Developing Strategies for Overcoming Challenges Faced by Postgraduate Nursing Students

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Abstract

Background: The research and thesis writing are critical components of postgraduate studies. Possible challenges affect the student's completion and attrition rate. In advocating for improved postgraduate experience, many postgraduate students adopted effective strategies in overcoming challenges encountered to be able to obtain their intended postgraduate degree certificate **Aim**: to investigate challenges faced by postgraduate nursing students, developing strategies for overcoming these challenges and assess face and content validity of the developed strategies. **Design**: A methodological study design was used at faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University. **Sample**: consisted of two categories, namely postgraduate nursing students (236 master and doctorate postgraduate students at their last semester of studies) and Juries.**Tools**:1) A Self- administered questionnaire for students 2) Opinionnaire sheet for Juries. **Results**: a majority of the postgraduate nursing students view a number of factors really challenging them during their postgraduate studies, as 88.6 % of students found time pressure for studying and working together followed by 81.4 found library and internet facilities are the highest challenging .**Conclusion**: the student-related challenges consider the most challenging for students in comparison with the institution and supervisor – related challenges, Among the student-related challenges, the financial ones are the most challenging, whereas the academic ones were the highest among the institution – related challenges **Recommendations**: The developed strategies should be presented to and discussed with postgraduate students in the study setting for the purpose of improvement and for ensuring their acceptability.

Introduction

Demand for postgraduate education has escalated since the year 2000 and is still growing. This growth in demand to higher education is not limited to developing but also in developed countries of the world **(Sojkin et al., 2011)**.The research and thesis writing are critical components of postgraduate studies .and there are many challenges facing post graduate students during working on their researches. Possible challenges affect the student's completion and attrition rate **(Federal Ministry of Information, 2012)**.The challenges face postgraduate students categorized to four challenges.

1.Research - related challenges: as unable to find a researchable topic, poorly written background, difficulties in

writing the discussion of results section of the thesis and plagiarism also posed a challenge **(Cambridge University Press, 2017c).**

2.Students - related challenges: as balancing jobs and academic work for Part-time is the big problem as they struggle to cope with their simultaneous academic and professional workloads, lack of support and understanding from their supervisors, inadequate knowledge of programs, inadequate preparation for postgraduate studies, different social environments and financial challenges **(Ilhaam, 2010**). Also, challenges as, family responsibilities, different Social Environments, unexpected circumstances (**Richardson and gage, 2010; pool et al., 2015**).

3.Institution - related challenges: it refer to information, services and quality offered by the institution as poor presentation of the program, limitations of infrastructural support, academic difficulties and administrative shortcomings **(Federal Ministry of Information, 2012).**

4. Supervisor - related challenges: the main problems facing postgraduate students are related to supervisor as lack of supervisor time, unclear feedback, students' conflict with supervisors, different expectations, cultural background, poor supervision, no schedule for meetings and the supervisors always too busy **(Odena and Burgess, 2017).**

In advocating for improved postgraduate experience many postgraduate students adopted effective strategies in overcoming challenges encountered to be able to obtain their intended postgraduate degree certificate **(Walsh et al., 2015). Strategies for overcoming challenges faced by postgraduate students** include improve the system of supervision, develop a research culture among students, resource and guidance Support, improvement of postgraduate education by University Authorities, improve the quality of education offered by the institution, following thesis and dissertation writing Criteria, effective supervisory system, curriculum enhancement Strategies, etc **(Havenga and Sengane, 2018).**

Aim of the study

This study aims at investigating challenges faced by postgraduate nursing students and developing strategies for overcoming these challenges and assessing the face and content validity for the proposed strategies.

Research Question

1.What are the challenges faced by postgraduate nursing students during their academic studies?

2.What are the strategies for overcoming the challenges?

Subjects and Methods

Design and Setting:

A Methodological study design was used in carrying out this study. At Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University.

Subjects:

The study subjects consisted of two categories.

1) Postgraduate nursing students: 236 master and doctorate postgraduate students during the academic year 2017/2018 at their last semester of studies.

2) Jury group: 25 experts in nursing to assess the face and content validity of the proposed strategies. It included Professors and Assistant Professors in Nursing Administration from faculties of nursing in different Egyptian Universities.

