

PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN TIMELY COMPLETION OF THESIS AMONG MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING STUDENTS OF A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY OF PUNJAB

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KEYWORDS:	ABSTRACT
Barriers, Timely Completion, Thesis and Master of Science in Nursing.	<p>Background: Completing research is a necessary part of getting a master's or MPhil degree. Master's students usually take around four years, on average, to complete their degree and graduate, exceeding the typical expectation of two years set by most universities. In Pakistan, it's noticed that a lot of postgraduate students can't finish their degree on time. Many of them manage to complete it, but often they face delays. Unfortunately, some students even have to stop without finishing their degree.</p> <p>Objectives: To explore perceived barriers to timely completion of thesis among Master of Science in Nursing students of a public and a private university in Punjab.</p> <p>Place and Duration of Study: The study was conducted in a private and a public University in Punjab from May 2024 to January 2025.</p> <p>Materials and Methods: Semi-structured face-to-face individual interview was used to obtain data from 12 participants who were selected by purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The audio recorded data collected was translated into English and transcribed verbatim. By using the Braun and Clarke method of thematic analysis codes were generated and organized as codes and major Themes.</p> <p>Results: Eight major themes emerged from the data analysis. The Themes are: Supervisor Mismatch and Delay Allocation, Research Knowledge Gap in Students, Ineffective Research Process Management, Communication Barriers, students' engagement and responsibility, Time Management Challenges, Financial, Emotional and psychological repercussions and unique themes of Private university. Possible suggestions were also given by the participants.</p> <p>Discussion: Based on the results, it was recommended that in order for job-holder researchers to complete their research projects on time, they must actively participate in research-related activities and may be granted study leave by their respective departments. Supervisors, on the other hand, might gain updated knowledge and expertise about research and the usage of modern communications tools. Universities may make improvements to the current infrastructure for research and implement strategies to address issues that are delaying it. The study is expected to make supervisees, supervisors, and management more aware of the need to remove or at least reduce the factors that contribute to postgraduate thesis completion delays.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study:

Completing research is a necessary part of getting a master's or MPhil degree. Master's students usually take around four years, on average, to complete their degree and graduate, exceeding the typical expectation of two years set by most universities. In Pakistan, it's noticed that a lot of postgraduate students can't finish their degree on time. Many of them manage to complete it, but often they face delays. Unfortunately, some students even have to stop without finishing their degree (Ismail, 2021).

Many students around the world often face a common problem of taking more time than expected to finish their research projects at the master's or MPhil level. This delay in completing dissertations is a widespread issue that people are worried about both locally and globally (LITA, 2023).

The existing body of literature provides clear evidence that postgraduate research students struggle with a diverse set of challenges that have a direct or indirect impact on the duration required to complete their research work (Dormiani Tabatabaei, 2022)

University education plays an essential role in delivering the necessary skilled workforce for society. Postgraduate programs, which include diplomas, master's, and doctorate degrees, contribute significantly to scholarly development. However, challenges, such as delays in completing theses or dissertations, arise due to factors like limited supervisor support, personal issues, and obstacles in the research process (Chidi, 2020). In our nation, a structured framework for conducting research is lacking. Surprisingly, there is a prevailing perception among certain individuals that the process of scrutinizing or engaging in research is deemed largely unproductive (Khatoon R. H., 2023). Most postgraduate researchers encounter numerous obstacles in finishing their research projects, including domestic responsibilities (especially for married researchers), job-related tasks, lack of motivation, financial constraints, etc. Delays in research are significantly influenced by supervisory practices (YUEN, 2022). Establishing a strong connection between the student and the advisor holds significant importance in ensuring consistent progress and the timely, high-quality delivery of the student's thesis. This relationship plays a crucial role in guiding the student through the research process, offering support, and maintaining effective communication, ultimately contributing to the successful and timely completion of the thesis to the required standards (Khatoon R. H., 2023).

Additionally, factors such as the university management's role, may play a part in these delays. The institution holds a critical responsibility in ensuring the availability and accessibility of essential resources to foster a sustainable research culture. Providing conducive and comfortable environments for postgraduate researchers is essential (Mansourian, (2021)).

A study found that research delays in postgraduate projects were attributed to factors such as poor working relationships between supervisors and supervisees, lack of motivation among students, and cultural constraints. Additional factors included job-related assignments, domestic responsibilities, hurdles in data collection, and issues related to distance from the university. Supervisors' workload, institution-related factors, complexities in the research process, and changes in supervisors were also identified as contributing to research delays (Khatoon R. H., 2023).

Material and Methods

Study Design: This study was followed a qualitative research approach using an exploratory study research design. This design was used to explore Perceived barriers in timely completion of thesis among Master of Science in Nursing students of a public and a private university of Punjab.

