



Challenges faced by students during conducting research: A review

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Abstract

The current study examined the problems and challenges faced by the researchers after course work. The purpose of this study was to explore the problems and difficulties faced by the researchers. A review study was conducted to examine the research problems and challenges. Hence review report generalized these research difficulties which keep researchers at problem throughout research studies. This review study reveals that almost all researchers faced above-mentioned difficulties during their research work. There is an extreme need to sort out the above problems and issues so that researchers could focus on research work rather than solving these inconveniences.

Keywords: research, challenges, problems, researcher

1. Introduction

A variety of students from all levels must require research. Many research studies have been carried out in different fields of study. According to Bandele (2004), research can be used as a hyphenated compound word search again means a new interpretation searching for something or repeated search. It is a process of solving problems and issues. It is an effort to push back the frontiers of ignorance to advance research knowledge. According to Kerlinger (1977), research is a systematic study of hypothetical propositions on the relationship between national phenomena. A research process needs to be addressed by standard procedures, which will lead to solutions to the problems. So much is heard about research in the negative light. Everyone hears that word just about every day by researchers:

“Research is difficult”

“Research is complicated subject”

“Research is complex subject”

“Research is stressful”

Where do the above obsessions come from? In most cases this attitude towards research develops when researcher starts research after course work. This review study was designed to explore the problems and challenges faced by research students during research.

2. Problems and challenges faced by researchers

According to Ojo (2007) ^[6], research serves for innovation as a springboard for subsequent development. Research work requires a clear understanding of what is to be done, it requires determination and effort. It builds on the existing data, which requires the full use of journals, textbooks and library facilities. According to Bandele, (2004), educational research is carried out, to increase human knowledge to solve contemporary problems and establish decision-making basis, to make discoveries and promote the contemporary modern evidence to help educational innovations and improve educational services.

2.1 Research topic selection

The research topic is the foundation of all, so it is the key to

carefully select. One cannot do anything until he or she found the basic focus of the topic. Taskeen., *et al* (2014) ^[9] mentioned that research study starts by selecting new research questions. Research problem should be original, can be studied, and must carry meaning, but it will lead to impenetrability because it is not easy to find a new problem and a significant population. This is the first step in the research investigation. Choose a new topic is difficult because researchers do not know how to choose a theme and based on what criteria they should choose it. The selection process starts selecting a specific area of interest within that area a problem is selected and narrowed down. However, due to a lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the selection of a problem, researchers waste a lot of time in selecting worthless research topics. Khan. T (2014) mentioned the selection of a new topic is difficult for many research students.

2. Supervisor related difficulties

Supervisors are misleading/misguiding investigators in the process of research because they do not have much training. Supervisors are found with ambiguous concepts. They cannot supervise in a real way. It will not be wrong to think that, in most cases, supervisors and researchers have the same level of understanding of research techniques. (Taskeen, Shehzadi, Khan & Saleem 2014) ^[9]. Agha (2015) ^[1] revealed that one day Dr. Masood, called her student and asked for a research paper. He forced him for including his name and also for the paid of the publication fee, she agreed. She added when she was leaving his office, he said that don't forget tomorrow is your final Ph.D. seminar. I am the signatory to your degree.

Agha (2015) ^[1] found a doctoral student named Samreen, she told as I attended a doctorate, the supervisor started to ask her to go out with him for the dinners. He also told her that all my seminars would succeed if I fulfill his wish. She tried his best to have a professional relationship with him but failed. Finally, she quit Ph. D because she had no other choice. Agha (2015) ^[1] said another doctoral student, Naeem told that his guide always avoided him but there was always time for his batch partners because they keep giving gifts.

He believed in his ability and didn't become his yes-men. The results; batch mates completed their degree, while even after eight years; he is in the process. Phillips and Pugh (2000, p. 193) argue that the supervisor is responsible for providing all students development require assistance in subject content, topics and research methods and, as well as instill professionalism and personal support.

