

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS: CHALLENGES OF BECOMING SCHOLAR

Dr. AthingNingshen^{*}

Mrs. Ningson Primrose^{**}

Mr. Cleve Ningshen^{***}

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ABSTRACT

Psychological factor consist of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or other cognitive or affective characteristics of an individual that influence his/her behavior. Doctoral studying is at the core of academic practices. There are several complementary factors that contribute to the doctoral experience, for instance, supervisory relationship, the scholar community and doctoral student's individuality. Successful studying in Ph.D. education is a complex matter. Although Ph.D. student are a highly select group, some never finish. It is a challenges journey. Aim of the Study is to find out the psychological factors of anxiety, lack of interest, stress, and exhaustion experienced by the doctoral students. Objectives of the study are to explore the psycho-individual factors, the psycho-supervisory relationship factors and the psycho-scholar community factors. The data was obtained from 32 doctoral students from eleven different Universities in India, during the 10 days National workshop on Research Methodology, at Yashwantrao Chavan Institute of Social Science Studies and Research, Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune. This study has thus concluded with analyzing the psychological factors of Individual, supervisory relationship and community causes.

^{*} Post-Doctoral Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi.

^{**} Assistant Professor (Anthro), South East Manipur College.

^{***} MSW

1. Introduction

PhD is an oriented research and a unique degree where the scholar creates a new knowledge. The main objective of PhD degree is to become a competent researcher who can conduct independent research in his or her chosen area. PhD scholar learns to properly formulate a problem and apply techniques to produce result that further the state of understanding about that problem. The ability to conduct research in an area requires deep knowledge in that area, knowledge about related areas, and the experience of working on research problems, i.e. problems whose outcomes are not known. To develop these critical abilities most PhD programs have three components in them – some course work to provide the breadth of knowledge, some methods to develop the depth of knowledge in the chosen area of study, and a thesis that provides the experience of working on research problems. But inconsistencies and problems with supervisors, individuals & community intention a PhD candidate fails to develop the following abilities, which form the psychological factors of anxiety, lack of interest, stress, and exhaustion experienced by the doctoral students.

The psychological factors of doctoral students study is analyzed with accordance to the objectives of the study which may be the reasons of tension in the supervisory relationship which often feel fear that, they may fail in their doctoral studies, delaying their doctoral studies may be the reasons of problems in research process and over workload may often feel exhausted/stress.

2. Results and Discussion

Table No. 1: Sex by their Age of the Doctoral Scholar.

Sex	Age				Total
	26-30 yrs	31-35 yrs	36-40 yrs	<41yrs	
Male	10(33.3)	4(13.3)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	17(56.7)
Female	4(13.3)	3(10.0)	6(20.0)	0(0.0)	13(43.3)
Total	14(46.7)	7(23.3)	7(23.3)	2(6.7)	30(100.0)

The above table No. 1 shows that 57 percent of the doctoral scholars were male, out of which 33 percent were at the age group of 26 to 30 years. Only few percent were above the age group of 31 years whereas 20 percent of female's doctoral scholars were at the age group of 36 to 40 years and few were below 30 years old.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, male's doctoral scholars were 20 percent more than the female's doctoral scholars and male's doctoral scholars were younger in age group than the female's doctoral scholars.

Table No. 2: Marital Status by their Size of Family Members of the Doctoral Scholar.

Family size	Marital status		Total
	Married	Unmarried	
3 – 4	8(26.7)	3(10.0)	11(36.7)
5 – 6	5(16.7)	11(36.7)	16(53.3)
7 – 8	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	3(10.0)
Total	14(46.7)	16(53.3)	30(100.0)

The above table reveals that, 53 percent of the doctoral scholars were unmarried and has their family size of (36.7%) 5 to 6 members, whereas 47 percent of married doctoral scholars has their family size of (26.7%) 3 to 4 members and few has above 5 members in a family.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, the percentage of married and unmarried doctoral scholars were relatively same but the family size seems to be more to those of unmarried respondents. The doctoral scholars revealed that, unmarried respondents have more independent research studies than the married doctoral scholars.

Table No. 3: University by their Department of the Doctoral Scholar.