Sample Size

Tentative sample size was Twelve (12) upon data saturation. Two (2) supervisors from each University and 2 supervisees of that supervisors. Hence, total supervisors are four (4) and total supervisees were Eight (8).

Research Tools

After reviewing the literature on qualitative research, a semi-structured interview protocol schedule was used to gather data for this study.

Data Analysis Plan

For the purpose of analysis of the data the audio-taped recorded interviews were transcribed, coded, assessed, interpreted and verified. Thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke was used for analysis.

Results

This chapter consist of participants' demographic variables analysis and thematic analysis of the Braun and Clarke. One popular technique in qualitative research is thematic analysis, which offers succinct explanation and interpretation of a data set's themes and patterns (Majumdar, 2022).

Demographic Variable Analysis:

This includes demographic variables (Gender, Age, Marital status, Contact No, Job Status (Employed/Un-Employed), Job Title, Work Experience, Living arrangements). The study participants were the Research Supervisors and supervisees of MS Nursing at Private and Public University of Punjab. Study participants were two supervisor and 4 supervisees from each university. Data regarding participants was depicted in Table 1.

Table.1: Demographic Variable Data:

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY						
Participants	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Job Status (Employed/Unemployed)	Work Experience	Living Arrangement (Local Resident/ Non-Residential)
PB-SUP 01	Female	35	Married	Vice-Principal	2 Year Education	Local
					2 Year Clinical	
PB-SUP 02	Female	46	Married	Principal	1 year Education	Local
					19 years Clinical	
PR-SUP 01	Male	33	Un-Married	Assist. Professor	3 years Education	Non-Residential
PR-SUP 01	Female	35	Un-Married	Assoc. Professor	9 years Education	Non-Residential
Pb-sup 01	Female	31	Married	Head Nurse	8 Year Clinical	Local
Pb-sup 02	Female	35	Married	Head Nurse	17 Year Clinical	Local
Pb-sup 03	Female	39	Married	Nursing Instructor	15 Year Clinical	Non-Residential
					5 Year Teaching	

Pb-sup 04	Female	31	Married	Nursing Instructor	3 years Education	Non-Residential
Pr-sup 01	Female	33	Married	Charge Nurse	3 years Education	Local
					7 years Education	
Pr-sup 02	Female	33	Married	Un-Employed	2 Year Education	Local
					7 years Education	
Pr-sup 03	Female	27	Un-Married	Un-Employed	1 Year Education	Non-Residential
					1 years Education	
Pr-sup 04	Male	29	Un-Married	Lecturer	2 Year Education	Non-Residential
					1.5 years Education	

PART II & III:

Description

Thematic analysis was conducted on the basis of supervisor and supervisee narratives. The themes generated by the supervisors and supervisees of both public and private universities are Supervisor – supervisee incongruity and Delayed Allocation, Research Knowledge Gaps in Students, Ineffective Research Process Management, Communication Barriers, Student Engagement and Responsibility, and Time Management Challenges.

Theme 01: Supervisor Mismatch and Delayed Allocation:

In supervisor mismatch and delayed allocation, two of private university supervisor and three of supervisee describes that there is conflict between professional expertise in supervision as one supervisor stated that when I conduct a meeting regarding this topic with their 1st supervisor, like it's not from our domain then he simply asked madam I don't have knowledge from your profession. So, I just entertain them according to my knowledge and strategy. If you are not comfortable them you have to hire your own nursing faculty and entertain your students according to nursing discipline (PB-SUP 01). Likewise on supervisee stated that our supervisor one is doctors and the second supervisors are from nursing domain, both supervisors have different research experience and they don't lie on the same page, if I met with one supervisor and he guides me in some direction then the second supervisor don't agree with that guidance, she guides me in another direction. Like sometime I am getting confused what to do (pb-sup 03). Both public and private university supervisors and supervisees faces the same challenges that there is Late allocation of supervisors as one of the supervisor state that I think assigning of the supervisors are too late like in 3rd semester supervisor assigned to students than there is delay of almost 2 semesters (PB-SUP 01), likewise, the supervisee state that research process is too slow and the research supervisors are assigned very late (pb-sup 01) two of the public university supervisors and one of the private university supervisors describe that there is Delayed research progress due to late supervision as stated that Due to allocation of supervisor, supervision also delayed automatically and students also not respond earlier I don't know what's the reason they are reluctant to do meeting with supervisor (PR-SUP 01). Two of the public and two of private university supervisees describe that there is Supervisor's mood shifts and non-directive feedback as stated by supervisee that My supervisor gave me tough time like even I simply asked, Sir, kindly guide me what

