

The Development of TT-s model (Techniques and Tactics) towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies

Rosfazila Binti Abd Rahman¹, Nor 'Adha Abdul Hamid²,
Norfaezah Mohd Hamidin³, Djhoanna S. Mama⁴

^{1,2,3} Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor, Malaysia

⁴Davao Oriental State University, Philippines

rosfazila@kuis.edu.my; noradha@kuis.edu.my; norfaezah@kuis.edu.my;
djhoanna.mama@doscst.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Postgraduates learning experiences namely knowledge, values and contacts acquired, professional and personal values acquired and specific learning problems encountered has shown a multiple dimension. The task of evaluating the student learning experience in postgraduate education can point out to researchers and university educators' various mismatches that would not be immediately known otherwise. With this, universities can take proactive steps to celebrate learner diversity when addressing students' difficulties in their continuous effort to further enhance support and facilities for their postgraduate students. This study aims to identify the elements and proposed a model of Techniques and Tactics (TT-s) that need to be implemented by educators and learners in helping to create students who are able, to succeed with further establishing best practice and effective model. Therefore, two guidelines for Models of Techniques and Tactics (TT-s) relationships for effective learning is discussed. The study is quantitative in nature and employed narrative approach. The findings are synthesized and summarized by presenting a matrix discussion of specific guidelines to increase effectiveness in the best practice and process of students learning. This study aims to propose a model to address the successful postgraduates' studies. The model will robust postgraduates' students to succeed in their learning journey.

Keywords: postgraduates; models; techniques; tactics; TT-s model

INTRODUCTION

It's never been easy to be a postgraduate student – pursuing further education while others are moving into the workforce – but it's become so much harder in 2020 due to the major repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, postgraduate students face some huge challenges that threaten to make their lives extremely difficult. There are four intimidating challenges namely managing finances, building professional credentials, looking after mental health and working & socializing safely (A.W.Gieger, 2021). However, towards overcoming those intimidating challenges, a way towards pursuing a successful postgraduate study need to be realized.

Given the influx of new courses and programs, an increase in the number of local and international students, as well as an upsurge in the number of universities in Malaysia, higher education has become a significant sector. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the factors affecting postgraduate research students' performance. Previous studies found positive and significant relationships between research students' performance and institutional factor, student' personal factor, and supervisor-related factor. Additionally, the results indicated that students' personal factor had a crucial influence on research students' performance, followed by institutional factor, and supervisor-related factor (Noor Ul Hadi & Barudin Muhammad, 2019). Thus, the study provides empirical evidence in support of student development theory and social learning theory. In the larger picture, the study will try to suggest a comprehensive model in order to achieve a successful postgraduate study.

The hypothesized relationships of the current studies come from student development theory (Astin, 1984) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), since environmental influence (institutional factor) and the amount of physical and psychological energy that the research student devotes (student personal factor) to his/her research have a positive effect on his/her performance. Current studies also considered Bandura's (1977) social learning theory since learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction (supervisor factor) (Noor Ul Hadi & Barudin Muhammad, 2019).

The objective of this study is to review past studies related to Factors Influencing Postgraduate Students' Performance and the specific guidelines to increase effectiveness in the best practice and process of students earning. The two (2) strategies in addressing the issues encountered and the possible solutions to such problems are also simulated to get clear possible model towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies.

METHOD

The study used qualitative research design and employed narrative approach. Data collection included focus group discussions and key informant interviews. There were 20 informants representing the five (5) Postgraduates Studies Centre in Malaysia: KUIS, UKM, UIAM, UPM and UNISHAMS. The informants were composed of post graduates study centre's directors, supervisors and postgraduate students. The data were transcribed, translated, applied thematic and in-depth analysis.

Table 1
Informant profiles

Informants	directors	supervisors	Students
KUIS	0	2	1
UKM	1	2	3
UIAM	0	1	2
UPNM	1	1	2
UNISHAMS	1	1	2
Total	3	7	10

Source: Focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Technical elements towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies

Technical elements in this context are defined as having special and usually practical knowledge especially of a mechanical or scientific subject a technical consultant; marked by or characteristic of specialization technical language; of or relating to a particular subject. Based on their responses, it was observed that the understanding of the informants about technical elements towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies was about the effects of postgraduates' studies in their journey specifically to the current study states. The informants, primarily of postgraduates'

study centres, perceived Successful Postgraduate Studies as an extraneous influence by the academic and non-academic culture. The Technical elements towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies informants include perceptions of: (1) internal elements, (2) external elements, (3) bio-metric elements, and (4) institutional elements.

