

To explore the factors leading towards delayed completion of thesis: students of master's degree program

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Abstract

Around the world, Thesis is the last step of any degree to complete the education degree, it is important for every student to complete their thesis at a given time but, unfortunately, all students cannot complete their thesis on time, therefore the aim of this study is to conclude that failure to complete a master's thesis is a serious problem that demands immediate attention and proactive planning. It provides depth understanding of the completion and non-completion of a master thesis project that is influenced by some factors. Data were collected through the survey questionnaire, the sample of the current study consisted of each postgraduate student who cannot complete their thesis on time. The population of this research is three universities of Jamshoro Higher Education City (JHEC), "Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET)", "University of Sindh", "Liaquat University of Medical and Health Science (LUMHS)". Quantitative data were gathered from the 255 respondents with a close-ended structured questionnaire. The expected results revealed that there are some factors that delay the postgraduate degree and thesis, and the factors include, Inaccessibility when needed, insufficient research skills, poor knowledge of topic undertaken by students, delay in submitted work, frequent change of research topics, improper guideline on written work and failure to keep timing schedule of discussion of research work. It was suggested that universities should arrange compulsory orientation programs of postgraduate students yearly to provide them with exploration guides, and skills and point them properly on how to compose and complete thesis on the given time. Further research could be conducted as well in other public universities of Sindh.

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1. Introduction

For the postgraduate program research is an essential component, many postgraduates struggled to complete their thesis, because of thesis non-completion many postgraduates' students delayed their graduation many students dropped out. The term non-completions refer to you failing to complete your research in the maximum time and having your registration called without completing the research. Excluding the thesis students of postgraduate complete all the requirements for the post-graduate program. After completing all requirements of the course work postgraduate students start their thesis. A thesis is supposed to accomplish two major objectives. First, the candidate receives extensive, highly qualified training in dealing with a major academic issue. Second, a thesis' results make an original involvement to the field's present knowledge [1].

Non-completion of postgraduate degree programs such as MPhil, MBA, and Ph.D. degrees are a serious problem for students and their reputations. Even though postgraduate students reflect the scholarly nature of an educational institution, they utilize more of its sources, such as facilities of library, time of faculty, library, and other services such as services of computer. The energy of students also wastes if they cannot complete their degree, financial resources, and hope, as well as an inefficient use of the time of faculty and struggle, and it is seen as a symptom of waste and ineffectiveness [2].

As a result, the individual staff is impacted department sources are squandered), and efficiency is lost. Every single student who drops without getting a degree, according to is a failure. Students who leave their degree in the thesis stage become a major problem for them. She further asserted that not only is a lengthy postponement in finishing the research and degree is a personal calamity for individual students, but it is also a harmful and wasteful result for teachers and organizations. Students experience issues as well if the thesis takes longer than expected [3].

Although students can finish all work courses in their postgraduate program, it is usually stated that most students within the regulated time don't complete their degree or regular the duration of the program they may continue the degree even

longer than the required period. Many students discontinue their master's program after finishing their course work, while others complete their course work quickly yet require years to complete their thesis [4] .

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2. Related Work

Generally, there are the five stages through which a postgraduate program with a research component goes. Course work, selecting a thesis topic and preparing a research proposal, appointing a proposal, performing research, and publishing a report. Many students go through every stage very efficiently, but some students go through a serious disruption in their work. Most students' thesis occurs after they have completed their course in two stages. First, discover a thesis topic and complete a thesis on time. Students realize that writing more than 100 pages is a very difficult task. Generally, various factors affect the writing thesis writing, all factors related to the students [5]

Completion of the thesis work is influenced by the supervisor skills, they play an important role in the successful completion of the thesis, for the student's positive contribution effective supervisor is important. Active engagement by the supervisor is very important for postgraduate students because the supervisor assists the students to solve a problem that is related to the research, finding an appropriate supervisor is very important who guide the students to find the research problem, to discourse the research problem they apply the correct methodologies, and it is highly emphasized they find a suitable solution to the detailed problem, also found that the there are biggest barriers in completion of a thesis that contain lack of the empathetic of the thesis writing process, loss of interest and frustration is biggest barriers, also the frustration, negative feedback, change of the attention were the reasons that painted by the students for the losing interest in the thesis [6] .