Tools of Data Collection:

The data needed for this study were collected using two tools

1- A self- administered questionnaire for students it consisted of the following parts.

o **Part I:** for the demographic characteristics of students such as age, sex, marital status, academic level (master or doctorate), specialty, mode of study (fulltime or part time) and source of funding.

o **Part II:** for investigate the challenges encountered by postgraduate nursing students. It was developed by researcher based on (**Ekpoh, 2016**). The tool involves 84 statements

2- Opinionnaire sheet for jury. For assessing the face and content validity for the developed strategies sheet.

Methods of data collection:

After securing necessary approvals, the researcher introduced herself to the postgraduate students, explained the aim of the study and how to fill-in the questionnaire, and sought their cooperation. Consent to participate was obtained orally before handing to questionnaire to any subject. The actual fieldwork extended from the beginning of June 2018 to the ending of November 2018.

Strategies construction

Based on the questionnaire findings, and in the light of pertinent literature, the researcher was developed a strategies for overcoming the challenges faced by postgraduate students. This was done through three 3 stages as follows:

Stage I (Strategy formulation): This refers to the process of choosing the most appropriate course of action for the realization of organizational goals and objectives, and there by achieving the organizational vision. This stage took a period of three months and half from beginning of December 2018 to the beginning of March 2019. The following steps were pursued. Setting objective, evaluating the faculty Environment and identifying challenges faced by postgraduate nursing students, setting quantitative Targets, establish the needed resources, reviewing of recent national and international related literatures and choosing the appropriate form of strategies.

Stage II (strategy development): This stage took three months from the beginning of March 2019 to the beginning of Mai 2019. It involved the following, detecting the key dimensions of the strategy design as challenge name, challenge type, frequency, objectives and how to overcome challenges, using creativity, using problem-solving approach to overcome challenges and to deal with a particular problem, investigating the forms of strategy design and selecting the appropriate form of strategies design and developing the strategies.

Stage III (strategy evaluation): The developed strategies were validated by a jury group consisting of 25 professors and assistant professors of Nursing Administration. The opinions

were sought for the relevance, clarity, comprehensiveness and accuracy of the strategies. After undergoing the modifications suggested by the jury group members, by addition and/or omission, the face and content validity of the strategies were ensured. And show high face and content validity with content Validity Index (CVI) 0.99 and 0.98 respectively **(**This stage lasted for five months from to the beginning of Mai to mid- September 2019.

Ethical Consideration:

Prior study conduction, ethical approval was obtained from the scientific research and ethics committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University. Oral informed consents were obtained from the participants. They were informed about their right to refuse or withdraw from the study with no consequences. They were reassured about the anonymity and confidentiality of the information collected, and that it would be used for the purpose of scientific research.

Statistical analysis:

Data entry and statistical analysis were done using SPSS 20.0 statistical software package. Date was presented using descriptive statistics in the form of Frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables, and mean and standard deviations medians, and first and third quartiles for quantitative variables.

Results:

Table (1): indicates that student's age ranged between 23 and 45 years as. The majority were female (70.8%) and married (72.9%), approximately one-fourth of the postgraduate nursing students were in critical care nursing

specialty (24.6%), and another approximately one-fourth in pediatric nursing specialty (22.9%). At the other extreme, only 3.4% of them were in nursing administration. The great majority were self-funded (93.6%).

Table (2): (a, b) shows that the majority of postgraduate nursing students considered all **student**-related research challenges as challenging or somewhat challenging as shown by the median values of 2.00 and 3.00 corresponding to "somewhat challenging" and "challenging" respectively. Meanwhile, the statistical capabilities of students and publishing research paper/s in local and international journals were the most challenging factors with the highest means (2.50). At the other extreme, the description of the geographical area of the study was the least challenging factor as indicated by its first quartile (1.00) meaning that at least one-fourth of the students considered it not challenging.

Table (3): illustrates that all the factors were viewed as challenging by at least one-half of them as demonstrated by the median values of 3.00. The only exceptions were related to the "support received from supervisors" and "Lack of confidence at the beginning of the study program" which had a median 2.00 indicating that at least one-half of the students considered them "somewhat challenging." Meanwhile, the most challenging factors were those of "Stress to end the study at specific time" and "Feeling tired form studying and working together" with means 2.73 and 2.71 respectively.

