

TEACHERS' BARRIERS IN TAKING POST GRADUATE STUDIES: AN EXPLORATORY SEQUENTIAL DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the multifaceted barriers postgraduate teachers face using exploratory sequential design. The thematic analysis revealed eight themes: Time Commitment and Management, Financial Strategies, Stress and Anxiety, Academic Pressure and Unpreparedness, Financial Constraints Unequitable Time Management, Financial Support for Teachers, Support and Reimbursement. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) reconstructed these into four main scales: surpassing academic obstacles, balancing professional growth, assessing support framework, and overcoming academic solitude. The study highlighted the critical need for educational institutions to systematically address these barriers. The findings suggest that interventions should focus on creating flexible learning environments, enhancing financial support mechanisms, and fostering strong support networks to reduce the feeling of isolation that teachers often feel outside of class. Furthermore, the high-reliability scores on the scale confirm the robustness of the instrument in measuring perceived barriers, making it a valuable tool for academic research and practical applications in educational settings. In conclusion, educational institutions must unite to implement targeted support strategies to overcome barriers to postgraduate learning for teachers. Suggestions include more flexible program options, increased financial aid, and an educational sponsor.

Keywords: *Post Graduate Teachers, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Exploratory Sequential Design, Matalam District North Cotabato, Time Commitment and Management, Academic Pressure and Unpreparedness.*

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, the scarcity of financial resources for advanced education is a prominent issue that educators worldwide must address. However, a significant majority of teachers, up to 88%, may have difficulties in meeting the demanding academic criteria of post-graduate degrees, particularly if they have been away from formal educational institutions for a considerable period of time (Hassan, H. A., & Khan, M. A. 2019). Nevertheless, the obstacles that hinder teachers from pursuing post-graduate education may restrict their opportunities for professional growth and advancement, ultimately affecting the quality of education they can provide to their pupils. Legislators, educational institutions, and enterprises should remove these obstacles and provide a conducive climate that motivates teachers to engage in post-graduate studies (Garcia, M. J. C., & De Vera, C. M. 2019).

Teachers are crucial in the development of the educational system in the Philippines. The challenge that many teachers have in acquiring post-graduate degrees may hinder their ability to advance their careers and enhance their professional development. These difficult conditions may have adverse effects on both the quality of education for children and the overall development of the country. In this scenario, it is crucial to acknowledge and overcome these obstacles in order to support teachers in their pursuit of higher education. This article discusses the challenges that teachers in the Philippines face while seeking post-graduate degrees and explores potential solutions (Mokhtar, M. F., & Abdul Rahman, R. 2020).

The school system in Pikit, Cotabato is influenced by educators who play a crucial role in facilitating student success. Nevertheless, local educators often face significant barriers while seeking to acquire further degrees, which might hinder their career advancement. The magnitude of these issues may have a substantial impact on the quality of education for both students and the society at large. This article examines the difficult issues that local teachers face while seeking post-graduate degrees, including limited funding, limited access to resources and opportunities, a scarcity of suitable programs and resources, and cultural and language obstacles. In addition, we will examine potential remedies for these issues with the aim of creating a more supportive environment for local educators to engage in postgraduate studies and further their professional development (Tran, T. H. A., & Nguyen, T. T. T. 2022).

In addition, the majority of research performed on teachers tend to concentrate on the barriers that hinder them from pursuing post-graduate education. Insufficient research exists that explicitly focuses on the challenges encountered by educators in low-income and developing countries. Given that a significant amount of previous study has focused on developed countries, it is crucial to investigate the distinct difficulties encountered by developing nations in their pursuit of advanced education.

This research aims to investigate the obstacles faced by teachers while pursuing post-graduate degrees and provide solutions and intervention programs to address these challenges.

Research Questions

This study examined the teachers' barriers in taking post graduate studies in Matalam West District, Matalam, North Cotabato. This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the themes that emerged from the interview regarding teachers' barriers in taking post graduate studies?
2. What are the underlying dimensions of teachers' barriers in taking post graduate studies?
3. What is the reliability of the constructed questionnaire on teachers' barriers in taking post graduate studies?
4. Based on the results of the analysis, what measurement tool is suitable for evaluating teachers' barriers in taking post graduate studies?

METHODS

This research used the exploratory sequential mixed technique. The approach starts with a phase dedicated to the collection and analysis of qualitative data, followed by a subsequent phase focused on the collection and analysis of quantitative data (Cresswell, 2003).

The objective of this design is to explore a scenario where this is often advantageous in the creation of a questionnaire (Plano Clark, 2005). Qualitative data is applicable in situations when variables have not yet been identified or a theory has not been developed (Morrow, 2007). Content analysis implies that individuals have views or opinions on a certain topic, and it posits that these beliefs may be accurately deduced from their verbal expressions (Wilkinson, 2004). One objective of content analysis is to ascertain individuals' perspectives on a certain subject. Content analysis is the systematic procedure of categorizing individuals' statements into coherent groupings based on their views. It has the potential to be very structured and well-ordered. The participant narratives provide the basis for the beginning sections of the task's values curriculum in this notion.