Further Powell and Green claim that thesis completion is also influenced by the nature of the work dedication. The commitment ratio is more than in part-time students in the full-time students. Students of postgraduate want a favourable atmosphere for their thesis where they can sit and do their research easily [7] .

Some other writers mentioned the reasons, selection of the suitable thesis topic, large fieldwork during the gathering of data. Some students want to take a break between completing the course work and beginning of the thesis because these students take a long time to complete their thesis, sometimes it becomes the reason for the non-completion. There is another reason, which may delay the completion of the thesis that includes the insufficient skills about the thesis, interest of the students, poor guidance of the topic, poor knowledge about the topic [8] .

Some authors discuss the importance of writing of thesis does reason the non-completion of the thesis, some additional authors argue that the extreme pressure of completing a thesis on time also cause of delay [9] .

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

The quantitative methodology is implemented. The research process started with a survey questionnaire. Adapting measuring scales were used to create the questionnaire. The main purpose of this research was to identify the reasons behind the non-completion of a master's degree. We used a questionnaire for this research, that includes in beginning small information to explain the reason for this research. Conditionally it is the top importance of the survey justifying the reasons for this research, highlighting secrecy of the survey. In this questionnaire, there are two sections based on the variables chosen to measure the reasons for the non-completion of the master's degree and research. The first section

consists of the personal information and their background, and the second section includes the questions attached to the non-completion of master's degree and delay of the thesis.

3.2. Participants

The current study's population includes all the students who have completed the university courses but have not yet completed their thesis. The population comprised 255 students (44.7% female, 55.3% male). From a list of students corresponding to the 2015-2020 period the number of participants was selected. The selection conditions were: (1) postgraduate students who had completed their studies in the last 5 years, and (2) but have not completed their thesis.

3.3. Data collection

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Factor that contribute to delay in postgraduate students' thesis and degree completion" that contain 11 items that contribute to the delay of the postgraduate student's completion of their thesis and degree respectively. All the items are structured on the Likert scale that consisted of the five options Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Tests that are used is the frequency table, descriptive, reliability test, correlation, regression, coefficient, and ANOVA

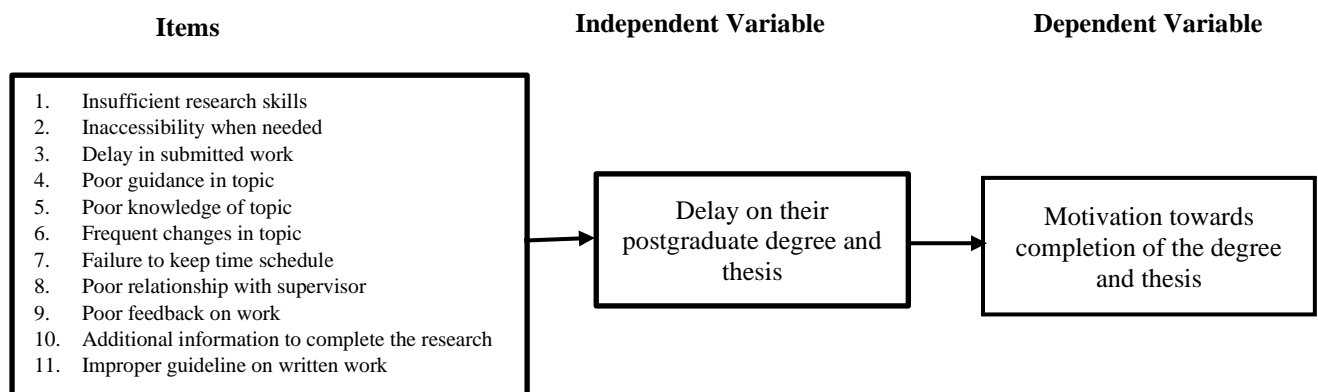


Fig. 1. conceptual framework

3.4. Interpretation

In Fig. 1 I use the conceptual framework that is consisted of three elements one is items in items I use 11 items that are present in my questionnaire through these 11 items I get my results. The second is the independent variable that is the delay on their postgraduate degree and thesis, and the third is the dependent variable that is motivation towards completion of degree and thesis.