University	Subject									Total
	Social work	Political	Economics	Sociology	Physical Education	Management	Media & Cultural	Anthro-pology	English	
Bharathi Dasan University	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
Bharati Vidyapeeth University	4(13.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	8(26.7)
Gulbanga University, Karnataka	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
Hyderabad University	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Karnataka University	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
Kuvempu University	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
R.T.M. Nagpur University	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)
TISS	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)
University of Delhi	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
University of Kerela	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)
Yashwantrao Chavan Open University.	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)
Total	15(50.0)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	4(13.3)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	2(6.7)	30(100.0)

Doctoral scholars were from the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences & Management of different Universities in India, i.e., Bharathi Dasan University, Bharati Vidyapeeth University,

Gulbarga University, Hyderabad University, Kuvempu University, R.T.M Nagpur University, Tata Institute of Social Science, University of Delhi, University of Kerela and Yashwantrao Chavan Open University, Nasik. Out of which 50 percent of doctoral scholars were from social work department and remaining few percent were from the department of sociology, economics, management, anthropology, english, political science, physical education and media & cultural of various universities in India.

Table No. 4: PhD programmed of the Doctoral Scholar.

PhD programmed	Frequency	Percent
Full time	15	50.0
Part time	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0

It is noted from the above table that, 50 percent each of the doctoral scholars were having full time and part time PhD programmed, wherein full timer doctoral scholars seems to have conducive progress in their research studies.

Table No. 5: State or Country of the Doctoral scholar.

State/Country	Frequency	Percent
Andhra Pradesh	3	10.0
Delhi	3	10.0
Gujarat	1	3.3
Iran	1	3.3
Jammu & Kashmir	1	3.3
Karnataka	7	23.3
Kerala	2	6.7
Maharashtra	6	20.0
Manipur	2	6.7
Tamil Nadu	1	3.3
Thailand	1	3.3
UP	1	3.3
West Bengal	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, there are only two doctoral scholars from the outside India, one is from Thailand country and another is from Iran country and the rest of the doctoral scholars were from the different states of India, i.e., 23 percent from Karnataka state, 20 percent from Maharashtra state, 10 percent each from Andhra Pradesh & Delhi state, and the remaining few

percentage were from Kerala, Manipur, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal.

Table No. 6: Year of Registration by their Working Conditions of the Doctoral Scholar.

Working condition of thesis	Year of Registration of doctoral studies								Total
	2004	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Awarded	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.3)
Review of Literature	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (33.3)
Course work	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	2 (6.7)	5 (16.7)	9 (30.0)
Data collection	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)
Preparing questionnaire	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (16.7)	1 (3.3)	6 (20.0)
Submitted thesis	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)
Total	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	7 (23.3)	6 (20.0)	30 (100.0)

It is observed from the above table that, 33 percent of the doctoral scholars were processing their research work on Review of Literature since from 2010.

It is also found that, 30 percent of the doctoral scholars were processing their research work on Course work since 2011, and few percent of the doctoral scholars were processing their research work on questionnaire & data collection since last 2008.

Therefore it can be concluded that, doctoral research progress were dawdling since they have across 3 to 4 years.

Table No. 7: Income Status in a Year of the Doctoral Scholar.

Income Status of PhD Scholar	Frequency	Percent
Sufficient	15	50.0
Insufficient	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 50 percent each of the doctoral scholars has got sufficient and insufficient incomes for their doctoral research studies, wherein insufficient income respondents were those who had regular research work.

Table No. 8: Some Situation that Delayed their Doctoral Studies.

Reasons of Delaying the Doctoral Studies	Delayed in doctoral studies		Total
	Yes	No	
Domestic work	5(16.7)	0(0.0)	5(16.7)
Illness	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Job	6(20.0)	0(0.0)	6(20.0)
Personal	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)
Visa	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Workload	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
N.A	0(0.0)	11(36.7)	11(36.7)
Total	19(63.3)	11(36.7)	30(100.0)

The above table depicts a clear sign of the situations that delayed their doctoral research is that, most of the doctoral scholars got delayed in their research work progress because of their jobs, domestic work and illness.

Table No. 9: The key events or turning points affecting PhD process.