Table (4): indicates that all the student-related financial challenges were considered as challenging by the majority of the postgraduate nursing students. The medians of all factors were 3.00 except for the factor of "Withdrawal of financial

grant and support" whose median was 2.00 and first quartile 1.00 indicating that at least one-fourth of them considered it not challenging. On the other hand, the costs factor had a first quartile of 3.00 indicating that at least three-fourth of them considered it challenging

Table (5): indicates that most factors were challenging with medians 3.00, and the most challenging factors were those of time pressure (mean=2.86) and workload (mean=2.77). Meanwhile, the least challenging factor was that of "Accommodation problems for expatriates;" its first quartile was 1.00 indicating that at least one-fourth of them considered it not challenging.

Table (6): demonstrates that at least one-half of the postgraduate nursing students considered the institution-related administrative challenges as somewhat challenging as indicated by their median values of 2.00. Meanwhile, the factor of choosing the appropriate specialty had a first quartile value of 1.00 indicating that at least one-fourth of them viewed it as not challenging. On the other hand, the study days was the most challenging with mean 2.38.

Table (7): indicates that at least one-half of the postgraduate nursing students viewed them as somewhat challenging as revealed by their median

values of 2.00. There was a small variation in their opinions regarding the various challenges with mean scores ranging between 2.10 for the "teaching methods" and 2.31 for the "feedback on student progress."

Table (8): illustrates a wide variation in postgraduate nursing students' opinions regarding the institution-related facilities challenges. Some factors had median values of 1.00 indicating that at least one-half of them viewed it as not challenging such as the space of the learning environment, the cafeteria, the garage, and the availability of security and occupational safety factors. On the other hand, other factors had medians 3.00 indicating that at least one-half of them considered them challenging such as the library and internet facilities, the microphone as educational aid, the lifts, and the bathrooms.

Table (9): indicates that most factors were somewhat challenging or challenging with medians 2.00 and 3.00. The most challenging factor was that of supervisor being busy with many commitments (mean=2.66). On the other hand, the least challenging factors were those of absent or changing supervisor and supervisor assigning student with non-research tasks, which had first quartiles 1, 00 indicating that at least one-fourth of them considered it not challenging.

Table (1): Demographic characteristics of postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age:		
<30	127	53.8
30-	59	25.0
35+	50	21.2
Range	23.0-45.0	
Mean ±SD	30.4±5.1	
Median	29.00	
Gender:		
Male	69	29.2
Female	167	70.8
Marital status:		
Married	172	72.9
Unmarried	64	27.1
specialty:		
Critical care nursing	58	24.6
Pediatrics nursing	54	22.9
Community health nursing	38	16.1
Medical- surgical nursing	33	14.0
Psychiatric health nursing	27	11.4
Obstetrics/ gynecology nursing	18	7.6
Administration nursing	8	3.4
Self-funded study.	15	6.4
No	221	93.6
Yes		

Table (2a): Student- related research challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

Students – related research challenges (Part I)	Mean	SD	Median	Quartiles 1st	3rd
1 Finding a new topic for research	2.40	0.63	2.00	2.00	3.00
2 Formulation of the research problem	2.22	0.67	2.00	2.00	3.00
3 Presenting the theoretical background of the study	2.22	0.72	2.00	2.00	3.00
4 Writing research design	2.25	0.67	2.00	2.00	3.00
5 finding study subjects	2.22	0.78	2.00	2.00	3.00
6 Data collection from study subjects	2.24	0.77	2.00	2.00	3.00
7 Description of the geographical area of the study	1.97	0.76	2.00	1.00	3.00
8 Description of data collection tools	2.13	0.70	2.00	2.00	3.00
9 Writing field work	2.29	0.61	2.00	2.00	3.00
10 Presentation of data analysis	2.42	0.68	3.00	2.00	3.00
11 Presentation and discussion of findings	2.41	0.66	3.00	2.00	3.00
12 Presentation of summary of the study and conclusions	2.30	0.71	2.00	2.00	3.00
13 Presentation of recommendations and suggested studies	2.20	0.75	2.00	2.00	3.00

Table (2b): Student- related research challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

	Students – related research challenges (Part II)	Score (max= 3)				
		Mean	SD	Median	Quartiles 1st	3rd
1	Citation from scientific references	2.28	0.62	2.00	2.00	3.00
2	Finding references and scientific sources	2.44	0.54	2.00	2.00	3.00
3	Writing and editing scientific references	2.33	0.65	2.00	2.00	3.00
4	publishing research paper/s in local and international journals	2.50	0.59	3.00	2.00	3.00
5	oral presentation preparation	2.23	0.68	2.00	2.00	3.00
6	verbal presentation skills during study and discussion	2.10	0.70	2.00	2.00	3.00
7	Contacting with professors to evaluate thesis tools/ thesis	2.33	0.63	2.00	2.00	3.00
8	obtaining approvals from official agencies to collect data	2.48	0.58	3.00	2.00	3.00
9	Statistical capabilities of students	2.50	0.62	3.00	2.00	3.00
10	The time period for ending scientific research	2.40	0.67	3.00	2.00	3.00