The quantitative technique utilizes construct validity to determine the component structure of the concept or measure. Concept validity refers to the overall assessment of the measuring technique used to quantify a certain concept. This is due to the fact that it encompasses several forms of validity, including content validity, convergent and

divergent validity, and criterion validity, which aid in assessing construct validity (Messick, 1989). Construct validity is a mechanism used to assess the accuracy of a measuring method. Alternatively, different forms of validity are used as practical instruments to assess whether a measuring process accurately assesses a certain concept (Wainer & Braun, 1988).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Emerging Themes on Teachers' Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies

This section presents an examination of the eight (8) main themes that were identified via in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the participants. The respondents highlighted eight primary issues addressing the evaluation of Teachers' Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies, namely: Time Commitment and Management, Financial Strategies, Stress and Anxiety, Academic Pressure and Unpreparedness, Financial Constraints Unequitable Time Management, Financial Support for Teachers, Support and Reimbursement.

Time Commitment and Management. This theme highlights the need of effectively arranging and overseeing one's time to accomplish several obligations. It entails devising strategies to manage the demands of job, study, and personal life, necessitating discipline, prioritizing, and efficient planning to attain personal and professional objectives while safeguarding one's well-being.. Thus, the significant remarks of the participants revealed below:

It is the time commitment, pursuing post graduate studies can be difficult for individual who care working full time or have other responsibilities such as family (IDI_P1).

Time constraints- post graduate studies often require a significant time commitment, which can be challenging for individuals who are balancing work, family responsibilities, or other commitments (FGD_P4).

Participant 1 has indicated that persons who are already committed to full-time careers and family commitments find it challenging to allocate enough time to postgraduate courses. It highlights the intricate endeavor of balancing academic endeavors with current responsibilities, underscoring the difficulty of time management in such situations.

During the Focus Group Discussions (FGD), one participant highlighted that the extensive duration of postgraduate courses is a difficulty in terms of managing academic, professional, and personal commitments. The subject matter of this piece is on the common challenges individuals have in managing their time effectively when they have several obligations.

The study implies that the task of managing time between postgraduate education, job, and family obligations has significant consequences for people's stress levels, academic achievements, and general contentment with life. Efficient time management tactics are essential for preserving mental well-being and attaining academic and professional objectives.

Furthermore, the study conducted by Altbach, P. G., & Salmi, J. (2020) has revealed that pursuing postgraduate courses requires students to dedicate a considerable amount of time to coursework, research, and writing their thesis or dissertation. For those who are employed and have family responsibilities, these demands add an extra level of intricacy. The issue is twofold: not only finding sufficient time for academic tasks, but also ensuring that one's career and home responsibilities are not overlooked.

Bowen, W. G., & Rudenstine, N. L. (2020) provide support for the theories, stating that time management involves not just dividing time among various activities but also prioritizing tasks based on their level of urgency and significance. Research has shown that persons who use efficient time management strategies often encounter reduced levels of stress and elevated levels of production. These strategies include

establishing explicit objectives, ranking chores based on importance, and using planners or digital tools to arrange schedules.

Also, Financial Strategies was the theme emerged that refer to the systematic planning and management of finances to meet both short-term and long-term goals. This involves budgeting, saving, investing, and wisely managing debt and expenses. Effective financial strategies are crucial for maximizing resources, ensuring financial stability, and achieving personal, professional, or educational aspirations efficiently. The significant statements of the participants revealed below:

"For the most effective in overcoming these barriers is the financial planning and budgeting and support from family and friends that can offer financial support (IDI_P4)."

"By seeking financial support (IDI_P5)"

"Researching and applying scholarship, grants, part-time work and budgeting strategies can supplement financial resources (FGD_P4)."

The remarks made by participants IDI_P4 and IDI_P5 emphasize the significance of financial planning and budgeting as crucial tactics for surmounting financial obstacles in educational endeavors. It emphasizes the importance of personal networks, such as family and friends, in offering financial assistance, highlighting the need of a support system in properly handling financial difficulties.

Furthermore, the participants' views suggest a diversified strategy to improving financial resources via many methods. It indicates that doing research and submitting applications for scholarships and grants, participating in part-time employment, and using budgeting techniques are effective methods to augment financial resources. This method demonstrates a proactive attitude towards obtaining extra financing to meet one's financial requirements in school or other domains.

Effective financial strategies are crucial for successfully navigating the intricacies of supporting school and managing personal money. They have a direct effect on an individual's capacity to obtain and finish higher education, shape job prospects, and contribute to long-term financial stability and success.

