



RESEARCH MADE EASY INTRODUCTION TO BASIC RESEARCH CONCEPTS

Workshop Project Report Uganda



THE COLLABORATION FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN AFRICA
(CORE AFRICA)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Collaboration for Research Excellence in Africa (CORE Africa) has as its mission to develop a sustainable network of skilled researchers in Africa, who are capable of addressing societal challenges through quality research. To be able to generate the knowledge required to tackle societal problems in Africa, research needs to be done locally, by Africans in Africa. Our aim is to increase research capacity and output in Africa, by

- Increasing awareness on the importance of research in Africa,
- Identifying and addressing research challenges in Africa,
- Creating opportunities for research skill development,
- Promoting the creation of research-friendly environments and
- Producing information that can influence research practices in Africa.

The ‘Research Made Easy’ (RME) programme was informed by these objectives, as well as students’ responses to our Attitudes Towards Research (ATR) surveys¹ which aim to understand their perceptions about research. The programme comprises of:

(i) an interactive webinar designed to provide students with a simple guide to conducting academic research, and

(ii) focus group discussions (FGDs) aimed at identifying challenges faced with academic research and potential solutions for them.

This report documents the outcomes of the RME programme delivered to students and other professionals in Uganda, on the 24th and 25th of April 2020. The programme was attended by 72 participants from 10 universities in Uganda. Students gained knowledge on the relevance of research to themselves and to society, how to find a research topic, steps involved in the research process, how to find research literature, how to disseminate research findings and how to access research support from CORE Africa.

Key challenges identified during the FGDs included difficulties identifying a suitable research topic, being unable to work on their desired topics, course structures not giving students enough time to learn how to conduct research effectively, students not feeling sufficiently supported during their academic research and lack of awareness, guidance and resources on research publication.

Potential solutions identified were early exposure to research, having access to research support programmes and opportunities to practice, and learning about the potential benefits of conducting research and disseminating findings.

Our recommendations in view of these findings are for academic institutions to introduce students to research as early on as possible in the curriculum, review the structure/content of research courses and the roles of supervisors, create opportunities to promote research activities and skill development (e.g. mentorship, internships and research clubs), and embed key messages about the importance of research to students and the wider society. These outcomes and recommendations will be disseminated to universities and other academic institutions in Uganda, and all relevant authorities. This report is also available for download at the CORE Africa website, www.coreafrica.org.

The RME programme has also been delivered in one other African country (Cameroon – report available at the CORE Africa website) and will be extended to other African countries and regions. Outcomes from these will be reported in separate country or region-specific reports. CORE Africa plans to conduct a cross-country analysis to integrate shared lessons from students’ research experiences across Africa.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The RME webinar was open and free to any university students, researchers and interested parties in Uganda willing to contribute towards the discussion on research challenges faced by students. Participants were invited through a flyer (Appendix A) which was shared through the CORE Africa website and our social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn and WhatsApp). The event took place on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th of April, 2020, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM EAT, and was delivered online, via the Zoom video conferencing platform.

Seventy-two participants registered for the programme. In attendance on Day 1 were 66 participants, and 69 on Day 2. Participants were mostly students, while others were professionals of various disciplines (Medical Doctors, independent researchers and lecturers). Students were from 10 universities in Uganda (Table 1), and from a variety of academic backgrounds, with a majority being health-related (see Appendix B).

Table 1: Universities represented by webinar participants

- Makerere University
- Kampala International University
- Mbarara University
- Gulu University
- Uganda Pentecostal University
- Kesmonds International University
- Bishop Stuart University
- Clark International University
- Islamic university of Uganda
- Infectious Disease Institute, Kampala

Day one of the webinar – 24th April 2020

On the first day, participants were engaged in discussions and reflections on the importance of research to students, and to society. Students learnt about the various stages and activities involved during the research process, and the level of support that CORE Africa provides at each stage. Sessions were delivered through a combination of interactive presentations which included scenario research planning, quizzes and question and answer (Q&A) sessions. The Q&A sessions were scheduled during and after presentations, giving participants an opportunity to discuss or seek clarification on the content presented. Questions were addressed by the session speaker and members of the CORE Africa team. The programme for Day 1 was scheduled as shown in Appendix C and lasted approximately an hour and a half.

Day two of the webinar – 25th April 2020

The first half of day 2 commenced with participants engaging in an interactive tutorial on how to find a research topic, which was followed by a presentation on different research dissemination pathways. As was the case on day one, there were Q&A sessions during and after presentations, where questions were addressed by the speaker and members of CORE Africa team.

The second half of the programme engaged participants in focus group discussions (FGDs) where they were split into small groups, each led by a CORE Africa team member. The aim of the FGDs was to provide an opportunity for students to express any challenges they were facing in relation to conducting academic research, and to propose solutions which they believe could be useful in increasing their research knowledge, enhancing their research skills or improving their research experiences at their respective institutions of learning and beyond. The questions addressed and findings are described in detail in section C.

After the FGDs, all participants returned to the main session, from where they were addressed by the Vice Chancellor of St. Lawrence University in Uganda (Professor Andrew Ssemwanga), who reiterated the importance and value research to students and society, encouraging participants to engage and develop research projects that add value to their societies. The programme for Day 2 was scheduled as shown in Appendix C and lasted approximately 2 hours.

PROGRAMME DELIVERABLES

Links to video material presented during the webinar were shared with all participants after the programme. Participants were also informed about different forms of support they could get from CORE Africa, including mentorship through the CORE Africa research mentorship scheme, and research internships.

Before attending the webinar, all registered participants were invited to complete a pre-event baseline survey assessing students' knowledge and perceptions of various aspects about research. Participants were then invited at the end of each day to complete another survey relating to the information presented on the day, as well as the intended programme outcomes.

Findings from these surveys were analysed quantitatively and used to determine the usefulness of the programme, the programme outcomes, as well as prospects for continuity and reproducibility across different countries and regions in Africa. Findings from the FGDs were also analysed qualitatively and both sets of analyses contributed towards the recommendations made. These will be circulated to universities and other relevant academic institutions in Uganda.