I want to do. He just replied that go and search again and again and brought almost 3 to 4 ideas. In the second meeting almost after 1 month he rejected all that idea and said that come again with other topics? (pb-sup 02). Both, the public and private university supervisees face Assertiveness and guidance issues as three of the private university supervisees and two of the public university supervisees supports this issue and stated that He didn't guide and direct me toward that mistake he found in my synopsis writing. Like he checked my synopsis and highlight the mistakes and told me that correct these mistakes. But when I ask sir how can I correct these mistakes. He said it's your problem, go and find your own way that how you will correct these mistakes (pr-sup 03). One of the private university supervisors and three of supervisee feels that sometimes supervisors are in Failure to assess students' learning needs as one supervisor stated that sometimes its supervisor who did not get the point of supervisee (PR-SUP 01) and likewise the supervisee stated that My supervisor ignored my areas of interest like my area of interest is cardiac but my supervisor forced me to choose title according to her area of interact (pr-sup 04). Supervisees from both public and private university describe that there is Disappointment in behavior as stated that We want do work on time, but I face difficulty regarding topic selection. Because on which topic we work, we had to write synopsis first, and when I went to my supervisor, he rejects my topic. And all my efforts and time multiply by zero. I had this experience round about 15 times (pb-sup 01). In public university two of the supervisors and three of the supervisees elaborate that there are non-nursing professionals for supervising nursing research as stated by the supervisor Doctors are assigned as a 1st supervisor of master students in nursing. How the doctors would be as a 1st supervisor even they don't know about our profession then how they can carry a master in nursing student's research (PB-SUP 01), on the other hand supervisee stated that supervisors assigned to us are doctors and our co-supervisors are Nurses. So, there are also issues because both supervisors are not on the same page (pb-sup 02). Public university supervisors and supervisees have same concern that the Supervisors unfamiliar with nursing-specific topics, as stated by the supervisor that one more thing the supervisor are from the other domain like they are doctors they have not any knowledge regarding our discipline. And they gave the topic to the students that are not related to our profession like I can give you as an example. Student brought a topic to me which are assigned from their 1st supervisor is "incidence and causes of hypoglycemia in neonate. Like it's not related to our nursing domain (PB-SUP 01). Likewise, the supervisees state that the topic that was assigned to me is not fall in nursing domain its totally link with the doctor's profession like where is the nursing care and my contribution to nursing profession, and it's quite difficult to me conducted this level research and I face a lot of difficulties regarding collection of data (pb-sup 03). In Private university supervisor and supervisee have facing the same challenges regarding the Supervisors' Resignation multiple time, as supervisor stated that employ did not retain and they resigned, and his or her supervisee added with another supervisor, and both the supervisee and supervisor face trouble (PR-SUP 01) as supervisee stated that I was not compatible with the new supervisor, He totally rejected my study title, he said that just change your study title. After that I was very disheartened from all this and I was not taking any more interest because it almost wasted my 2 semesters in just title selection. Again, when I realize that the all my peers were on the way to progress towards then I re-motivate me to do work again. I did multiple meeting with my supervisor on new topic but he did not guide me he just simply said a big No. Even he did not guide or direct me like I did not understand what to do. I almost spent my whole day at the outside of my supervisor office he gave me time but again it was not fruitful like he didn't agree on any topic. Then again, I demotivated and lost my track toward research progress. I was in condition like I am quit this program like even those students those even have basic knowledge regarding research was also in good progress (pb-sup 03).

Theme 2: Research Knowledge Gaps in Students:

Private and public, both university supervisors and supervisees having the same concern like two supervisor and one supervisee from the public university and one supervisor and two of supervisees elaborate that Students lack basic research knowledge (Difficulty selecting appropriate research topics, misunderstanding sample size calculation) as supervisor stated that students have not any basic knowledge regarding research they don't know how to select a topic, because supervisors gave them topics. Even they don't know how to

write the thesis. What is the literature review? How to write a literature review. How to calculate sample size they thought that they can assume the sample size by their own perception. Literally they have not any idea what is the sample size and how to calculate the size (PB-SUP 01). Likewise, the supervisee state that I have zero knowledge of nursing research and synopsis writing, in my bachelor's degree my supervisor is not so good so I prepared my research project by someone else on the payment (pb-sup 02). In public and private university both the supervisors and supervisee have the same issue that is Misalignment between student knowledge and research demands as supervisor stated that that they thought that they can assume the sample size by their own perception. Literally they have not any idea what is the sample size and how to calculate the size (PB-SUP 01). In public and private university both the supervisors and two supervisees of each university, face same challenges regarding, Confusion about writing research chapters as supervisor describe it that the students even don't know the research chapter write up, and stated that even they don't know how to write the thesis (PB-SUP 02), likewise the supervisee state that I have theoretical knowledge of the nursing research but I am unable to do research as a project. I face a lot of difficulties in doing research like, I don't know how to write the introduction chapter, especially the literature review (pr-sup 02). Difficulty in resolving feedback by the supervisees of both private and public university have identified during data collection as elaborated by the supervisor stated that that Students have no idea how to fix the feedback. And they take a lot of time to fix that feedback (PR-SUP 02). Both public and private university supervisor have the same concern regarding supervisees have Lack of understanding of resolving the feedback as supervisor stated that Students also don't know how to fix the feedback issues regarding the research, in the meeting they did not ask questions regarding their queries and after that when the day of next meeting they are still on the same page like as in the previous meeting. When I ask the what is this, they simply answer that sir I did not able to resolve. I put many efforts to fix these issues. But I can't (PR-SUP 02). In private university both the supervisors and supervisee are concerned about Complexity of research tasks recognized too late as described by the supervisor that The even don't feel any pressure in the initial phase but when they realize the importance of this task it's going to be very late (PR-SUP 01)., likewise the supervisee elaborated it by stating that during my first semester in am not serious about my research work, an di put not any effort in the 1st and almost half of the 2nd semester. But when I realize that I am getting too late, and now I have to face the consequences of my negligence and carelessness (pr-sup 03).