Table (3): Student-related psychological challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

	Student-related psychological challenges	Score (max= 3)				
		Mean	SD	Median	Quartiles 1st	3rd
1	Support received from supervisors	2.27	0.70	2.00	2.00	3.00
2	Feeling tired form studying and working together	2.71	0.50	3.00	2.00	3.00
3	Confusion during the discussion of thesis	2.63	0.55	3.00	2.00	3.00
4	Stress to end the study at specific time	2.73	0.50	3.00	3.00	3.00
5	Loss of motivation to complete the study	2.51	0.68	3.00	2.00	3.00
6	Isolation from social, religious and personal events	2.48	0.65	3.00	2.00	3.00
7	Lack of confidence at the beginning of the study program	2.34	0.71	2.00	2.00	3.00
8	Fearing of not getting a degree	2.57	0.56	3.00	2.00	3.00
9	Anxiety and tension when approaching the discussion of the thesis	2.62	0.54	3.00	2.00	3.00
10	Feeling frustrated by not applying research recommendations and benefiting from it	2.52	0.61	3.00	2.00	3.00

Table (4): Student- related financial challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

Student- related financial challenges	Score (max= 3)				
	Mean	SD	Median	Quartiles	
				1st	3rd
1 Cost of admission to graduate studies	2.62	0.60	3.00	2.00	3.00
2 thesis preparation costs (photocopying – printing --)	2.72	0.55	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 Travel cost and transfers	2.56	0.66	3.00	2.00	3.00
4 Statistics preparation costs	2.65	0.57	3.00	3.00	3.00
5 Cost of foreign studies and their translation	2.60	0.63	3.00	2.00	3.00
6 Withdrawal of financial grant and support	2.06	0.93	2.00	1.00	3.00

Table (5): Student- related socio-cultural challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

Student- related socio-cultural challenges	Score (max= 3)				
	Mean	SD	Median	Quartiles	
				1st	3rd
1 Time pressure for studying and working together	2.86	0.40	3.00	3.00	3.00
2 Workloads	2.77	0.48	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 Mood of study conflicts with employment	2.44	0.74	3.00	2.00	3.00
4 Computer and access digital libraries (Internet) difficulties	1.99	0.70	200	2.00	2.00
5 Family responsibilities	2.50	0.63	3.00	2.00	3.00
6 Language and communication problems	2.06	0.70	2.00	2.00	3.00
7 Difficulty signing up for a digital library and knowledge bank	2.42	0.66	3.00	2.00	3.00
8 Poor health status for students	2.08	0.73	2.00	2.00	3.00
9 Accommodation problems for expatriates	1.72	0.86	1.00	1.00	3.00

Table (6): Institution-related administrative challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

Institution-related administrative challenges	Score (max= 3)				
	Mean	SD	Median	Quartiles	
				1st	3rd
1 Orientation program for graduate studies	2.35	0.63	2.00	2.00	3.00
2 Registration process for graduate studies	2.13	0.68	2.00	2.00	3.00
3 Choose the appropriate specialty	1.85	0.76	2.00	1.00	2.00
4 Evaluation of graduate students	2.22	0.60	2.00	2.00	3.00
5 Elective courses	2.12	0.71	2.00	2.00	3.00
6 Study days	2.38	0.67	2.00	2.00	3.00
7 System of receiving student complains	2.36	0.68	2.00	2.00	3.00
8 Availability of guideline for graduate students	2.25	0.69	2.00	2.00	3.00

Table (7): Institution-related academic challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

	Institution-related academic challenges	Score (max= 3)				
					Quartiles	
		Mean	SD	Median	1st	3rd
1	Teaching methods	2.10	0.68	2.00	2.00	3.00
2	Courses in term of content and diversity	2.17	0.63	2.00	2.00	3.00
3	fit courses with market requirement	2.22	0.63	2.00	2.00	2.00
4	Balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of the courses	2.25	0.64	2.00	2.00	3.00
5	Feedback on student progress	2.31	0.66	2.00	2.00	3.00
6	Availability of questionnaire regarding staff/ administrators	2.26	0.62	2.00	2.00	3.00
7	Availability of questionnaire regarding courses	2.27	0.59	2.00	2.00	3.00