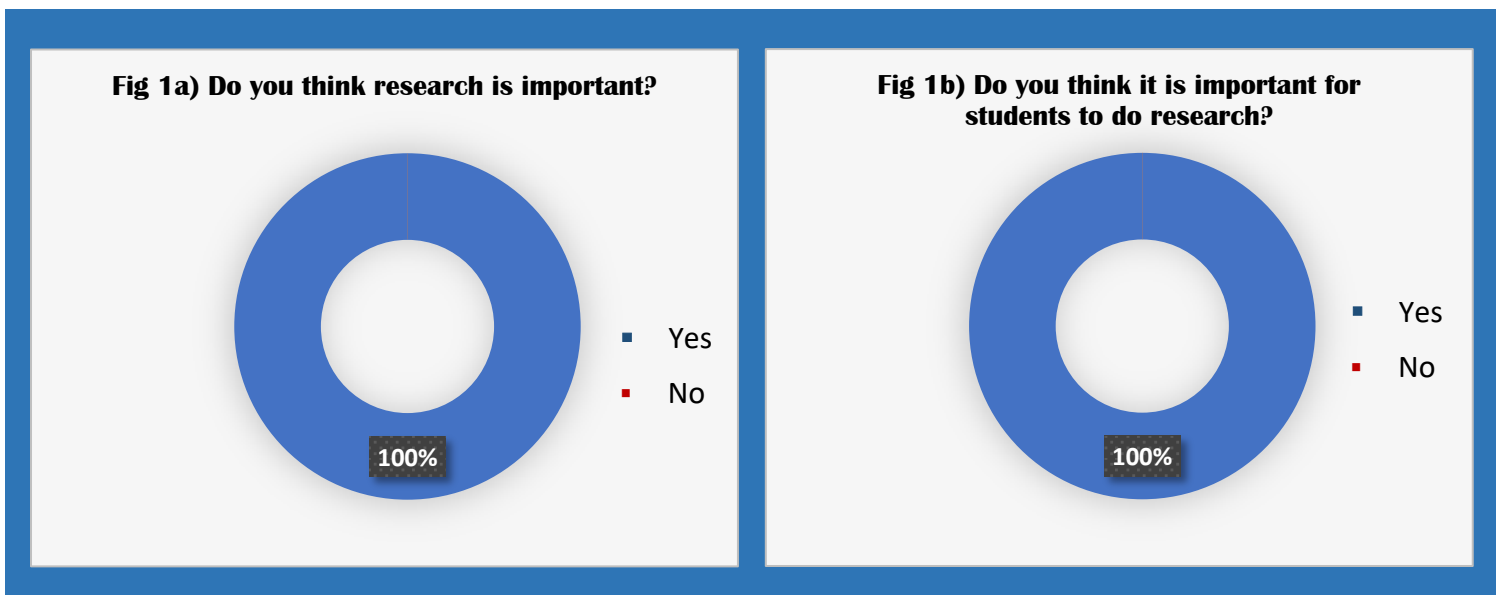
PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Section A: Findings from pre-event survey

The pre-event survey was completed by 59 out of 66 students who attended Day 1 (83.4% participation rate), while the post-event surveys were completed by 61 out of 69 students who attended Day 2 (88.4% participation rate).

1. Relevance of research and knowledge of the research process

Before the event, students were asked to indicate whether they think research is important, and whether they think it is necessary for students to do research. All survey respondents felt that research is important, and that it is important for students to do research (Figs 1a and 1b).



The survey also assessed students' understanding of the research process and their knowledge of the different types of research. A majority of students (75%) identified that they do not really understand the process of doing a research project (Fig 2a), and most students (83%) noted that they did not know the different types of basic research (Fig 2b).

Fig 2a) Do you understand the process of doing a research project?

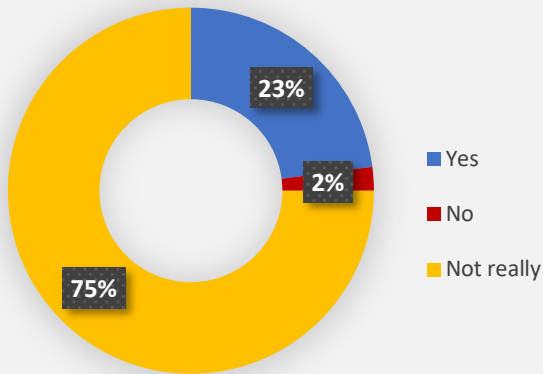
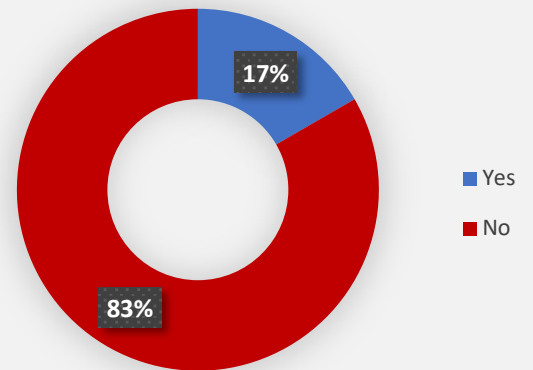


Fig 2b) There are 3 types of basic research. Do you know the different types?



2. Finding a research topic

Most students (71%) identified in the pre-event survey that they do not know how to find a research topic, and that they do not understand what makes a good research topic (73%) (Figs 3a and 3b). A majority of students also indicated that they find the process of finding a research topic difficult (75%), and some (38%) did not know the difference between a research topic and a research question (Figs 3c and 3d).

Fig 3a) Do you know how to search for a research topic?

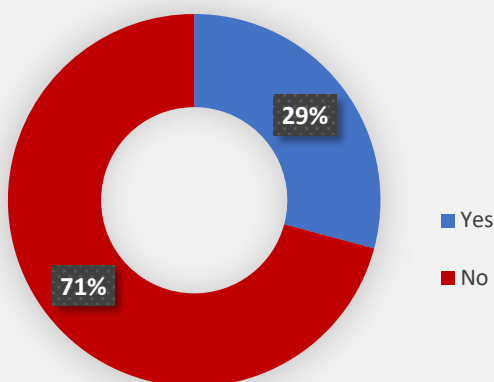


Fig 3b) Do you understand what makes a good research topic?

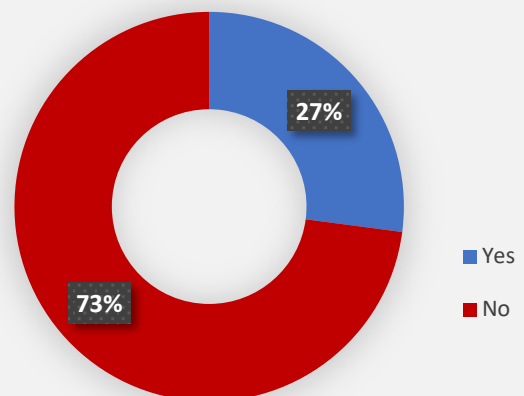


Fig 3c) How do you find the process of searching for a research topic?

