

An exploratory study on the inclusion of Research Methodology courses in Greek universities' curricula

Panagiotis Kavouras, Leonidas Ananiadis, Eleni Spyrou, Nicole Sarla, Vana Stavridi, Costas A. Charitidis

School of Chemical Engineering, National Technical University of Athens, Greece

Objective

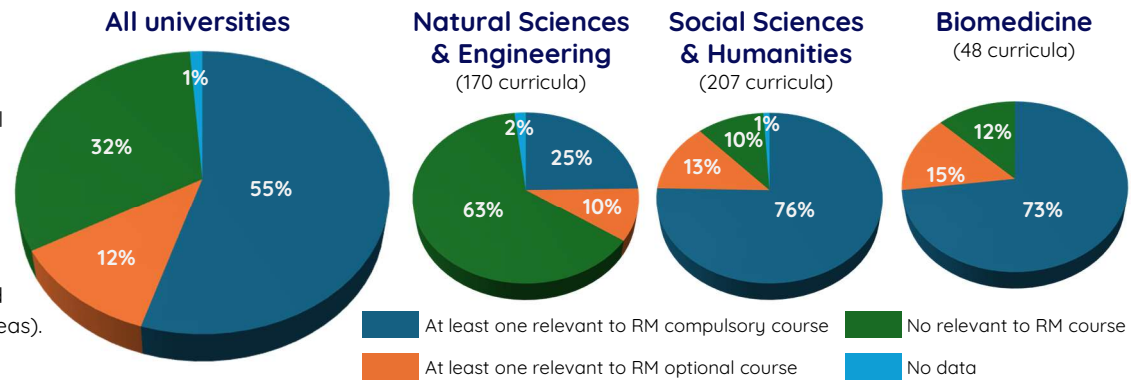
To map the inclusion of Research Methodology (RM) related courses in the curricula of all Greek universities and explore whether there are variations regarding the following parameters: discipline, institutional setting, number of admitted students, and year of establishment.

Methodology

We analysed the latest versions of the official university curricula (the "Study Guides") for undergraduate studies and courses potentially related to RM were retrieved. The decision on whether a specific course is related to RM was made collectively, based on specific inclusion (deductively and inductively defined) and exclusion criteria (inductively defined).

Data retrieved

We mapped all 27 Greek Universities, as listed at the latest, relevant governmental document (Φ.253.1/42905/A5). The total number of curricula we mapped was 425. The pie charts depict the percentages of the curricula that include relevant to RM courses, with varying base values (i.e., all Greek universities and breakdown per three wide disciplinary areas).



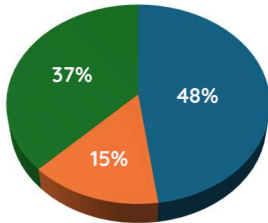
Inclusion criteria

The description of a course contained the following terms "research methodology" or "methodology" or "method" (inductive) or "statistic" or "analysis" or "metric" (deductive) to be considered as potentially relevant to RM. Then, exclusion criteria were applied to decide whether a course is relevant to RM.

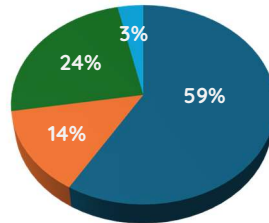
Exclusion criteria

- Courses of Teaching Methodology
- Bachelor Thesis preparation with no explicit reference on elements of RM
- Courses that include research methods applied in the context of a wider study. For example:

- "methods of structural characterization via infrared spectroscopy" (Physics or Chemistry)
- "methods of music text analysis" (Music studies)
- "software development methodologies" (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
- "drug analysis" (Pharmacy)
- "psychometrics" (Medical or Psychiatry)



Combined results from National and Kapedistrian University of Athens, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Patras, and University of Crete.



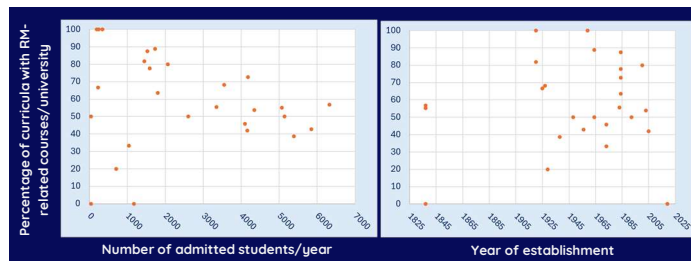
Combined results from National Technical University of Athens (Engineering), University of Makedonia (Economic studies), Panteion University (Social and Political Sciences), and School of Fine Arts.

Institutional setting

We compared the results of the mapping between universities with schools or departments that cover all scientific disciplines and universities with a more specific disciplinary focus. For this we combined the data from four universities (AUTH, NKUA, UoP, and UoC) and four Universities with a focus on Engineering (NTUA), Economic studies (UoM), Social and Political Sciences (Panteion), and Fine Arts (ASFA).

Admitted students

Percentage of the curricula that contain at least one compulsory course related to RM per university as a function of the number of students admitted per year (according to the 2023 official records).



Year of establishment

Percentage of the curricula that contain at least one compulsory course related to RM per university as a function of the year of its establishment.

There seems to be no connection between these two parameters and the inclusion of RM-related courses

Conclusions

The inclusion of RM-related courses in the curricula of Greek universities is more prominent at the disciplines of Social Sciences and Humanities and less prominent in the disciplines of Natural Sciences and Engineering. This does not imply that the latter disciplines lack methodological guidance; it is, most possibly, related to a more "fragmented" or "case-by-case" approach to RM. The results suggest that universities with a more specific disciplinary focus contain relatively more RM-related courses in their curricula than universities with faculties from all disciplines. In addition, the inclusion of RM-related courses by Greek universities seems not to be correlated to the number of students they admit per year (a measure of a university's administrative size) or to the year of their establishment (a measure of a university's seniority).