Theme 3: Ineffective Research Process Management:

In Ineffective research management, Study finding revealed that there is Lack of research process guidelines for Master's program in Private and public university, as two supervisors and three supervisors from public university and two supervisees from the private university describe it as stated by the supervisor that "It's the pioneer batch. Like, as I told you that it's a novice program, so not any research committee or guidelines are present in this institute" (PB-SUP 01), Likewise, supervisee also supports this statement and said that "Our department there is no policy, rules, guidelines or any direction. The most prominent barrier according to me, there is no proper guidelines regarding research" (pb-sup 03). Both supervisors and two supervisees from the public university describe that there is Absence of a dedicated nursing research committee as supported by the statement of supervisor stated that "There is no proper nursing research committee. Even institution had no defined nursing research committee" (PB-SUP 02)., Two of supervisee also describe that there is not a research committee for their thesis progress and state that definitely, it's really affected our thesis progress, even if we do are work already but there is no any committee which will be on schedule basis. Like there is no proper schedule of the research committees. Our higher study meeting was held in may-2024, but our IRB committee was held on jan-2024 (pb-sup 02)., Both supervisors and two supervisees from the public university describe it our institute Use of Bachelor's-level research policies for master students and stated by the supervisor that "They simply follow the bachelor level guidelines to run the master program research" as supervisee stated that the university have not any clear research process to accomplish their research project (Pb-SUP 01)., In public university both the supervisor and three of the supervisees elaborate it that University unaware of research processes, the supervisor stated that "They even don't know the basic rules and regulation of nursing research and how it is conducted. They simply follow

the bachelor level guidelines to run the master program research. The university have not any clear research process to accomplish their research project” (PB-SUP 02)., One of the supervisees also describe this as stated by “we are pioneer batch of our institute. There is too much delay, because there is no well-structured environment for us (pb-sup 01).,”In public, there is Structural issues in supervisor’s allocation/faculty hiring as elaborated by two supervisors and one supervisee, as supervisor stated that “I saw that there is just one msn faculty whose course work completed. There is not proper faculty for master student’s research” (PB-SUP 01)., And one supervisee explains it by stated that “According to my experience, I think the unnecessary delay of supervisor like almost our 2nd semester is going to be end when the list was shared with us that they were your supervisors (pr-sup 03).,”. In public and private university, there is Lack of regular feedback sessions, as describe by the both supervisors of public and private university, two supervisees from the private university and one from the public university, elaborate it as stated by the supervisor that There is lack of regular feedback session on weekly basis, like sometimes we are busy due to multiple tasks of the organization and sometime supervisees are not available due to their personal responsibilities (PR-SUP 01).Likewise, the supervisee stated that other thing is that as I told you that our supervisors are doctor, and all are almost the HOD of their department so they are too much busy, like even in prior scheduled meeting, most of the time they didn’t gave us time due to multiple tasks of their job. So, there is no continuity of research progress meeting as mentioned in the time table of every week (pb-sup 01). In public and private university, two supervisees and two supervisors from each university, having the same issue of Postponed planned meeting due to overburden of supervisors as elaborated by the supervisor stated as Sometime due to overburden from the organization, planned meeting was cancelled (PR-SUP 01), Likewise, the supervisee stated that as I told you that our supervisors are doctor, and all are almost the HOD of their department so they are too much busy, like even in prior scheduled meeting, most of the time they didn’t gave us time due to multiple tasks of their job (pb-sup 01).

