number 15 "Do you think academic writing should be mandatory in every higher education institution?" 57,3 percent of the responses considered the introduction of academic writing as a mandatory course necessary. Meanwhile, 36.4 % of the respondents considered it essential but not a compulsory course. The responses that were deemed unnecessary and were not sure about were 3.2% each.

Table 12

Do you think academic writing should be made mandatory in every higher educational institution?

	<i>Students</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
<i>15 - Do you think academic writing should be made mandatory in every higher educational institution?</i>	145	57.3%	Yes, absolutely
	92	36.4%	Yes, but not mandatory
	8	3.2%	No, not necessarily
	8	3.2%	Not sure

Referring to the research question (iii) related to the need for Academic Writing to be mandatory in the university, the respondents in my research reported this way: 145 out of 253 said they would strongly agree to have Academic Writing as part of the university curriculum. Ninety-two respondents reported agreeing to have the academic writing course in the university curriculum, but it might be optional. Eight of them said it might not be necessary, and eight others responded that they were unsure.

4 Limitations and recommendations

Based on this research and referring to the literature review coming from different authors of countries that have shared a common political and cultural path, my recommendations for the policymaking institutions such as the Ministry of Education and HEIs would be to provide a set of theoretical and methodological rules to design academic writing courses in Albanian; Offer academic writing programs for faculty members and researchers in both Albanian and English. Introducing Academic Writing as a mandatory course for every study program certainly follows practices coming from Western HEIs. Support collaboration among disciplinary professors and linguistics to guide and orient an improvement on the existing curricula; interact with other universities in organizing and conducting seminars, lectures, and conferences aimed at distributing this new approach of writing with all related competencies; promote the development of teacher training programs delivered from experts of academic writing in both Albanian and English. The results of this research should be helpful to Albanian Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education, Career Centers, and Human Resources Agencies. HEIs would focus on integrating academic writing into their curricula, which would create and open up the opportunity for students to express and show their critical thinking through writing skills. The limitation of this research was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where all the universities were delivering classes online, and the majority of the administrative staff were working from home, making it challenging to attain the syllabi of some faculties that were not provided on the

official websites. Therefore, student gatherings were restricted, which brought the only option of delivering the questionnaire online. Consequently, the results presented in the paper refer to the level of equity and impartiality that respondents have had while self-regulating the questionnaire online.

Conclusions

This research has shown students' perception of academic writing during their learning process in higher education institutions and how exposure to this course would facilitate and assist their writing skills on format and content regarding their assignments, research papers, etc. The data coming through the questionnaire constructed by the researcher - referring to the situation of academic writing - was addressed to 253 students from public and non-public HEIs. The students reported findings such as:

- Students of HEIs show a significant absence regarding the writing process, mostly related to basic skills in format, content, and the ability to process the materials needed.
- Despite being aware of the importance of acquiring the ability to present decent written assignments as needed from the academic aspect, students preferred mostly the internet to refer to for guidance over assistance from their professors.
- Students' lack of writing skills, such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and using proper referencing, which are taught through academic writing, has led to a lack of academic integrity.
- Students' perception of the importance of academic writing and the possibility of being offered as a mandatory course in HEIs was significantly high, considering it necessary.

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