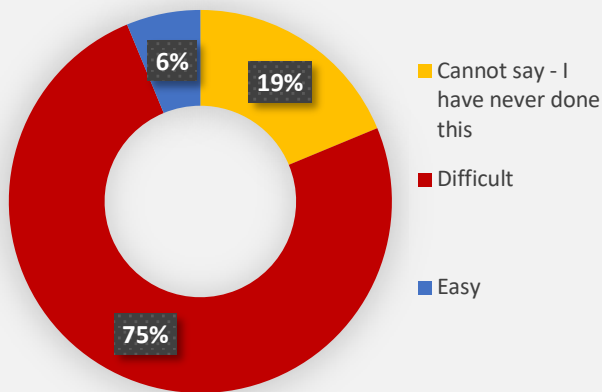
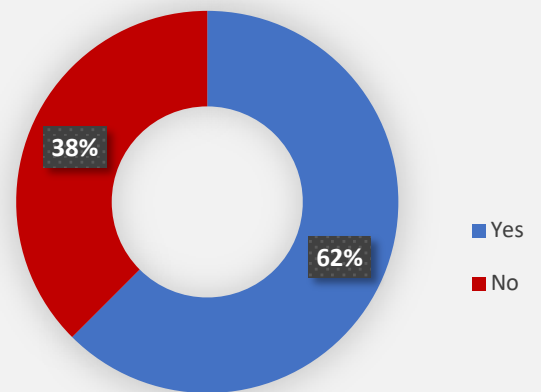


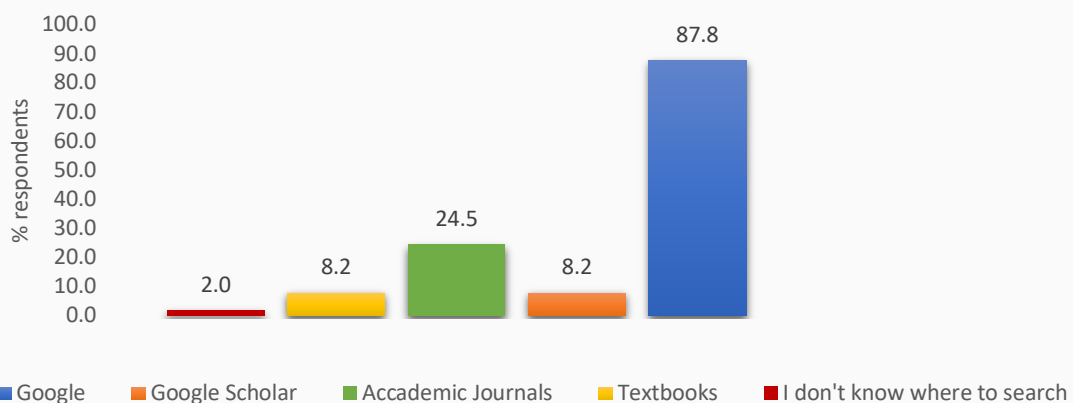
Fig 3d) Do you know the difference between a research topic and a research question?



3. Searching for research literature

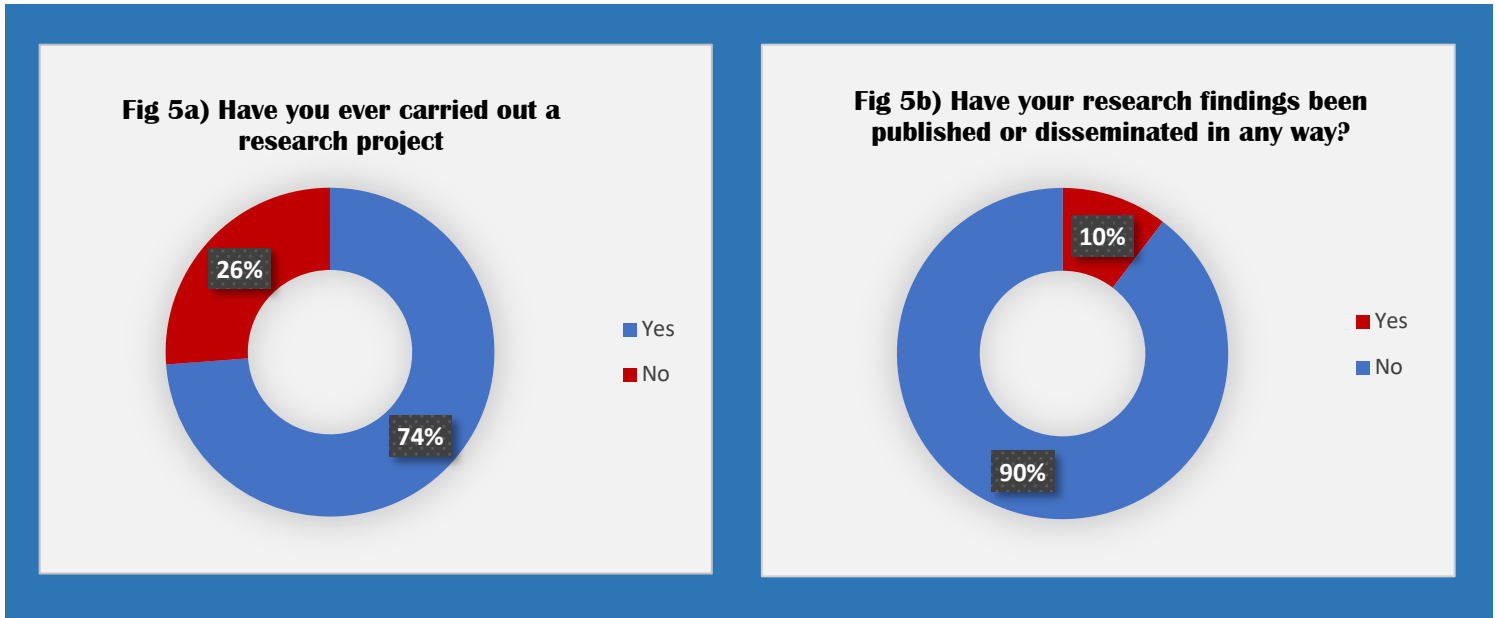
We asked students what sources they normally use to search for research literature, for example, when writing the introduction of their research report or conducting literature reviews. The main source as indicated by most students was Google (87.8%) (Fig 4). Knowledge of other sources like academic journals and Google scholar was low (24.5% and 8.2% respectively). A few students (2%) identified that they do not know where to find research material.

Fig 4) Where do you search for research literature?