Wakeford (2004, and 2006) said that this is not always the matter. The reality is often different. Many research students found their original supervisors unavailable or too busy, because of illness, study leaves, personal problems, and promotion or retirement. The association between a student and a supervisor is so important that students cannot afford to leave it to chance. It must be managed. According to Murphy (2009) the supervision emphasizes more on the people, and is often seen as guidance has been more supportive, but not effective for all students. Grant (2003) disclosed that while the production of a paper/ thesis is an important part of supervised practice, the professional development of students is also vital.

Some published studies identified several difficulties and obstacles in postgraduate students. Grant and Graham (1999) stated that providing poor feedback, inaccessibility, sexual harassment and not keeping appointments leads to unsatisfactory supervision. Supervisors and students might make friendship difficult due to dynamic power between them (Ives and Raleigh, 2005) friendship of doctoral studies in the early stages, may lead to supervision difficulties, after a few years' supervisors may not be able to escape it (Lee, 2008). Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) argued that only a small number of students were satisfied with their supervisors. Lack of effective supervision and support, other workloads of supervisors and poor feedback were the difficulties they face in conducting research.

Researchers working under the supervision of their supervisors are responsible and bond to provide proper assistance and guidance to researchers as researchers themselves cannot work well. Supervisors, on the other hand, take it easy. Instead of helping and guiding students they impose the responsibility on researchers, no, any guidance or assistance is provided by the supervisor. With the start of researcher's study supervisors usually disappear, their attitude changes, researchers are entangled between research study and supervisor's attitude and finally when research study is accomplished and a researcher has conducted the whole research, his/her research work is finally rejected by supervisor because it appears as below the standard thought of supervisor (Taskeen *et al*, 2014)^[9].

3. Unavailability of appropriate literature

According to Hart (1998), reading the literature will give an overview of the major theories and ideas that previous researchers have guided about a particular topic. To develop an appropriate vocabulary for writing and communicate ideas student must have a good knowledge of the key concepts in their related field of study. According to the study of Neuman (1997), the review of related literature is based on the assumption that research should build on the work of other researchers. Taskeen, Khan, Shehzadi & Saleem (2014)^[9] mentioned that almost all of the research studies include the literature review section which is intended to cover the gap between past and present studies. A literature review of research tells the researchers how much work and what type of work from the past have been

done by other researchers regarding the current study; this is why this part is very important. But unfortunately, our researchers cannot obtain proper review as appropriate literature is not unavailable or there is no access to the appropriate related literature and without going through the literature a research work cannot enjoy access to success. This is a major problem the researchers faced during research work.

4. Time period of degree

Agha (2015)^[1] mentioned completing M.Phil./MS and a doctorate degree at the time is another major issue, as the system doesn't implement an appropriate timetable. Pakistan doubled its time to comply with the timetable than other countries. The final submission occurs only if the supervisor is 'satisfied' with the scholar; otherwise, the students have to keep waiting.

5. Research culture

Rashid (2014) argue that the culture of research at the university level is deficient. That's why students strive to be a master on the research basis. Research culture cannot be constructed with the laboratory construction and the purchase of expensive apparatus but a change in the way student's thinking. In this case, students understanding by critical analysis is a general lack of graduate (Bachelor) and postgraduate (Master/MS/M.Phil.) institutions in Pakistan. Generally, students do not introduce the concept of critical analysis and its significance. It is vital to find gaps and a contradiction, looking for advantages and disadvantages to see what is there and what is not.

6. Lack of research funding

Memarpour (2015)^[5] in his research study showed that a shortage of funding in conducting research is a major problem for students as cited in previous studies. This may involve the fact that, in some countries, funding for research on expensive materials and equipment has been limited. Saidinia (2013) pointed out the lack of research funding research projects as the main problem.