Theme 4: Communication Barriers:

Data collection findings shows that communication barriers also play a significant role in delaying the research progress as describe by the supervisors and supervisees of both public and private university. One supervisor from public university and two from private university describe that there is limited interaction between students and supervisors as stated by the supervisor that 1st supervisors are doctors and they all are almost most senior within their department. Like some are HOD of their department. So, they are too much busy and most of students have complaint of time management (PB-SUP 01), likewise the supervisee stated that supervisor was too much busy like they even did not answer the mail. We again mailed to the supervisor. Then he/she replied its almost 3 to 4 weeks (pb-sup 03). In public and private university, supervisor and supervisees face same issue regarding Difference in opinions between assigned supervisors as one supervisor stated that because their 1st supervisors are docs and they don’t know about the nursing research, so as a supervisor we both are not rely on the same opinion (PB-SUP 02), likewise, supervisees stated that supervisors assigned to us are doctors and our co-supervisors are Nurses. So, there are also issues because both supervisors are no on the same page (pb-sup 01). In public university both the supervisors state that the students’ mistrust due to interdisciplinary differences as evidence by the statement Literally they have not any idea what is the sample size and how to calculate the size. I told them it’s the right method. Go to a biostatistician and calculate the sample size but they don’t believe that i am telling them correct, they thought that we are not have enough knowledge as a supervisor, they prioritize the Doctor on us that they have the proper knowledge. But when they go to their 1st supervisor, they tell the same method as I already told them (PB-SUP 01). In private university one supervisor and one supervisee describe the code of Fear of asking questions by the students as supervisor stated that most of the time the supervisee doesn’t know how to start the research and also being reluctant and feeling anxiety in meeting with the supervisor. And even in the meeting they did not ask what they want to learn I don’t know why they feel fear in asking question regarding their queries (PR-SUP 01). Likewise, the supervisee state that he checked my synopsis and highlight the mistakes and told me that correct these mistakes. But when I ask sir how can I correct these mistakes. He said it’s your problem, go and find your own way that how you will correct

these mistakes, if I can't fix it then he shouted on me and simply said that if you are not able to do it than quit this program (pr-sup 03). In private university, both supervisors and two supervisees describe that the supervisor's Preference of in person meeting over online meeting as supervisor stated that actually, in our department, we don't have an online consultation, like we do have but we including me we don't appreciate that practice, why because sometimes students say that we will send you are synopsis or presentation and kindly check this out. But we did not respond on well because the human interaction is also important. Some points are not explainable at online medium so I prefer in face-to-face interaction (PR-SUP 01). , likewise, the supervisee state that the supervisor don't check the work if I send my research work in soft form through email, they said that come to my office if you see that I am free in my office than give me your research work file in hard form (pr-sup 01).

Theme 5: Student Engagement and Responsibility:

In public university, students' engagement and responsibility is limited because the Limited tasks given to students, as both supervisors elaborated it, by giving the statement that but in our institution the supervisor is allot the topic and also defend that topic in committee. Like in ERC supervisors defend their topic (PB-SUP 01). In private university, in the initial semesters like in semester 1 and 2 the students show negligence in research work, as described by the supervisor that on the edge of student, in the initial phase students did not respond us well like they did not bother that, I don't know why like might be they think that it's an easy task or may be some other reason. The even don't feel any pressure in the initial phase but when they realize the importance of this task it's going to be very late ((PR-SUP 01), both supervisors from the private university elaborate that non-responsiveness of supervisees also play a significant role in delaying, and stated as Those students who have a non-serious attitude regarding their research and didn't response to the supervisor regarding previous feedback, and not conduct a meeting even after reminding them. I do multiple mails or even whatsapp text but they did not bother. So, I did not entertain that type of students (PR-SUP 02). In private university both the supervisor and two supervisees concerned about the Unawareness of students regarding the significance of research, as stated by the supervisor that they wasted their time a lot. Even I was connected with them via mail, WhatsApp but they didn't get it serious. If students realize that the study and research is most important rather than their job so I think this delay can be minimizing (PR-SUP 01), Likewise the supervisees stated that I wasted a lot of time, because I enjoyed my university life, I didn't get any stress of research project and now I realized that I have wasted too much time. But now I realized that I am in wrong direction (pr-sup 03).

Theme 6: Time Management Challenges:

The study finding revealed that in private and public university facing the issue of Poor time management, supervisors and also all the supervisees of from both universities, describe it as one supervisor stated that As I told you that the 1st supervisors are doctors and they all are almost most senior within their department. Like some are HOD of their department. So, they are too much busy and most of students have complaint of time management (PB-SUP 01), likewise supervisee also stated that Time management play major role in delaying my thesis work, because our research work starts too late (pb-sup 02). In both universities there is Constricted time for quality feedback, as supervisors and supervisees from private and public university elaborated it as supervisors are too much busy and most of students have complaint of time management. Like firstly they are not free so they communicate less with their supervisor, they don't give quality time to students (PB-SUP 01). Likewise, the supervisee stated that other thing is that as I told you that our supervisors are doctor, and all are almost the HOD of their department so they are too much busy, like even in prior scheduled meeting, most of the time they didn't gave us time due to multiple tasks of their job (pb-sup 03). In Private university both supervisors and supervisee have same concern that there is Students' unavailability on planned meeting, and stated as Students also show non serious attitude towards research like they are too much busy with other task and responsibility and not attend the scheduled meeting with supervisor after that they had multiple excuses for this behaviour (PR-SUP 02). Likewise, the supervisee stated that sometimes due to my job responsibilities I am unable to attend the planned or schedule meeting