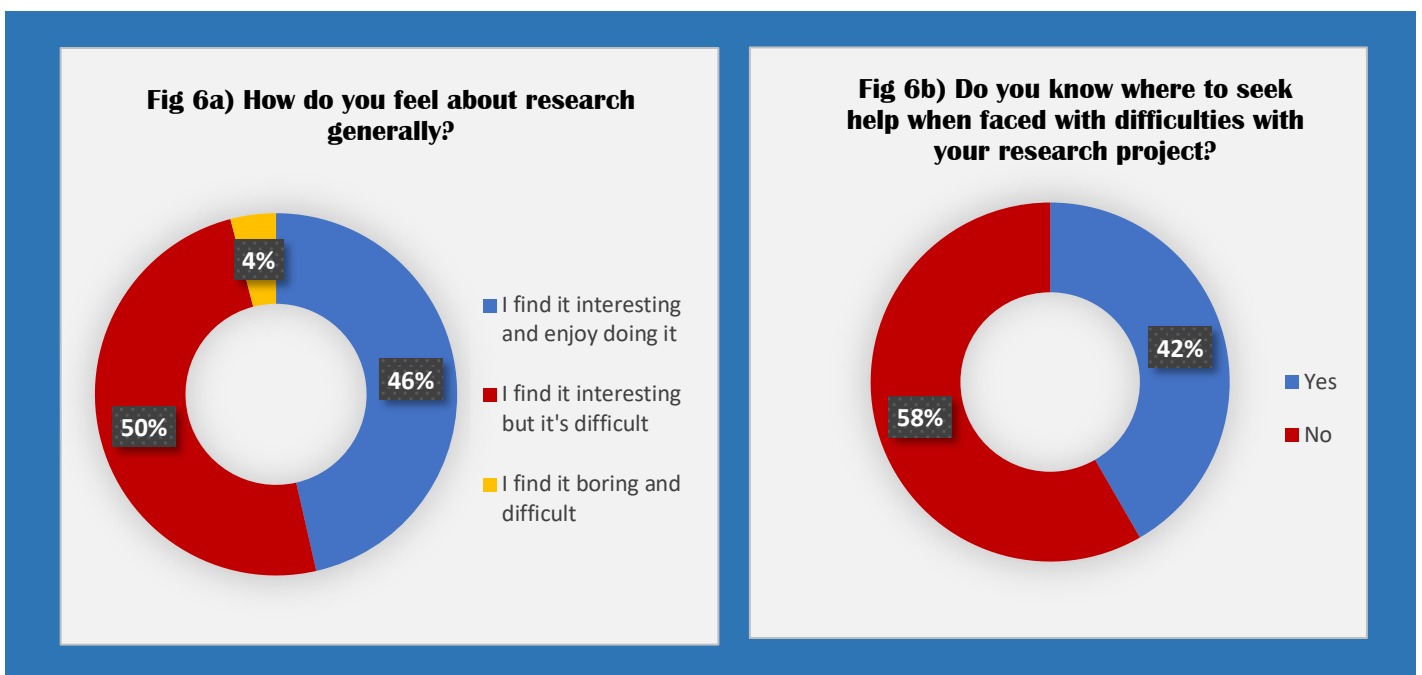


4. Disseminating research findings

The pre-event survey responses showed that 74% of the participants had been involved in carrying out a research project, while 26% had never done a research project (Fig 5a). Of those who had carried out research, 90% reported that their findings had never been published or disseminated in any way, while only 10% had published results from their research (Fig 5b).



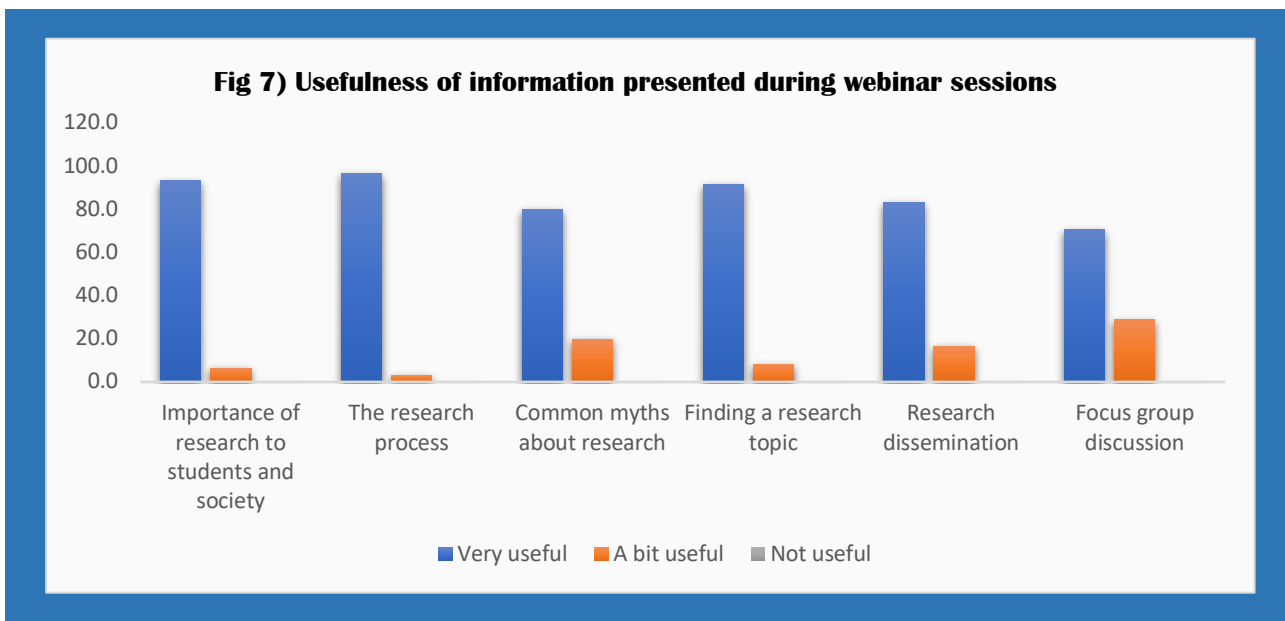
Students mostly described the idea of doing research as interesting (96%), although some also felt it was difficult (50%), while others reported that they enjoy doing it (46%) (Fig 6a). A few students (4%) felt that research is boring and difficult (Fig 6a). Over half the students (58%) identified that they do not know where to seek help or support when faced with difficulties relating to their academic research projects (Fig 6b).



Section B. Findings from post-event survey

1. Usefulness of webinar sessions

Figure 7 below shows the students' ratings on the usefulness of the different sessions delivered during the webinar. Over 90% of students found the sessions on the importance of research, the session on the research process and the session on finding a research topic to be very useful. 83% of the students also found the session on research dissemination to be very useful. The least enjoyed session was the focus group discussion, which was attributed to internet connectivity issues with persistent lags, video/audio freezes and intermittent black-outs amongst participants, which prevented some students from participating in the entirety of the sessions (as reported in their feedback at the end of the webinar).



2. Knowledge gained from the webinar sessions

We assessed the knowledge students had gained from the sessions and grouped them into three categories which were over 90% (in green), 70-89% (in blue) and 50-69% (in orange) (Fig 8). Over 90% of respondents reported having learnt about the importance of research to society, how to find a research topic and what makes a good research topic. In the second category, we had 86.7% of students reporting that the sessions helped them understand what makes a good research question, and over 70% who learnt where to search for research literature, how to use Google scholar, how to search for research gaps and various ways to disseminate their research findings. In the last category, over 60% of students gained knowledge on the importance of research to students, what to include in the different parts of a research report and the different types of research; while 50% of students learnt about the importance of referencing.

Fig 8) Knowledge gained from the RME webinar



3. Impact of webinar on perceptions of research

We further assessed whether the RME programme had changed students' perceptions about research in any way, and 63% of the students reported that they find research to be more interesting than before, while 33% felt it was less difficult than they thought initially (Fig 9). No student found research to be boring after the programme, although a few students (4%) still had the perception that research is difficult (Fig 9). All students felt that the RME programme was useful and indicated that they would recommend it to other students (Fig 10).