7. Lack of research knowledge and skills

Research is a complex skill that requires different techniques to use the database and evaluating results of research. Others need planned thinking, such as knowing which tools are effective and appropriate for different research questions. In addition, to develop the proficiency and development capabilities in all these areas, students must be capable of integrating all of these. Linden (2012)^[11] revealed in his study that the students also experienced a certain development of their research knowledge and skills. They believed that they developed their knowledge and skills more in science-oriented topics and less in research methods and research designs. The knowledge and skills of the science-oriented scale are strongly related to aspects of a positive attitude towards research. For example, the knowledge and skills related to 'critically evaluating research by others', 'the validity of research' and 'analyzing and interpreting data'. Rani and Priya (2014) pointed out students' face difficulties due to a lack of research methods and time.

8. Poor library management

Shehzadi *et al* (2014) argued that the libraries are not

managed systematically. Most researchers spend valuable time for searching books, newspapers, reports and more rather searching relevant information. Contents have been lost, researchers find relevant data by looking at and observing each section one by one, which can drain their time and make it harder for them to focus on the subject of the study.

9. Data collection difficulties

Difficulties were faced during the data collection period, in most of the surveys and some of which were similar among countries. Shehzadi *et al.*, (2014) stated that during the study researcher can't rely on one or two of the data sources rather they have to collect from different sources, so there is no easy access to data sources. Hoskins & White (2013) said that establishing rapport may be difficult for researchers who are different from their subjects and who are experiencing interviews. Bonevski *et al.*, (2014) mentioned that the opinions of the subject's during data collection were also identified. The participants reported that the researchers felt uncomfortable during the data collection period. Bonevski (2014) pointed out that to address the difficulties in a survey; the researchers were given suggestions to create a comfortable environment for participants during data collection.

10. Interpersonal difficulties

Logan (n.d) mentioned that every time self-problems can affect a certain cognitive capacity and involve in academic pursuits. Sometimes, a problematic solution depends on what the reason, in this case, must be to find out why the difficulties occurred. Research is found to be tiring and boring for most of the students; however, teachers and students could not leave this work because usually, this is an academic requirement. Locke (2005) found that interpersonal difficulties are often associated with other people's difficulties. He further mentioned that interpersonal problems might be associated to anticipate for how others will react. This might be sensitive or insensitive to people's reactions to others. Another research study of Bocar (2013) revealed that collaboration among subjects outside the academic institution was a critical issue for researchers. Because of personal difficulties, such as stress management and time interference sixty-six percent of the subjects find it difficult and end their research study.

11. Time management difficulties

According to Wells-Moran & Dombeck (2006) time management skills deal with consciousness, organization, and commitment. One should comprehend and collect all the things one is doing as those are important things that can be done in due time. It also needs the commitment to maintain a schedule, and not attracted to other interesting things happening around. They also stressed that organizational skills and time management were not related to various life tasks that one should decide to take those measures. University of Cincinnati (2001) suggested "unexamined and untreated considerable emotional problems as those of loss, depression, and anxiety might lead candidates to feel inadequate or cause major institutional difficulties and failure".

12. Linguistic difficulties

Students' get difficulties in language aspects of writing

research papers will include grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling problems. It's a huge challenge for most students to write good grammatical English. Especially in the absence of sufficient vocabulary to write papers will land the students in trouble. The researchers also read a lot while conducting research. Researchers must go through a lot of research papers to get a clear picture of the language. All these difficulties focused on language problems. When all of these together exist in one place the effect will be completing frustrating. The research papers should be perfect in all respects which is submitted for the highest degree. This indicates how significant the amendment and modification of the draft are in the study. By default, a few rounds of changes must be made by a research supervisor before it gets the green signal. To write a high-impact research papers, these linguistic difficulties must be resolved on an individual basis.

3. Conclusion

It can be concluded that research becomes difficult when researcher faced several difficulties during their research work. This review study reveals that almost all researchers faced above-mentioned difficulties during their research work. There is an extreme need to sort out the above problems and issues so that researchers could focus on research work rather than solving these inconveniences.

4. References

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