Effect on PhD process	Frequency	Percent
Domestic Care	2	6.7
Family problem	2	6.7
Gender restriction	1	3.3
Job pressure	4	13.3
Language problem	3	10.0
Less knowledge of Research studies	5	16.7
Less knowledge about Review of Literature	3	10.0
Less knowledge of Research Methodology	3	10.0
Social pressure	3	10.0
Thinking likely	2	6.7
N.A	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

It observed through the above table that, 17 percent of the doctoral scholars have a key event or turning points of less knowledge of research studies that had significant effect on their PhD research process and below 13 percent each were having job pressure, language problem, less knowledge of review of literature & research methodology, thinking likely, domestic care, family problem and gender restriction that had effect on their PhD process.

Table No. 10: Main Reasons of Problems, Questions or Challenges of PhD Process.

Main reasons of problems in PhD process	Problems during PhD process									Total
	Accommodation	Collecting data	Delayed in Research process	Irregularity	No time for studying	Research Writing	Tension	Relationship with the Guide	N.A	
Apathy	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)
Job	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)
Improper guide	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	5(16.7)	0(0.0)	9(30.0)
Lazy	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Less preparation	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)	2(6.7)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	7(23.3)
Less sources of materials	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Misunderstanding	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Social discrimination	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)
Weak in English construction	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
N.A	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)
Total	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	8(26.7)	4(13.3)	2(6.7)	2(6.7)	4(13.3)	6(20.0)	1(3.3)	30(100.0)

It is found that, the Main reasons of problems, questions or challenges typically found during PhD process were (27%) the research process delayed because of less preparation, weak in English construction, improper guide, laziness and less sources of material, while 20 percent got relationship problem with their guide because of the improper guide and remaining few percentage were barely marked.

Table No. 11: Doctoral Training required for PhD Research.

Training required	Frequency	Percent
Field visit training	1	3.3
Quantitative & Qualitative Research	2	6.7
Research approaches	8	26.7
Research design	3	10.0
Research Methodology	4	13.3
Research Statistic	12	40.0
Total	30	100.0

The above table No. 11 reveals that, 40 percent of the doctoral scholars were willing to have Research statistics training, while 27 percent of the doctoral scholars were willing to have

research approaches training and few were willing to have training on research methodology, research design, quantitative & qualitative research and field work training.

Table No. 12: Feeling Exhausted of Doctoral Studies.

Exhausted of doctoral studies	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	7	23.3
Fully agreed	23	76.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, large percentages of the doctoral scholars were feeling exhausted on their research studies.

Table No. 13: Workload often too high.

Workload often too high	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	8	26.7
Fully agreed	22	73.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, large percentages of the doctoral scholars often find their workload to be too high.

Table No. 14: Doctoral Studies are too Stressful.

Stressful of Doctoral studies	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	16	53.3
Fully agreed	14	46.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 47 percent of the doctoral scholars find their doctoral studies to be too stressful for them.

Table No. 15: Worrying about the Thesis.

Worried about the Thesis	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	13	43.3
Fully agreed	17	56.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 57 percent of the doctoral scholars were worrying about their thesis to be writing even in their free time.

Table No. 16: Difficulty in Doctoral Studies.

Difficulty in doctoral studies	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	20	66.7
Fully agreed	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 33 percent of the doctoral scholars find more difficult in their research studies.

Table No. 17: Fear of Failing in Doctoral Studies.

Fear of Failing PhD	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	23	76.7
Fully agreed	7	23.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, average percentages of the doctoral scholars fear that, they would fail in their research studies.

Table No. 18: Stressed of PhD Workload Dead-lines.

Deadline stressed of PhD	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	17	56.7
Fully agreed	13	43.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 43 percent of the doctoral scholars have often got stressed out for their workload dead-lines.

Table No. 19: Forcing to Work for the Thesis.

Forcing to work thesis	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	10	33.3
Fully agreed	20	66.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, large percentages of the doctoral scholars were often force themselves to work on their thesis.

Table No. 20: Whether Treated Respectfully.

Treated respectfully	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	1	3.3
Fully agreed	29	96.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, overwhelming doctoral scholars were treated respectfully by their supervisor and their Institutional staffs.

Table No. 21: Worrying for PhD Disqualification.

Worrying for PhD disqualification	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	17	56.7
Fully agreed	13	43.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 43 percent of the doctoral scholars were worried that, they might have got disqualify or rejection of their doctoral degree.

Table No. 22: Difficulty in English Writing and Constructing Sentence.

Difficult in English writing	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	19	63.3
Fully agreed	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 37 percent of the doctoral scholars find difficulty in English writing and constructing sentence.