Table (8): Institution-related facilities challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

	Institution-related facilities challenges	Score (max= 3)				
					Quartiles	
		Mean	SD	Median	1st	3rd
1	Library and internet facilities	2.79	0.47	3.00	3.00	3.00
2	Educational aids used					
2-1	Data show	1.92	0.85	2.00	1.00	3.00
2-2	Board	1.78	0.75	2.00	1.00	2.00
2-3	Microphone	2.35	0.80	3.00	2.00	3.00
3	Learning environment					
3-1	Lighting	1.76	0.84	1.50	1.00	3.00
3-2	Ventilation	1.78	0.83	2.00	1.00	3.00
3-3	Space	1.75	0.84	1.00	1.00	3.00
3-4	Seats	1.86	0.84	2.00	1.00	3.00
4	Faculty facilities					
4-1	Lifts	2.69	0.61	3.00	3.00	3.00
4-2	Bathrooms	2.44	0.73	3.00	2.00	3.00
4-3	Cafeteria	1.57	0.74	1.00	1.00	2.00
4-4	Garage	1.39	0.69	1.00	1.00	2.00
5	Availability of security and occupational safety factors	1.46	0.65	1.00	1.00	2.00

Table (9): Supervisor-related challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the study sample (n=236).

	Supervisor-related challenges	Score (max= 3)				
		Mean	**SD**	**Median**	**Quartiles** 1st	3rd
1	The supervisor is busy with many commitments	2.66	0.59	3.00	2.00	3.00
2	Differences in views between supervisors in the thesis	11.4	0.69	3.00	2.00	3.00
3	The Supervisor's commitment to meet the student at the agreed time	14.8	0.74	3.00	2.00	2.00
4	Supervisor's commitment to agreed time to correct/ read drafts of the thesis	15.7	0.75	3.00	2.00	3.00
5	Supervisor efficiency	23.7	0.78	2.00	2.00	3.00
6	Communication methods between supervisor and student	14.4	0.71	2.00	2.00	3.00
7	Supervision style	16.5	0.73	2.00	2.00	3.00
8	Incompatibility with supervisor	19.1	0.75	2.00	2.00	3.00
9	Absent supervisor	26.3	0.83	2.00	1.00	3.00
10	Changing supervisors	25.4	0.85	2.00	1.00	3.00
11	Discrimination between students by supervisors	25.0	0.82	2.00	1.75	3.00
12	Personal disagreement between supervisors	19.9	0.76	2.00	2.00	3.00
13	guidance/ encouragement /Monitoring by supervisor	19.1	0.73	2.00	2.00	3.00
14	Methods for supervisor selection	11.4	0.68	2.00	2.00	3.00
15	Feedback from supervisors	13.6	0.70	2.00	2.00	3.00
16	The supervisor assigns the student with non-research tasks	38.1	0.83	2.00	1.00	3.00

Discussion

The aim of this study is investigating challenges faced by postgraduate nursing students and developing strategies for overcoming these challenges. Concerning their characteristics, mostly less than 30 years. The majority is married and in master's degree programs as the numbers of students in doctoral degree programs are always lower. Still the majority were female students as expected from old history of feminine nature of the nursing specialty, which has been changed over the past decade. A similar higher preponderance of female nurses participating in postgraduate training was reported in a study in Nigeria **(Ekpoh, 2016).**

Only around one- tenth of the postgraduate nursing students in the current study sample were full – time students. An even lower percentage was not self- funded. This could be attributed to the dearth of scholarship or fellowship programs that support postgraduate nursing studies. This would accentuate the weight of the challenges these students face during their postgraduate studies. In agreement with this finding, **Ismail et al., (2011)** in a study in Malaysia reported that the majority of postgraduate nursing students were self – sponsored.

According to the present study finding, all student-related challenges associated with research were viewed as challenging or somewhat challenging by the majority of postgraduate nursing students. The most challenging issues in

this area were those related to student' statistical capabilities. This might be attributed to the deficient preparation of these students for research both in under as well as postgraduate programs. In line with this foregoing present study finding, **Ezebilo, (2012)** in a study in Australia found the major concerns of postgraduate students were regarding the skills of designing data collection methods, data analysis, writing publishable research papers and oral presentation.