Fig 9) Has the RME programme changed the way you feel about research in any way?

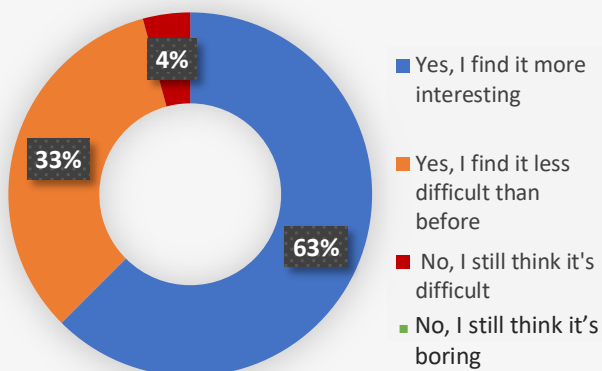
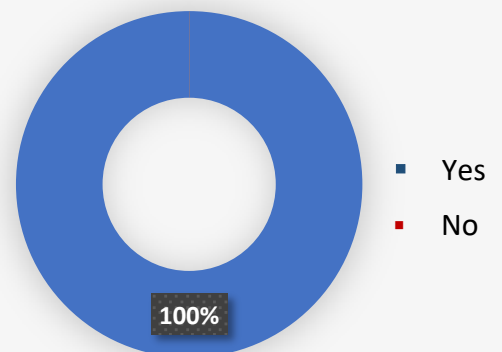


Fig 10) Would you recommend the RME programme to a friend or colleague?



Section C: Findings from focus group discussions

Three key questions were addressed during the FGDs which were:

1. What are the main challenges students face with doing research?
2. Why do students not publish their research findings? and
3. What factors can positively influence students' research experiences?

The findings from the FGDs were audio-recorded using digital voice recorders. Verbal consent to record was obtained from participants. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by CORE Africa's research assistants. Transcripts were anonymised by removing all identifiable information and assigning unique identification numbers to participants. Transcripts were then coded and analysed using thematic analysis. Findings from these are presented below.

1. Main challenges students face with doing research

a. Not knowing where to start from

Students identified that they find the process of doing research to be challenging right from the start. Finding a research topic was one main problem that resonated through all the FGDs. Students expressed difficulties with getting a suitable topic to do their research on, describing the process as 'hard', 'intimidating' and 'daunting':

"I find it so hard, I may have many ideas or questions, or problems in mind, but I find it hard to formulate it into a topic that can be attractive."

Students felt that the process of finding a suitable research topic would be easier if they had an area of interest in mind. However, they described facing difficulties with formulating research questions or objectives from their areas of interest, as evidenced in the quotes below:

"For me it is how to get the question...how to start, get a topic, get the question, and then begin your research."

"...once I come across a topic, I find it hard to break it into objectives of what I will want to find out. In my mind I will be having questions I want to address, and then forming objectives becomes a problem."

As seen from the descriptions above, these challenges are mostly related to a lack of knowledge on the process of finding a suitable research topic, or how to define a research question. In the next quote, a student describes how getting simple advice from a peer helped them realize that they could choose a research topic or question which addresses an actual problem affecting them:

"I am very naïve to the research world, but I think what opened things up, it might seem very simple was the fact that one of my peers just told me to look at the problems that you are facing. So I think that helped to kind of start the wheels turning in my mind when it comes to the fact that I can actually look at a problem and even just come up with a question."

This implies that students can benefit from more of such guidance, especially in relation to real life problems affecting their communities and societies. One challenge for students who had an area of research interest in mind was being unable to work on their desired research topics due to conflicts of interest with their supervisors:

“when we have supervisors [...] sometimes their interest clash with yours, what they want you to do, what they think is more beneficial maybe for the community or for your research project is conflicting what you actually want.”

This introduces some important questions, such as how much influence research supervisors have on students' choices of research topics, and how this may in turn influence the students' interest in or ability to do their research.

b. Course structure: timing of introduction of research

Students generally felt that their courses are structured in a way that does not give them enough time to learn how to conduct research properly:

“Most of our programmes which I have faced, research proposal writing and dissertation is put towards the end, some of us we passed through the process but we didn't know how to do it properly because there is no time.”

Students lamented on the lack of time to learn about the different activities involved in the process of doing a research project, with many of them feeling “rushed” because they had a limited time to complete and submit their dissertations.

c. Lack of resources and support

Students identified funding as a major challenge, limiting their ability to cover the basic costs of their research projects, whereas *“there are many things you have to pay for”*. Funding challenges also prevented students from accessing online articles, which they needed for their research projects. Students also did not usually have support from their academic institutions to facilitate the process of obtaining published literature online, as outlined below:

“It is really hard to get the exact books or journals, most of them are for payment, and the rest you need to maybe have permission to access particular information which might not come as easy as it could for people who have backup of maybe a university or another institution.”

d. Other factors

Other factors cited as preventing students from getting more knowledge about research or developing their research skills were that *“knowledge about research is poor among students”* and that *“some students don't know where to get resources to increase their knowledge or understanding of research”*. In addition, students cited factors like time constraints and a lack of motivation for them to seek further knowledge to enable them build the required research skills.

2. Why students do not publish their research findings

a. Lack of awareness

The first and most prominent reason mentioned as accounting for why a majority of students do not publish their research findings was that students generally lack awareness about publication, and do not understand the importance of disseminating research findings. Students identified that their primary focus when doing research at the university is to *“just finish the dissertation”*, and that they normally do not think

of things like presenting their work anywhere or taking their research beyond submission. In explaining their reasons, students commented again on the structure of their research courses, stating that these mostly lay emphasis on earning marks and obtaining an academic award, with not much indication of how academic research could be useful, be it to them or to others:

“We really focus on finishing the dissertation, you do your thesis and submit it in order to get maybe marks, and you don’t have at the back of your mind that maybe I can present it or do something else with it.”

“I think is that most people also don’t know the benefits, so they don’t have the knowledge about the benefits of publishing your research.”

b. Lack of guidance

Secondly, it was reported that students do not understand the publication process and lack information and guidance on how or where to publish their research findings. The quote below illustrates an example of this from a student’s personal experience:

“Now like me I did my research at undergraduate, I wanted it so much to be published but up until now, it has never been published for the last 3 years, we would like to know which information, which type of research is easily published, and which one is not easily published, so we need such information.”

c. Lack of funding

The difficulties with finding suitable platforms where students could publish their research were further compounded by funding challenges:

“Where can we publish our work when we are done, most of them are looking online, to look for maybe online free journals because if it is not a free journal where we can publish, we don’t actually have any funds to get the work published.”