4. Results

The results that I get from the 255 respondents who had completed their course but have not completed their thesis. These are the results of the questionnaire that I used in my study.

Table 1: Frequency analysis of each demographic variable [1]

Characteristics of Respondents		
Gender	Frequency	percent
Male	141	55.3
Female	114	44.7
Total	225	100.0
Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years old	76	29.8
26-35 years old	168	65.9
36-45 years old	11	4.3
Total	255	100.0

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Intermediate	1	0.4
undergraduate	42	16.5
postgraduate	208	98.4
Ph.D.	4	1.6
Total	225	100.0

4.1. Interpretation

Part 1 of the questionnaire was used to collect the data of the demographic attributes. It contains the three questions gender, age, education. Table 1 shows that the frequency table of Gender, age, and education. Male and females contributed to this research. There are 141 males out of the 255 with a percentage of 55.3% and 114 female out of the 255 with a percentage of 44.7% so, this shows that the number of male respondents is higher than female. Age groups which are included in this research are 18-25, 26-35, 36-45 so this table shows that the respondents 18-25 are 76 out of the 255 with a percentage of 29.8% and from the age group of 26-35 are 168 out of 255 with the percentage of 65.9% and from the age group of the 36-45 are 11 out of the 255 with the percentage of the 4.3%, so it shows that the majority of the respondents are lying in the age group of the 26-35. The education which is included in this research is the high school, intermediate, bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. So, this table shows that 1 out of the 255 respondents is from the intermediate with the percentage of 0.4% 42 out of the 255 are the bachelors with the percentage of the 16.5%, 208 Out of the 255 respondents are from the master's with the percentage of the 81.6% and only 4 out of the 255 respondents are from the Ph.D. with the percentage of the 1.6% so it shows that most of the respondents are from the masters.

4.2. Reliability test

4.2.1. The scale of Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis

The scale of the Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis was adopted from the [2]

4.2.2. Cronbach's Alpha of Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis

Table 2: Scale reliability of the Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	N of Items
.909	.909	11

4.2.3. Interpretation

Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis scale reliability score found to have Cronbach's Alpha 0.909 based on the 11 items. This table shows that the questionnaire which we have used in our research study is more reliable because the Ratio of our research questionnaire is 0.909 which means that 90.9% is above the standard ratio, which is 0.7, which is extremely good and shows consistency in scale (Likert) used to find the results on the supervisor selection.

4.2.4. scale of the Motivation towards Completion of degree and thesis

The scale of the Motivation towards Completion of degree and thesis adopted from the [4]

4.2.5. Cronbach's Alpha of Motivation towards Completion of Degree and Thesis

Table 3: Scale reliability of the Motivation towards Completion of Degree and Thesis

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on standardized items	N of Items
.836	.836	5

4.2.6. Interpretation

Motivation towards Completion of the Degree and Thesis scale reliability score found to have Cronbach's Alpha 0.836 based on the 5 items. This table shows that the questionnaire which we have used in our research study is more reliable because the Ratio of our research questionnaire is 0.836 which means that 83.6% is above the standard ratio, which is 0.7, which is extremely good and shows consistency in scale (Likert) used to find the results on the Motivation towards Completion of the Degree and Thesis.

4.3. Descriptive statistics

Table 4: Statistics

		DPSC	MTCT
N	Valid	255	255
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.8509	4.0233
Std. Deviation		.30286	.30022
Variance		.092	.090
Skewness		.127	.046
Std. Error of Skewness		.153	.153
Kurtosis		.831	1.431
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.304	.304
Sum		981.97	1025.95

4.3.1. Interpretation

The descriptive statistics (table) of the study, including mean (M) standard deviation (SD); Skewness, and Kurtosis of the variable were also measured. The value for the Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis completion (M = 3.7783, SD=.35703, S= .153 and k passion (M = 3.7772, SD=.42857, S= .127 and k =.840) for Motivation Towards Completion of Degree and Thesis (M = 4.0233, SD=.30022, S= .046 and k =1.431). All the values of the Skewness and Kurtosis are lying within the range of (-1 to +1) to (-3 to +3) which conforms to the normality of the data for regression.