The internal elements were notable among the perceived informants. The informants believed that the element of which or situated on the inside is very important. Intra personal aspects, health, learning capabilities, self-motivation and skills brought positive influences on their mission to pursue success, thus, for them strong internal elements in pursuing postgraduates' studies are very important.

Successful postgraduates' studies felt by the informants as its external element as well. With the existence of something coming or derived from a source outside the subject affected, it has become a normal situation. These are considered crucial in their experiences. They fear that they might not be able to cater the external elements during their postgraduates' studies. The informants were persistent in good supervisor and supervision, examiners expectations and examination process. In their perspectives, bureaucracy in the admission somehow may lead to an errant act.

On the other hand, the bio-metric elements were manifested among informants. Informants always believed that their bio-metric elements have a causal connection in a successful postgraduates' studies. With the age factor, gender, academic achievements, brought by bio-metric elements, they perceived them as a good element for pursuing postgraduates' journey. The informant relates socio economic background and parents' social status through the story of successful postgraduates' studies. They also cited the research ability of the students themselves that have influences their journey. They seemingly believed that these bio-metric elements influences may affects their successful postgraduate studies.

Furthermore, it appears that the informants felt successful postgraduate studies relative to institutional elements. Most of the informants felt that postgraduate's journey was at the losing end because most of the students were

stranded by institutional elements. Correspondingly, most of the students were worried about the financial support. On the other hand, informants were frightened that institutional elements like learning facilities and support group might intemperance their postgraduates study focus. It is evident that informants strive hard to strengthen the focus of their postgraduate's journey.

Table 2

Technical elements towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies patterns.

Technical perception	Pattern1	Pattern 2	Pattern3
Internal	The element of which or situated on the inside is very important.	Intrapersonal aspects, health, learning capabilities, self-motivation and skills brought positive influences.	
External	The existence of something coming or derived from a source outside the subject affected.	Fear of not being able to cater the external elements.	Persistent in good supervisor and supervision, examiners expectations, examination process and bureaucracy in the admission.
Biometric	Biometric elements have a causal connection in a successful postgraduates' studies.	Age factor, gender, academic achievements, brought by biometric elements.	Socio economic background, parents' social status and research ability.
Institutional	Postgraduate studies relative to institutional elements.	Stranded by institutional elements.	Financial support, learning facilities and support group
Total	5	4	3

Source: Focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Tactical elements towards a successful postgraduate studies

The concept of tactical is relating to tactics; done in order to get a particular result and it seemed to be vague to the informant, however this was made clear when the researcher described the idea to them. Their tactical elements were clearly defined when they shared their needs towards successful postgraduates' studies. The informants expressed their tactical elements in terms of their academic and non-

academic culture or best practice. One of the tactical elements is that they want to get involved in academic opportunities and gain success from postgraduate studies. They foresee a centre and procedure be established for them to have an opportunity to attend and be active.

The informants from students hope that their centre and procedure be improved for it is one of the venues to strengthen the foundation of postgraduate's studies in their academic and non-academic journey and have a greater chance to thwart bad stimulus.

Table 3

The tactical elements towards a Successful Postgraduate Studies pattern.