It was also reported that in some cases, students rely on certain organisations to help them publish their work. However, a challenge identified with this was that some of these organisations tend to make decisions on whether students can or cannot publish their findings for various reasons, for example, because their findings may be revealing some information that the companies do not want to make known to the public:

“I have a colleague, one of the reasons they told me they didn’t publish their work, their research was really ground breaking, it had a lot of findings which were really crucial and incriminating the company...and they ended up covering it up.”

3. Factors that can positively influence students’ research experiences

In the last phase of the discussion, students outlined factors they believe could positively influence their research experiences at the university, increase their knowledge and skills, and also increase their motivations to do research.

a. Early exposure

Students identified that introducing them to learning about research in the early stages of their university studies could give them more time to learn and better prepare them for their research tasks. Citing an example of how slight course modifications could be helpful, one of the students stated:

“...like if writing research abstract or research proposal is started right away from maybe first year or second year, such that someone can get to know their mistakes and perfect them along the way.”

In line with this, some students cited an example of a lecturer they knew who had made similar modifications in his teaching, and how they found this to be helpful:

“There is one lecturer I have faced, like he tries to teach you right away as you begin your lectures in the first year, and I found it helping a lot.”

b. Mentorship

The need for mentorship was eminent, as students yearned for mentors who could guide them through the different stages of their academic research:

“If we could get mentors who could actually guide us step by step through the process, from proposals even just to ethical approval and also publishing, all those things, I think mentorship is really needed and that is really lacking.”

Students felt that having mentors to support them through their academic research would make a positive impact both on their learning experiences and research outcomes. A few students shared how they had been supported through mentoring:

“At Makerere university, there is programme, I started knowing about it last year, they group students, it is much of mentoring, so they group students into groups of 10s and then students come up with research topics and then they actually fund their research and they do it at the end. It really helped.”

However, while acknowledging that some students had benefitted from mentoring, students also commented that their mentors were usually very busy due to their heavy workloads (e.g. some lecturers), and therefore, not always available when students needed help.

“It’s very difficult to find committed mentors, most of the mentors that we have come across are very distant because they’re busy, so they will just give you a bunch of notes and tell you go and read them.”

c. Opportunities to practice

Students believed that giving them opportunities to practice what they learn in the classroom, through internships or other part-time research-related activities would be useful, as through these they could gain further knowledge, develop their research skills, identify their mistakes and learn from them.

“The way it is now, you do it last minute, and you just rush through it, and you don’t know how you went through it, so exposure; practical exposure will be very good to improve research, otherwise we will keep taking it as we do and off we go.”

d. Knowledge on potential impact of research and research skills

Students felt it would be useful to know that there is a potential audience out there that may be interested in their research findings, and also that their research could potentially have an impact.

“If you did research with a particular goal of; I am going to address this question, and probably if I disseminate my findings, there is a body or an organisation, that could want to look into it and probably cause a change in this particular area, I think it is fulfilling, especially when you think that you will actually be part of the impact through your research.”

“If you do your research, knowing that at the end of the day it will be published, people will get to read about it, and see your ideas, so it will open up your mind to think more and more, but as of now, we have so many ideas, but those ideas tend to die within us, we have so many good ideas which can be implemented and help our society, but just because we lack the information and guidance, so the ideas die with us.”

Students also felt that they would be more motivated to do research if they knew how the skills from research could be beneficial to them in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The RME project was successfully delivered in Uganda and well-received by participants. There was a high level of interest in the sessions delivered, which students also found to be very useful. In addition to student feedback, there was a high level of appreciation from researchers and other professionals in attendance, especially as the programme was termed ‘the first of its kind’, provided at no cost by an external body.

Through this project, we identified important knowledge gaps that need to be addressed, as these are likely to have an impact on students’ research experiences, research abilities and research outcomes. Without intervention, students will continue to face these challenges during their academic research, which will inevitably have a negative impact on research quality and output in Africa.

These findings also identify missed opportunities for identifying societal challenges in Africa and tackling them. Academic research can make a useful contribution towards addressing pressing problems in Africa, especially at local level. For this to happen however, students need to have the right levels of motivation, guidance and support.

While the evidence presented in this report pertains mostly to Uganda based on the population involved, there are similar challenges faced by university students in other African countries, as evidenced in our ATR surveys¹. These will be highlighted in our cross-country analyses.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES, OTHER ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

Based on the findings from this project, CORE Africa would like to make the following recommendations to the stakeholders specified:

Recommendations for National Curriculum Accreditation Officials, Universities and other academic institutions

- **Early exposure to research** – Introduce students to research as early on as possible during the course of study to give them sufficient time to gain the basic knowledge and skills required to conduct research. Early exposure will also enable students to develop the motivation required to ignite their interest in research.

Recommendations for Universities, other academic institutions, and course instructors including lecturers and teaching assistants

- **Research awareness** – embed key messages about the importance of research to students and the wider society in research courses, including information on how skills gained from conducting research could enhance their professional development and employability.
- **Conflicts of interest** – identify ways of harmonizing students' research interests with those of their research supervisors during the formulation or selection of research topics, to give students the opportunity to work on topics that they are keen on.
- **Dissemination of research findings** – Develop strategies to support students to start thinking about the dissemination of their findings as early as possible, such as by introducing them to the concept of using research repositories, encouraging them to participate in student conferences, and guiding them in publishing their findings in research journals. This will not only add value to the body of existing knowledge, but will also increase the visibility of both the student and the institution to the wider research community.
- **Practice exercises** – Explore possibilities of integrating basic research activities into other non-research modules or courses. For example, encouraging students to use multiple sources of information when doing coursework, getting students to cite references during assignments, etc.

Recommendations for Stakeholder Engagement and Alumni Offices within Universities

- **Skill development opportunities and support systems** – create opportunities where students can engage in research activities and develop their research skills, such as by forming partnerships with organisations offering mentorship services or internships, creating peer-mentoring programs where alumni can support current students on academic research, and creating research clubs where students can learn more about research. It is important to

ensure that these opportunities are consistent and are able to meet the students' needs (e.g. mentors being available when students need them).

Recommendations for the National Council for Higher Education, the Ministry of Finance, research organisations and think tanks

- **Research challenges and support pathways** – Engage both students and staff in the exploration of research challenges at academic level (including funding limitations and all other concerns highlighted in this report); and also in identifying opportunities through which academic institutions can be supported to maximize research outcomes and output.

PROJECT CONTINUITY AND FURTHER GUIDANCE FROM CORE AFRICA

The recommendations made above are aimed at helping to improve the student research experience, students' research skills and outcomes, as well as the research output of universities. CORE Africa hopes that these recommendations are taken on board by universities and academic institutions in Uganda.

CORE Africa runs a number of programmes aimed to support students with their academic research, such as our research mentorship scheme, research internships and snapshot reports/articles on different research topics published on our website and social media platforms. More information about our programmes can be found on the CORE Africa website (www.coreafrica.org).

Several Ugandan students signed up to our Research Mentorship scheme after the RME programme, and the mentorship programme has shown great benefits on the research abilities, knowledge and skills of our mentees (see Appendix D).