4.4. Regression

4.4.1. Model Summary

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.906a	.822	.821	.12704

a. Predictors: (Constant), DPSC

4.4.2. Interpretation

The above table illustrates the model summary. The value of adjusted R-square is .822 multiplied with 100 means 82.2 which is higher than 0.6 as suggested for the good fit model. Whenever we need to compare the model with complexity, we always use adjusted R square. So, for this study, the model is a good fit. The value of R Square is .822 which shows that dependent variable Motivation towards Completion of Degree 82.2% impact upon independent variable Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and thesis completion while 17.8% are other factors that are affecting employee motivation.

4.4.3. ANOVA

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.810	1	18.810	1165.522	.000b
	Residual	4.083	253	.016		
	Total	22.894	254			

a. Dependent Variable: MTCT
b. Predictors: (Constant), DPSC

4.4.4. Interpretation

The above table of ANOVA concentrates on the value of the sig and F value so the sig value must be less than 0.05 to reject the null hypothesis. This research has found the .000 sig value and the F value is the 1165.522 consequently model is significant it can be argued that the independent variable explains the dependent variable. So, the table shows the significance.

4.4.5. Coefficient

Table 7: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	.563	.102		5.539	.000
	DPSC	.899	.026	.906	34.140	.000

a. Dependent Variable: MTCT

4.4.6. Interpretation

The above table shows that the Delay on their postgraduate degree and the thesis affects the motivation towards completion of the degree and thesis as the value of beta is .899 and the value of t is 34.140 as the value of t is above the standard value (± 2) which purpose that the delay on their postgraduate degree and thesis have an impact on the motivation towards completion of the degree and thesis. As the beta of the independent variable is .899 and the value of the t is 34.140 which is greater than the (± 2). So, we can conclude that the independent variable has an impact on the dependent variable.

4.5. Correlation

Table 8: Correlations

		DPSC	MTCT
DPSC	Pearson Correlation	1	.906**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	255	255
MTCT	Pearson Correlation	.906**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	255	255

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.6. Interpretation

Person product correlation of the Delay on their Postgraduate Degree and Thesis and Motivation towards Completion of degree and thesis was found to be strongly positive and statistically significant ($r=.906$, $p<.001$). Hence hypothesis was supported. This result shows that there is a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables it proves that because of these factors postgraduate degrees and thesis get delayed.

5. Discussion:

The findings of this study show that postgraduate degree and thesis get delayed because of some factors, these factors include delay in submitted work, inaccessibility when needed, insufficient research skills, poor knowledge of topic undertaken by students, failure to keep timing scheduled of discussion work, frequent changes of research topic, and improper guideline on research work. By these insufficient skills, it becomes very difficult for them to guide and help students on how to identify search-related literature and researchable topic to timely complete their studies. It is also discussed that there is no major difference factor of the supervisor that also participates to delay of the students of postgraduate's completion of their thesis in universities, also students interrelated factors contribute to delay of postgraduate degree and thesis.

The expected results of this study showed that postgraduate degree and thesis get delayed because of the student's related factors that include the poor interest in research work, untimely submission of thesis work, difficulty in getting research topic, poor research skills, difficulty in combining thesis and work.

From the results of this study, we can conclude that limitation of the time factor for the thesis completing because of this most students work. It was argued by several authors the process of thesis development is multifactorial and complex and it requires time management, self-discipline, and self-motivation for the thesis students. Also, thesis is the struggle for successful and timely completion that requires skills, abilities, knowledge, aptitude, and determination.

6. Conclusion

This study is all about exploring the factors leading towards delayed completion of the thesis and master's degree program. Based on findings, it was concluded that the postgraduate degree program and thesis get delayed because of the student's related factors. So, the focus of this study is to figure out the problems of postgraduate students who don't get thesis development support. According to the findings, we can suggest that if students want, they complete their degree and thesis on time they should work on the factors that I mentioned above.

Finally, the thesis explanation process requires a supervisor who can support and guide the students in the manner of the thesis, also make sure the interest of the students in self-discipline to make sure the thesis is conducted on time. Also, it is important for a supervisor who checks the student's thesis work on time. This study was limited to only in some universities of Jamshoro, in the future, this research can be done in the different universities of Sindh province and Pakistan.

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