Tactical expression	Pattern1	Pattern2	Pattern3
Academic culture/practice	Shared needs towards successful postgraduates' studies.	They want to get involved in academic opportunities and gain success from postgraduate studies.	
Non-academic culture/practice	Non-academic journey	Strengthen the foundation of postgraduate's studies.	have a greater chance to thwart bad stimuluses.
Total	2	2	1

Source: Focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

It was evident in the accounts that the informants described their experience more on the technical side of the Successful Postgraduate Studies. It was found out the Successful Postgraduate Studies was tremendously challenging among informants because of best practices that were not only technically but also tactically complex. Through this research, the informants were able to share their thoughts about a Successful Postgraduate Studies. However, while the informants would wish to see measures how the students can be protected from the negative stimuluses of Successful Postgraduate Studies, it has to be seen as a model as to how postgraduates' communities can protect the community from the real threats of being a Successful Postgraduate Studies. The study shows that the informants'

insight is proactive solution to the impending future impacts of Successful Postgraduate Studies. The latent answer, while this is concealed in angst, fright, fears, values, and faith, postgraduates' communities should be address to avoid future problems. Postgraduate's journey is inevitable, it needs mutual understanding and respect among the postgraduate's communities. Intervention should be made relative to the felt effects of a Successful Postgraduate Studies, we can now predict some possible circumstances. For instance, if the postgraduate's communities will not do battle with Successful Postgraduate Studies, then the fear of cultural crumbling and breakdown of the journey may occur. Moreover, in the absence of proactive social intervention and postgraduate's studies development direction may result to a weak social structure that may not be able to counter the future impacts of Successful Postgraduate Studies namely: drop out, demotivation and illegal acts.

The field of academics is an important learning platform in the national education system. Student achievement levels are assessed through academic achievement excellence. However, the level of excellence in achievement depends on the abilities of the individual. As these abilities vary according to individual, at the level of higher learning institutions, learning activities play a very important role in the effort to achieve individual goals especially in academic achievement excellence. The learning and teaching process will affect the acceptance level of students, but then again it depends on the level of acceptance of individual. This is because the activities and way of life of students greatly affect the academic achievement (Nor 'Adha Abd Hamid et. al. 2020).

For those studying at postgraduate level, the degree of success that they will have in utilizing their knowledge is, in part, bounded by the quality of the teaching they receive during their PhD studies. Delany (2009) expressed that in knowledge-based economies, governments see universities as engines for change and expansion of prosperity. The work of postgraduate students constitutes a vital component of a university's research effort and contributes significantly to the institution's research profile (Nor 'Adha Abd Hamid et. al., 2020).

The postgraduate's communities need proactive approaches to communicate well the postgraduate's studies development plan for students specifically among the communities and stakeholders. There is a need to design intervention programs for cultural, natural and economic aspects of successful postgraduates' studies. The intervention strategies should be participatory, inclusive and sustainable. This study is an avenue to start a proactive evaluation program clarification towards successful postgraduates' studies.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored the felt impact of successful postgraduates' studies among the 20 informants representing the five (5) Postgraduates Studies Centre in Malaysia. It has examined the technical and tactical aspects of the informants as research informants representing postgraduates' studies communities. The study found out that successful postgraduates' studies development is less than tolerable to the informants because best practices were not customarily sensitive and the feelings of exclusion in the development process. However, there are possibilities of harmonizing successful postgraduates' studies development direction when conducted in participatory approach and extensive postgraduates' education and social preparation of the affected communities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was fully supported by the International Islamic University College Selangor (KUIS) led by Dr. Rosfazila Binti Abd Rahman, Nor 'Adha Abdul Hamid, Norfaezah Mohd Hamidin and Djhoanna S. Mama. DOrSU, UKM, UIAM, UPM and UNISHAMS have been the centre of undertaking in carrying out this study.

REFERENCES

- Ali, S., Haider, Z., Munir, F., Khan, H., & Ahmed, A. (2013). Factors contributing to the students' academic performance: A case study of Islamia University Sub-Campus. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 1(8), 283-289. <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-1-8-3>.
- Al-Mutairi, A. (2011). Factors affecting business students' performance in Arab Open University: The case of Kuwait. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 6, 146-155. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v6n5p146>.
- Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25, 297-308.
- A.W. Geiger. (2021, March 3). *So close but so far: The challenges of being alone and being with others during COVID*. <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/charlottefive/c5-people/article249182865.html>.
- Baharudin, S. N. A., Murad, M., & Mat, N. H. H. (2013). Challenges of adult learners: A case study of full-time postgraduates' students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 90, 772-781.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. New York: General Learning Press.
- Burgess, R. G., Pole, C. J. & Hockey, J. (1994). Strategies for Managing and Supervising the Social Science PhD. In Hockey, J. (1996). *Strategies and Tactics in the Supervision of UK Social Science PhD Students*, Qualitative Studies in Education, 9(4), 481-500.
- Considine, G., & Zappala, G. (2002). Influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 38, 129-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/144078302128756543>.
- Crawford, I., & Wang, Z. (2016). The Impact of placements on the academic performance of UK and international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41, 712-733. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.943658>.