After the RME programme, students requested for a similar programme focussing on the following areas:

- Literature review
- Developing a research proposal
- Research design
- Quantitative research methods
- Qualitative research methods
- Data analysis
- Research publication

Based on the outcomes of this project, the RME programme will be continued to provide additional support to students, starting with these requests. CORE Africa is open to working collaboratively with universities to support students during their academic research, and are available for contact at admin@coreafrica.org.

This report is available online for download via the CORE Africa website and printed versions will be distributed to academic institutions and key stakeholders in Uganda.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

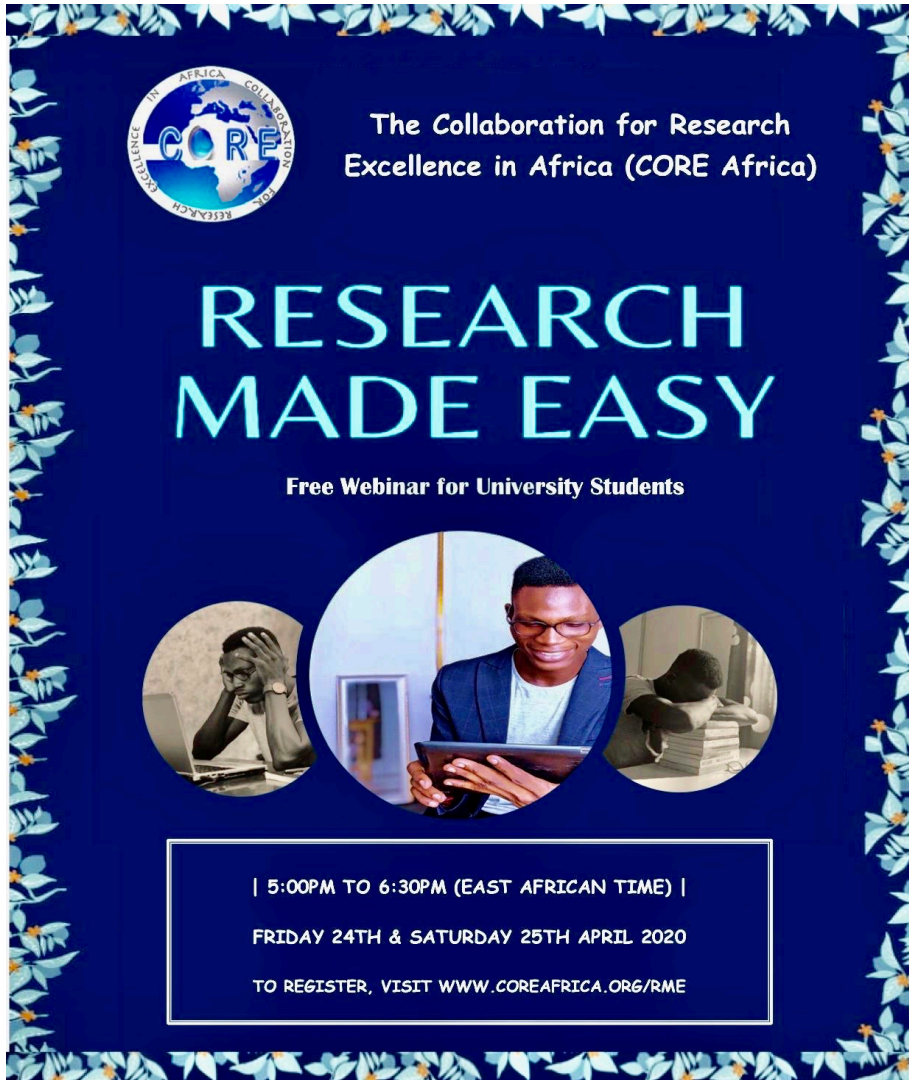
We would like to thank all the students who shared their experiences with us, and also the researchers and other professionals for their input in the discussions. We also acknowledge the collaborative efforts of all individuals and institutions who supported us in spreading the word and reaching out to potential participants for the programme.

REFERENCES

1. CORE Africa (2018) Attitudes Towards Research: Research Barriers at Secondary School Level, and Experiences Of University Students in Africa. Available at: https://coreafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ATR_university-students-1.pdf

APPENDICES

Appendix A – RME flyer



The flyer features a dark blue background with a decorative border of light blue leaves and orange flowers. At the top left is the CORE Africa logo, a circular emblem with a map of Africa and the text 'CORE AFRICA COLLABORATION FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN AFRICA'. To the right of the logo, the text 'The Collaboration for Research Excellence in Africa (CORE Africa)' is written in white. Below this, the main title 'RESEARCH MADE EASY' is displayed in large, bold, light blue capital letters. Underneath the title, the text 'Free Webinar for University Students' is written in white. The central part of the flyer contains three circular images: a person resting their head on their hand, a man in a suit looking at a tablet, and a person reading a book. At the bottom, a white-bordered box contains the following text in white: '| 5:00PM TO 6:30PM (EAST AFRICAN TIME) |', 'FRIDAY 24TH & SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2020', and 'TO REGISTER, VISIT WWW.COREAFRICA.ORG/RME'.

**RESEARCH
MADE EASY**

Free Webinar for University Students

| 5:00PM TO 6:30PM (EAST AFRICAN TIME) |
FRIDAY 24TH & SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2020
TO REGISTER, VISIT WWW.COREAFRICA.ORG/RME

Appendix B – Courses studied by students who attended the RME programme

Health-related courses

- Medicine and Surgery
- Public/population Health
- Pharmacy
- Health services research
- Nursing
- Biomedical and laboratory sciences
- Dentistry
- Immunology and Clinical Microbiology
- Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- Psychology
- Radiology

Non-health related courses

- Information systems
- Food and agricultural sciences
- Journalism and media management
- Applied management

Appendix C – RME programme outline



**THE COLLABORATION FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
IN AFRICA (CORE AFRICA)**

**Programme for Research Made Easy: An
Introduction to Basic Research Concepts**
Free webinar for university students

Friday 24th April 2020

5:00 – 5:05 PM	Welcome and programme introduction (5 mins)
5:05 – 5:20 PM	About CORE Africa (15 mins)
5:20 – 5:35 PM	Importance of research to students and society (15 mins)
5:35 – 5:40 PM	*****Break***** (5 mins)
5:40 – 6:15 PM	The research process (35 mins)
6:15 – 6:25 PM	Common myths about research (10 mins)
6:25 – 6:30 PM	Announcements and closing remarks (5 mins)

Saturday 25th April 2020

5:00 – 5:05 PM	Welcome and programme introduction (5 mins)
5:05 – 5:30 PM	Finding a research topic (25 mins)
5:30 – 5:40 PM	Research dissemination (10 mins)
5:40 – 5:45 PM	*****Break***** (5 mins)
5:45 – 6:20 PM	Shared experiences on research challenges and proposed solutions (35 mins)
6:20 – 6:30 PM	Announcements and closing remarks (10 mins)