with the supervisor, and for the next time it's quite difficult to getting another appointment from supervisors because they are too much busy (pr-sup 01). Supervisors from both university and also the three supervisees from public university and two from private university describe that Student's Job commitments leading to research delay, as stated by the supervisor: like mostly students are jobians and they prefer their jobs like they have multiple excuses like they were not taking off from job or there was not any relieving from job. So, they wasted their time a lot. Even I was connected with them via mail, WhatsApp but they didn't get it serious. If students realize that the study and research is most important rather than their job (PR-SUP 02). Likewise, the supervisee stated that sometimes due to my job responsibilities I am unable to attend the planned or schedule meeting with the supervisor, and for the next time it's quite difficult to getting another appointment from supervisors because they are too much busy (pr-sup 03).

Theme 07: Financial, Emotional and Psychological repercussions:

Supervisees face the Financial, Emotional and Psychological repercussions in both universities, as three supervisees from the private university and one from the public university describe that they feel Frustration and mental stress due to repetitive rejections of topics as one of them stated that I face difficulty regarding topic selection. Because on which topic we work, we had to write synopsis first, and when I went to my supervisor, he rejects my topic. And all my efforts and time multiply by zero. I had this experience round about 15 times. At that time, I thought that I have to quit my degree program and then I went in the recessive phase of 5 to 6 month (pr-sup 03). One supervisee from public and one from private university have the concern regarding the financial strain as stated by one participant that but there was financial up and downs in 1st year. One more thing that the supervisor checked the research work only in hard form. Even in research committee, 3 to 4 files have been submitted in hard form. I face so many expenses in printing the research work In between we used some software in research like SPSS, Endnote etc. (pr-sup 01). In public university the two supervisees describe that they face Geographical Separation and Travel Stress The topic that was assigned from our 1st supervisor, my research study setting is Bahawalpur and I am from Multan. That's why I have to travel to Bahawalpur for data collection, it's quite difficult for me to manage the travelling issue. And I feel stressed in travelling because I have a lot of personal and professional commitments in jobs (pb-sup 02). Three Supervisees from public university and two from private university describe that they face Strain from work-life imbalance, as one of them sated that There is not any support for research tasks at job place. Even there is not as much culture or environment to open my laptop to doing my work at duty place. Because there is a lot of tasks. And I have not a single second to do my research in job time (pb-sup 03).

Unique Themes in Private University:

Both supervisor and the supervisees of the private university having the same issue regarding the Internet and Resource Constraints as supervisor stated that there is no internet facility, when we give feedback to students, they can't fix it on the same day they move back toward home than again come back in to almost 2 weeks (PR-SUP 02). Likewise, the supervisee stated that there is no internet facility within university and our own pkgs were not working due to university jammers, so the feedback from the supervisors were not corrected on the same day, student then move back towards their residence and correct all that thing which supervisor explained in the last meeting. But again, its time consuming (pr-sup 01).

Possible Suggestions:

Two Supervisor and all supervisees from public university suggested that there should be research committee for the nursing discipline as supervisor stated that the university should make the Nursing Research committee for MSN students (PB-SUP 03). Likewise, supervisee stated that University also pay attention to making the research committee for the nursing profession (pb-sup 04). Two supervisor and three supervisees from public university and two supervisor and one supervisee from private university also suggest that the allocation of the supervisors should be in the first semester as supervisor stated that allocation of supervisors should be done on the earliest convenience. So, they can choose title at least at 1st

semester (PR-SUP 02) , likewise the supervisee stated that supervisors that are assigned to us are assigned during first 6 month of our degree, and we will select our study title in 1st year then in 2nd year we will do are research properly with our study (pb-sup 02). Two supervisors and all the supervisee from public university, one supervisor and two supervisees from the private university recommend that there should be supervisors and supervisees alignment as the supervisor stated that both the supervisor and supervisee should be on the same page (PR-SUP 01), Likewise, the supervisees stated that I suggest that there should be a meeting with both supervisors along with supervisee. Like all 3 are on the same page so I think the gap between all of can be minimize. So, the time can be saved (pb-sup 03). Supervisors and supervisees from the Private university stated that there should be provision of internet facility in the university boundary as supervisor stated that university should provide internet facility so the student can fix the feedback on the same day rather than they going back to home and took 2 to 3 weeks (PR-SUP 02). Likewise, the supervisee stated that there are jammers in the university and my own internet package was not working, and the university also not have internet facility, so there should be open access to the internet facility for the students to ease the search for research project (pr-sup 02). All supervisors and supervisees from both universities recommended that there should be defined rules and policies for research process as the supervisor stated that there should be proper and defined guidelines regarding the nursing research process like different committee and their protocols are defined and coordinate with the students (PB-SUP 02) , Likewise the supervisee describe that university should have the guidelines for the research process and different research committees (pr-sup 01).