Table No. 23: Treated Worse on Gender/Quality.

Worse Treated	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	27	90.0
Fully agreed	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, very few percentages of the doctoral scholars were treated worse because of their research quality.

Table No. 24: Tension in Supervisory Relationship.

Tension in supervisory relationship	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	13	43.3
Fully agreed	17	56.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 57 percent of the doctoral scholars were often got tension on their supervisory relationship.

Table No. 25: Problem in Research Processes.

Research process problem	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	16	53.3
Fully agreed	14	46.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 47 percent of the doctoral scholars were facing problems in their research processes.

Table No. 26: Difficulty in Obtaining Information of the PhD Research Data.

Kind of difficulties	Difficult in obtaining information		Total
	Yes	No	
Data collection in new area	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)
Less sources of Primary & Secondary data	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)

Unavailability of Secondary data	4(13.3)	0(0.0)	4(13.3)
N.A	0(0.0)	21(70.0)	21(70.0)
Total	9(30.0)	21(70.0)	30(100.0)

The above cross table reveals that, 30 percent of the doctoral scholars find difficult in obtaining information of research data because of unavailability of secondary data, data collection in new research area and less sources of primary and secondary data.

Table No. 27: Worrying on People Responses.

Worrying on People responses	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	14	46.7
Fully agreed	16	53.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 53 percent of the doctoral scholars were worried about their relationship with the research community where they may not be given good responses.

Table No. 28: No Support from Friends or Community.

No support from friends/community	Frequency	Percent
Do not Agreed	20	66.7
Fully agreed	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 33 percent of the doctoral scholars has no support or receives any research suggestion from their friends or community.

Table No. 29: Problems apart from Academic Life.

Problems apart from academic life	Frequency	Percent
Community problem	2	6.7
Earning issue	2	6.7
Family problem	1	3.3
Financial problem	5	16.7

Individual problem	2	6.7
Sometime	1	3.3
N.A	17	56.7
Total	30	100.0

It is found that, 43 percent of the doctoral scholars have problems of financial, Individual, community, earnings & family apart of their academic life.

3. Conclusions

A psychological factor of doctoral students has three causative factors which affecting their doctoral studies, they are psycho-individual factors, psycho-supervisory relationship factors and psycho-community factors:

Psycho-personal factors: Doctoral research progress work seems to be so dawdling since they have across 3 to 4 years ago and most on the doctoral scholars got delayed in their research work progress because of their jobs, domestic work and illness, where 20 percent got relationship problem with their guides and few percent got problems of irregularity, tension, collecting data, no time for studying and research writing.

The doctoral scholars has a key event or turning points of less knowledge of research studies that had significant effect on their PhD research process were due to their job pressure, language problem, less knowledge of review of literature & research methodology, thinking likely, domestic care, family problem and gender restriction.

50 percent of the doctoral scholars have got insufficient incomes for their doctoral research studies.

The Main reasons of problems, questions or challenges typically found during PhD process were delayed in research process, irregularity, research writing, No time for studying, collecting data, accommodation, tension & relationship with the guide. It is because of their less preparation, weak in English construction, improper guide, laziness, less sources of material and job.

40 percent of the doctoral scholars were willing to have Research statistic training, while 27 percent of the doctoral scholars were willing to have research approaches training and few were willing to have training on research methodology, research design, quantitative & qualitative research and field work training.

Psycho-supervisory relationship factors: Large percentages of the doctoral scholars were feeling exhausted, find their workload to be too high, have often force themselves to work on their thesis

Considerable percentages of the doctoral scholars were worrying about their thesis, have often got tension on their supervisory relationship & stressed out for their workload dead-lines, find their doctoral studies to be too stressful, facing problems in their research processes, worried that, they might have got disqualify or rejection on their doctoral degree.

Average percentages of the doctoral scholars find difficulty in English writing, constructing sentence& research studies and fear that, they would fail in their research studies.

Very few percentages of the doctoral scholars were treated worse by their supervisors because of their research quality.

Psycho-scholar community factors: 53 percent of the doctoral scholars were worried about their relationship with the research community where they may not be given good responses. No support or receives any research suggestion from their friends/community and have financial problems to visits the concern community.

30 percent of the doctoral scholars find difficult in obtaining information of research data because of unavailability of secondary data, data collection in new research area and less sources of primary and secondary data.

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