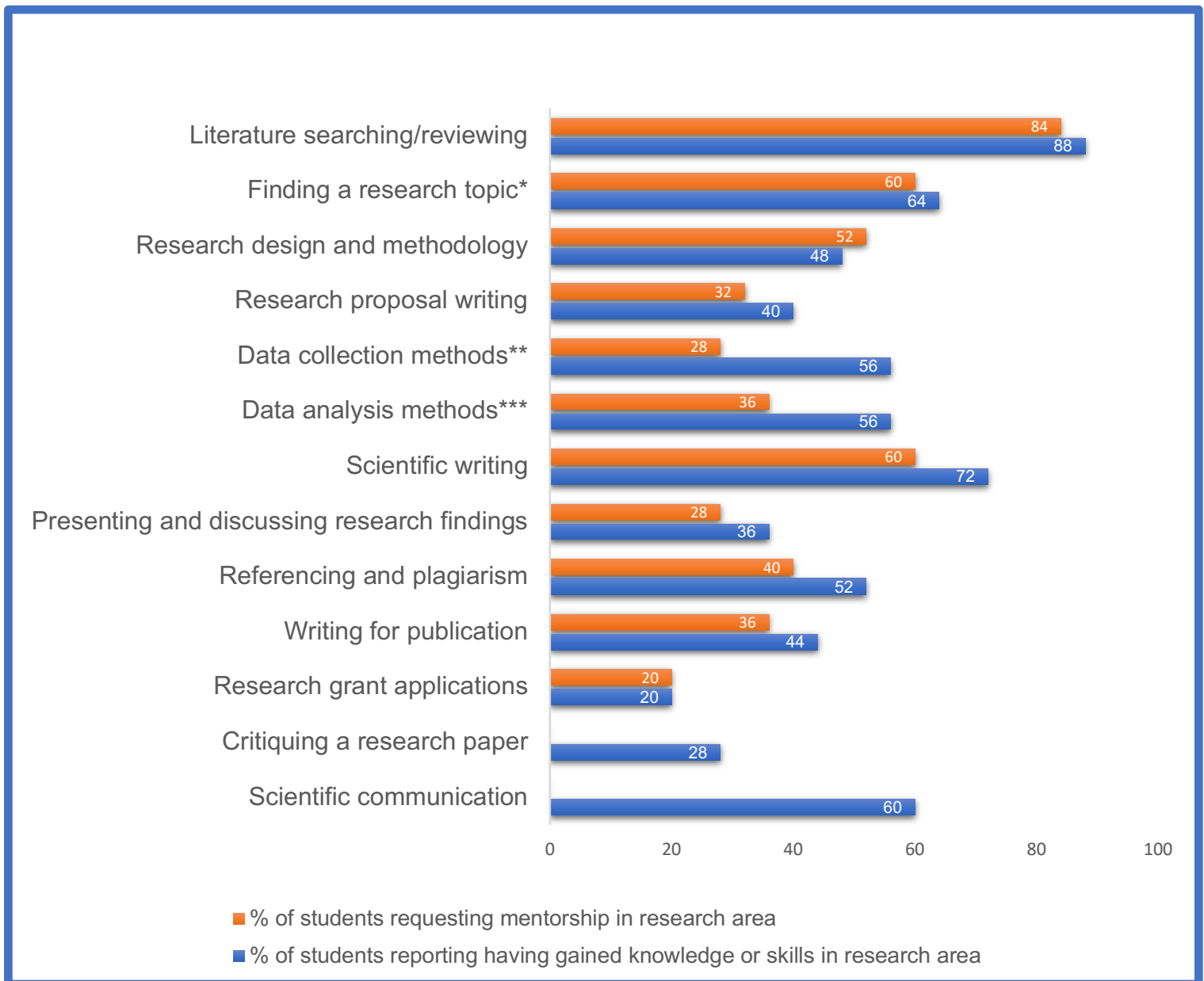
*All sessions include 5 minutes at the end to take questions from the audience

Please note:

- Session times may change slightly during the event due to network or other technical issues. We advise that attendants join the meeting at least 5 minutes before the programme starts.
- If you haven't yet, please download and set up the Zoom app before the day. You can do a test meeting on Zoom to familiarize yourself with the platform

CORE Africa
Contact us: admin@coreafrica.org
Website: www.coreafrica.org

Appendix D (i) Impacts of the CORE Africa Research Mentorship Scheme (CARMS)



*Requests for mentorship on finding a research topic including support on formulating research questions, hypotheses and objectives

** Requests for mentorship on choosing appropriate data collection methods including practical support e.g. designing questionnaires, developing interview questions, etc

***Requests for mentorship on analysing different types of data s including practical support e.g. choosing appropriate statistical tests, using statistical software, etc

Note: Most mentees gained knowledge and skills in other research areas besides those they requested support for (e.g. while 84% of mentees signed up for mentorship on literature searching and reviewing, 88% reported having learnt how to do this from their mentor). Some mentorship areas shown in the figure were not included in the mentorship request form, but mentees reported gaining knowledge and skills in those areas (e.g. critiquing a research paper and scientific communication).

Appendix D (ii) – Mentee feedback on the CARMS

**THE CORE AFRICA
RESEARCH
MENTORSHIP
SCHEME (CARMS)**

**WHAT
OUR
MENTEEES
SAY...**

**Excellent research mentorship!
Thanks to CORE Africa for providing
this great opportunity to learn more
about research.**
Mathias L.

**It is amazing how my mentor
creates a safe space to freely
express my views and interact in a
friendly manner.**
Lilian N.

**My mentor is very
knowledgeable about how to
conduct research.**
Maurice E.

**My mentor always
reaches out if he notices
that I have been silent.**
Jackie B.

**My mentor is very fast in response to email
communication. As much as we haven't had many
voice calls, we have exchanged several emails.
Recently he reviewed my application for a fellowship.
He provided very constructive input and even went
ahead to put suggested edits in my concept paper.**
Kennedy O.

Appendix E – Members involved in the development of the RME project and preparation of this report

Steering Committee and presenters

Dr. Lem Ngongalah
Program Coordinator
CORE Africa

Rawlings Niba
Director of Programmes
CORE Africa

James Musisi
Director of strategy
CORE Africa

Dr. Emerson Wepngong
Programme Support Officer
CORE Africa

Programme facilitator

Dr. Kimonia Awanchiri
Programme facilitator
CORE Africa

Observers

Professor Andrew Ssemwanga (Ph.D)
Former Vice Chancellor, St. Lawrence
University, Uganda
Member of Advisory council
CORE Africa

Dr. Adefisayo Odeniyi
Research mentor
CORE Africa

Data transcribers

Etienne Jam
Research Assistant
CORE Africa

Stessy Angeck
Project Assistant
CORE Africa