- Cullen, D., Pearson, M., Saha, L. J., & Spear, R. H. (1994). *Establishing effective PhD supervision*. Canberra: AGPS.
- Delany, D. (Unpublished). *A review of the literature on effective PhD supervision. Academic Best practice, University of Dublin*.
https://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/assets/doc/Effective_Supervision_Literature_Review.doc.
- De Zoysa, T. S. V. (2007). *Factors affecting the completion of post graduate degree using distance mode*. http://wikieducator.org/images/a/a0/PID_383.pdf.
- Golding, C., Sharmini, S., & Lazarovitch, A. (2014). What examiners do: What thesis students should know. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39, 563-576. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2013.859230>.
- Graetz, B. (1995). *Socio-economic status in education research and policy*. In John Ainley et al. *Socio-economic Status and School Education*. Canberra: DEET/ACER.
- Grant, B. M., & Graham, A. (1994). *"Guidelines for discussion": A tool for managing postgraduate supervision*. In O. Zuber-Skerritt & Y. Ryan (Eds.), *Quality in Postgraduate Education* (pp. 165-177). London: Kogan Page.
- Hadi, N.U., & Muhammad, B. (2019). Factors Influencing Postgraduate Students' Performance: A high order top down structural equation modelling approach. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*. Vol. 19 No. 2. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2019.2.004>.
- Haksever, A. M. & Manisali, E. (2000). Assessing supervision requirements of PhD students: The case of construction management and engineering in the UK. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 25(1), 19-32.
- Hansen, J. B. (2000). Student Performance and Student Growth as measure of success: A evaluator's perspective. *Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. New Orleans, Louisiana, April 25, 2000.
- Ismail, A., Abidin, N.Z., & Hassan, A. (2011). Improving the development of postgraduates' research and supervision. *International Education Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v4n1p78>.

- Kwesiga, C. J. (2002). *Women's access to higher education in Africa: Uganda's experience*. Kampala: Fountain publishers Ltd.
- Meerah, T. S. M. (2010). Readiness of preparing postgraduate students in pursuit of their doctoral programme. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 9, 184-188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.133>.
- Mushtaq, I., & Khan, S. N. (2012). Factors affecting students' academic performance. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 12, 16-22.
- Mutula, S. M. (2009). Challenges of postgraduate research: Global context, African perspectives. *Key note address delivered at the University of Zululand, 10th DLIS Annual Conference*, from 9-10 (September 2009), 1-13.
- Nor 'Adha Abdul Hamid, Rosfazila Abd Rahman & Norfaezah Mohd Hamidin. (2021). Nurturing positive atmosphere in supervisor-supervisee relationship throughout postgraduate studies. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 21-33, 2021. <http://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ijares>.
- Pearson, M., & Kayrooz, C. (2004). Enabling critical reflection on research supervisory practice. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 9(1), 99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144042000296107>,
- Sarjit Kaur. (2009). A qualitative study of postgraduate students' learning experiences in Malaysia. *International Education Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3.
- Savasci, H. S., & Tomul, E. (2013). The relationship between educational resources of school and academic achievement. *International Education Studies*, 6, 114-123. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n4p114>.
- Williams, J. (2016). A critical exploration of changing definitions of public good in relation to higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41, 619-630. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.942270>.
- Yatigammana, M.R.K.N., Md Johar, Md. G., & Gunawardhana, C. (2012). Postgraduate students' perceived e learning acceptance: Framework of extended technology acceptance model. *South East Asian Journal of Contemporary Business, Economics and Law*, Vol. 1, ISSN 2289-1560.

Zenghai Wu, Jin Yang, Chang Liu and Beijie Yin. 2019. Research on the quality assurance path of academic graduate education. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, Volume 332, Issue 4.