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes discussion on the demographic Variables and discussion on the major themes and codes of the study.

Discussion on Demographic Variables:

In this study, majority (83%) of the participants were females and only 17% were males. The age range of the supervisors were 33- 46 years, and had the experience range 3-20 years (clinical and education) upon different levels (Principal, Voice Principal, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor). The age range of the supervisees were 27- 39 years and had an experience range of 2-20 years, upon designation of (Lecturer, Nursing Instructor, Charge Nurse and Head Nurse). Majority of the participants (83%) were employed and only 17 % Participants were unemployed during degree program. Half (50 %) of the supervisors and (75 %) supervisees were married. One half (50 %) supervisors were local and 50 % are non-residentials. About one half (50 %) supervisees were locals and one half (50 %) were non-residential during degree program.

Discussion on Major Themes:

Theme 01: Supervisor Mismatch and Delayed Allocation:

According to data analysis, first emerging theme was Supervisor Mismatch and Delayed Allocation and it was challenging barriers for both supervisor and supervisee that causing delay in the research study. It is due to personality mismatch of supervisor-supervisee, Institution's structural issue of hiring and allocation supervisor, and in-congruent driplines of supervisor-supervisor. This study finding is similar to the study was conducted in Ghana by (Arthur, 2022).

Theme 2: Research Knowledge Gaps in Students:

According to data analysis, there is research knowledge gap in the supervisees, there concept regarding research is not quite enough to do a thesis, they don't know how to write the chapters of thesis especially literature review. They are unable to resolve the feedback provided by the researcher because in the bachelor degree, there concepts are not buildup. These lines were also lined with the study conducted in 2020 by (Kourepaz, 2020).

Another study conducted by (Pangket, 2023) also elaborate this theme as results of the study showed that the most significant issues were a lack of academic requirements, specifically instruction on research paper writing skills, lack of knowledge with the research writing process, a lack of resources, and a lack of methodology.

Additionally, a study conducted in 2021 suggests potential actions including connecting mentors and research advisers with young researchers, holding seminars, and helping graduate students develop strategies for dealing to deal with common difficulties (Casanova, 2021).

Theme 3: Ineffective Research Process Management:

According to data analysis, one of the major problems seen in the public sector is that there is not a defined research process management, like there is no specific and defined policies/criteria. Even the hiring of the research supervisors is inappropriate. This study revealed that there is Lack of research process guidelines for Master's program, absence of a dedicated nursing research committee, university unaware of research processes, structural issues in supervisor's allocation/faculty hiring, postponed planned meeting due to overburden of supervisors. Another study with consistent finding by (Muraraneza, 2020) reported that the challenges of the institutional framework included the recruitment of several postgraduate students, which resulted in mismatch, uncertainty, and a lack of support, the absence of definitive guidelines for nursing schools, and the small pool of suitable research supervisors. Research supervisors lack the necessary expertise.

Theme 4: Communication Barriers:

The analysis of the data showed that the ineffective communication due to limited interaction between the supervisor and supervisee, and preference of face-to-face communication rather than online meeting and these findings similar to study conducted in Philippine by (Pangket, 2023) as reported that difficulties faced by graduate students in three different domains: time management, communication, and infrastructure. Another study with consistent findings shows that Supervisors' busy times, incompetence in supervision, ignorance of the relevant profession, and a less positive mentality on quality research, as well as a lack of competence with modern communication techniques (Sarwar, 2018). Another study report that the Supervisors and supervisees' opinions differed significantly, as both supervisors' reported practices and supervisees' opinions regarding their supervisors' use of good written thesis feedback also restrict the interactions (Gezahegn, 2023).

Theme 5: Student Engagement and Responsibility:

As study findings revealed that the student's responsibility and participation in the research thesis play a major role in timely completing the thesis. A study conducted in Mogadishu by (Abubakar, 2024) also elaborate it as the findings shows that the guidance and counsel of competent supervisors are certain to be very beneficial to research students, but in the end, it is their own responsibility to conduct their own research and write their theses. A study was suggested that According to the study's findings, both supervisors and supervisees should actively participate in research projects for their coursework and theses (Khatoon R. H., 2023).

Theme 6: Time Management Challenges:

Study findings revealed that the time management challenges, both in public and private sector due to postponed planned meeting due to supervisor workload, and students job commitments. A study conducted in universities of central Punjab in Pakistan by (Sarwar, 2018) report that busy schedule of the supervisors, their job-related assignments and duties and less positive attitude towards quality research work were factors of research delay at postgraduate level. Another study was conducted in Pakistan by (Khatoon R. H., 2023) described that it was found that the supervisors' poor time management was a major problem, as they had to teach the students, monitor the various students, and attend to their personal and social

obligations. Another study finding report that approximately 50% of students face challenges due to time constraints in developing their research (Abubakar, 2024).