On the same line, **Qasem et al., 2015) in a study in** Yemen describing the level of statistical competency among post-graduate students, found it was below than average, and added that and low competency in statistics is directly going to affect the quality of research output in education.

Concerning the student-related psychological challenges among postgraduate nursing students in the current study, the results identified the stress to end the study at a specific time, as well as the feeling tiredness from study and working together as the most challenging factors. This is quite expected given that the great majority of these students are part- time students. Moreover, according to the university regulations, they have a deadline to finish with their degree; otherwise they would lose their time and money, with subsequent feeling of stress and distress.

According to the current study findings, the majority of the postgraduate nursing students viewed all student-related financial challenges as challenging. The costs factor was considered as the most challenging. On the other hand the factor of withdrawal of financial grant and support was mostly not challenging. This is quite expected given that only a very small minority of

them was having such financial support or scholarship.

As far as the student-related socio-cultural challenges are concerned, the postgraduate nursing students in the present study viewed that most of its factors were challenging. The time pressure and workload had the highest scores indicating they were most challenges factors. The results are quite plausible given that the great majority of these postgraduate students were part-time. Thus, the time they have to spend at work and in family commitments. This would have a negative impact on their family and social life. In line with this, **Mohammad, (2017**) in a study in Bangladesh reported that time constraint and work over load for the completion of thesis work was an overwhelming problem among study participants.

Considering the institution-related factors in the current study, administrative challenges were considered as somewhat challenging by on- half of the postgraduate nursing students. Among these challenges, the study days were the most challenging. This is certainly due to the part-time status of these students. Thus, they are required to attend more days then their workplace would allow them. Similar institutional challenges were reported by **Duze, (2010)** among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities.

The institution-related academic challenges were mostly considered as somewhat challenging by postgraduate nursing students in the present study. The least challenging were the teaching methods, whereas the most challenging the feedback on student progress. Thus, the students were most worried about their faculties' feedback on their progress. This is quite important especially because these students have deadlines to end- up

their degree. The lack of such feedback, particularly with their part-time status, may lead to a situation where the student should present his/her finished research work within a few weeks or months. Otherwise, the student's registration would be terminated. Thus, **Ary et al. (2018)** in a study in the United Kingdom recommended that educators should be trained in the provision of constructive feedback to their students.

As regarding postgraduate nursing students' opinions about the institution-related facilities challenges, the current study revealed that the library and internet facilities were the most challenging. The library and internet problems might be explained by the fact that the library was under renovation at the time of data collection for the study. Hence, the students' response would certainly be negatively influenced by this temporary situation. In agreement with these results, **Siddiq, (2012)** in a study in Nigeria highlight that the basic software needed for research were not available, and if available they were inaccessible.

Concerning supervisor – related challenges, the most challenging factor was that of supervisor being busy with many commitments. This is of major importance given that the supervisor role needs long time for face-to-face or internet meeting with student, in addition to time for reading and providing feedback. Therefore, a very high student**:** supervisor ratio would be at the expense of the time the supervisor allocates for supervisory duties. In this respect, a study in Iran demonstrated that postgraduate students' most important expectations of their supervisors were professional, which includes timely availability and proper communication (**Corbin, & Strauss, 2008).**

Based on the analysis of the postgraduate nursing students' opinions about the various challenges facing their postgraduate education and research, and in view of pertinent literature, the researcher developing strategies that would help them overcome these challenges. The strategies were presented to a panel of experts to gauge their face and content validity. The strategies were finalized after implementation of their comments and suggestions, which were mainly related to the repetition of some items, rephrasing, and re- arranging their sequence. The merits of similar strategies have been demonstrated in study Australia (**Nguyen et al., 2018).**

Conclusion

In conclusion, the majority of postgraduate nursing students viewed were really challenged, particularly regarding student-related challenges and to a lesser extent supervisor – related challenges. Accordingly, strategies to overcome such challenges were developed and validate by experts' opinions.

Recommendation

The study recommends discussion of the developed strategies with postgraduate students in the study setting for the purpose of improvement and for ensuring their acceptability. More efforts are needed to improve the research and statistical capabilities of postgraduate students. Seminars and workshops in thesis supervision, research methodology and thesis writing are recommended for both lecturers and students.

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Conflict of interest:

No

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