Theme 07: Financial, Emotional and Psychological repercussions:

According to data analysis, supervisees faced Financial, emotional, and psychological repercussions due to repetitive rejection of study title, travel expenses and travel stress. The findings is harmonized with the study in Indonesia by (Ermianti, 2021) that The key themes are the learning objectives and requirements in the thesis course, the physical and psychological issues that students face during the thesis, and both positive and negative interpersonal relationships during the thesis. A study with consistent findings reported that key barriers affecting graduate student's dissertation were lack of support from supervisor and fear of rejection and a major obstacle for the students was obtaining the required study materials, tools, workspace, technological resources, and funding. Accordingly, universities have to assess methods for expanding access to research facilities and provide more funding to help graduate students with their theses (Abubakar, 2024).

Unique Themes in Private University:

Study findings revealed that there is internet and scarce resources issues faced by the university, also play a significant role in delaying research. The study findings are similar to these issues as reported that researcher face problems with internet connectivity and communication (problems with connectivity and insufficient scientific resources, as well as communication with other thesis participants) (Lobo, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study have revealed that the study participants were both male and females. Firstly, the supervisors and supervisees were in-congruent, both were not on the same page. In this present study, this factor was rated as the most significant one by both supervisees and supervisors. After that ineffective time management and communication skill was also an important barrier in thesis completion. There was lacking of institutional research policies and guidelines, infrastructure of hiring of supervisors was also inappropriate. Supervisee's participation was also crucial in timely completion of thesis. Financial, and psychological strains were also faced as a challenging barrier. Internet connectivity and scarce resources also contribution in the elongation of duration of thesis completion. Based on the results, it was recommended that in order for job-holder researchers to complete their research projects on time, they must actively participate in research-related activities and may be granted study leave by their respective departments. Supervisors, on the other hand, might gain updated knowledge and expertise about research and the usage of modern communications tools. Universities may make improvements to the current infrastructure for research and implement strategies to address issues that are delaying it. The study is expected to make supervisees, supervisors, and management more aware of the need to remove or at least reduce the factors that contribute to postgraduate thesis completion delays.

STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY:

Few major strengths of this study were acknowledged by the researcher.

- Firstly, this study highlighted the major barriers/challenges encountered in timely research Thesis completion of postgraduate level, both in public and private university.
- Secondly, this study also explored the possible suggestions of highlighted challenges.
- Thirdly, this study laid foundation of research leading toward further study by using the empirical research methodology.

Recommendations:

• Early Assignment of Supervisors and Completion of Synopsis

Supervisors should be assigned at the beginning of the program, ideally in the first semester. This early assignment allows students to establish a clear direction for their research from the start. Completing

the research synopsis within the first semester ensures that students have a well-defined plan and can progress without delays.

- **Initial Meeting Between Supervisors and Student**

The main supervisor, co-supervisor, and the student should hold an introductory meeting. This meeting helps clarify expectations, roles, and responsibilities for all parties, ensuring alignment and smooth collaboration throughout the research process (Arthur, 2022).

- **Establishment of a Research Committee for Nursing**

A dedicated research committee should be formed specifically for the Nursing department. This committee should provide clear guidelines to streamline research activities, maintain quality standards, and address discipline-specific challenges effectively.

- **Compliance with HEC Policies for Supervisor Assignments**

Assigning supervisors should adhere to the policies and guidelines set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). This ensures transparency, equity, and compliance with national standards for academic research (HEC, 2023).

- **Student-Driven Topic Selection**

Students should be encouraged to select research topics that align with their areas of interest. This approach increases motivation, fosters creativity, and enhances the relevance of their work to their future career goals (Khatoon R. H., 2023).

- **Job Flexibility for Students**

Students should be allowed to work up to 20 hours per week to support their financial needs. Universities can assist by providing on-campus job opportunities, enabling students to balance work and study effectively while reducing financial stress.

- **Access to Personal Supervisors for Additional Guidance**

Each student should have access to a personal supervisor within the university who can provide additional support and guidance. This ensures that students can address queries or challenges promptly, improving their overall research experience.

Limitations of Study

- In this study total participants were 12 and findings based on the data saturation, hence this study was not generalizable on large scale.
- In this study because findings based on the personal experience so there is minimal margin of self-reporting biasness, which cannot be eliminated.

Ethics statement

The Research study with Ref. No: REC-UOL-/211/08/24 was approved by the Ethical Committee of The University of Lahore Faculty of Allied Health Sciences Lahore Punjab Pakistan. The interviews were conducted anonymously by the Primary researcher. No personally identifiable questions were included in the questionnaire. Participants were deemed to have provided informed consent to participate in the study.

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The authors declare that they have no competing interest

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