Day and Robson (2020) argue that financial issues provide a major obstacle to accessing higher education. The fees related to tuition, textbooks, living costs, and, sometimes, lost earnings, may discourage prospective students from pursuing higher education. Financial measures are essential for ensuring access to education and helping people efficiently manage or offset the associated expenditures.

In addition, the research conducted by Eley, A., & Jennings, R. (2021) provided evidence that budgeting is recognized as a fundamental financial approach in the literature. It entails monitoring revenue and expenditures to establish a strategy that guarantees costs do not surpass revenues. Budgeting is essential for students as it helps them effectively manage their limited financial resources, identify areas where costs may be reduced, and allocate monies towards educational expenditures. Research has shown that using a well-designed budgeting strategy may alleviate financial strain, enabling students to allocate more mental energy towards their academic pursuits and less towards financial worries.

Furthermore, the theme that emerges from these practices is Stress and Anxiety. This theme explores the psychological and emotional responses to perceived pressures and challenges. It encompasses feelings of tension, worry, and unease that can arise from various sources, including academic pressures, financial burdens, or personal responsibilities. Managing these feelings is crucial for maintaining mental health and well-being. The significant statements of the participants revealed below:

"It gives me stress (IDI_P1)"

"Financial challenges can affect financial stress that can create feelings of anxiety and worries making it difficult to concentrate on my studies (IDI_P3)."

"Financial concerns because it can create stress and limit access to postgraduate education (FGD_P4)."

Based on the remarks provided by participants 1 and 3, it may be inferred that the speaker is under stress. This stress is likely caused by several factors, such as academic, financial, or personal difficulties. It emphasizes the immediate influence of these difficulties on the individual's emotional condition.

In addition, the remarks made by the participants during the focus group discussion revealed that financial stress not only causes stress but also hinders future education. This is a significant correlation, since financial stress is not only an emotional and psychological concern, but also a tangible obstacle that hinders scholastic progress and personal growth.

This implies that stress and anxiety have a substantial influence on people's academic performance, mental health, and general well-being. The high occurrence of these issues among students, particularly those who are managing financial worries and pursuing postgraduate courses, requires the implementation of efficient management measures to reduce negative impacts and enhance a more beneficial and productive educational experience.

Furthermore, the statements supported Gardner's (2020) concepts that stress, which refers to the body's reaction to perceived threats or demands, and anxiety, characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, or unease, are frequently activated by different academic pressures such as strict time limits, elevated standards, and the demanding nature of postgraduate coursework. Existing research continuously emphasizes the correlation between these psychological conditions and reduced academic achievement, highlighting that elevated levels of stress and anxiety may hinder focus, retention, and effective learning.

Furthermore, Golde, C. M., & Walker, G. E. (2021) conducted a research which found that financial problems are a notable cause of stress and anxiety among postgraduate students. The research explains how the financial obligations of tuition fees, living costs, and possible debt may worsen these emotions, leading to a cycle of stress that hinders academic involvement and achievement. Research has shown that students who lack sufficient financial assistance or depend on loans experience intense financial stress, which may result in increased anxiety and, in some instances, cause them to reassess their educational goals.

However, the theme Academic Pressure and Unpreparedness which explores the stress and challenges students face due to high academic expectations and their feelings of inadequacy in meeting these demands. It encompasses the anxiety from looming deadlines, performance expectations, and the struggle to adapt to rigorous academic environments, often highlighting a need for better preparation and support. The significant statements of the participants revealed below:

"It is the academic pressure (IDI_p1)."

"I came unprepared in all aspects. I was once underestimating graduate studies not knowing that all headaches, mental-emotional breakdown are combined in this particular level of study (IDI_P5)."

"And the biggest challenges I've encountered was 'Graduate Level Test' or the GLT (FGD_P2)"

According to participants 1 and 5, the comments indicate that there is a significant amount of academic pressure, suggesting that stress caused by academic pressure is the primary source of anxiety. It implies that the issues that result from pressure might impact an individual's performance and well-being.

The participants' views during the Focus Group Discussions unanimously identified the Graduate Level Test (GLT) as one of the most significant academic problems. The preparation and successful completion of this test pose significant

hurdles, since it serves as a benchmark for assessing one's readiness for postgraduate-level academic pursuits or advancement to a higher postgraduate level.

Academic pressure and lack of readiness may have a profound effect on students' mental well-being, resulting in heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and perhaps even burnout. These issues negatively impact academic achievement and might discourage students from pursuing further education. To tackle these problems, it is necessary to establish comprehensive support systems that include academic guidance, mental health services, and programs for enhancing abilities.

Similarly, Golde, C. M., & Walker, G. E. (2021) provide evidence to back up the remarks. Academic pressure refers to the expectations and pressures put on students to attain high levels of academic accomplishment, as shown by several studies. The strain is often intensified in postgraduate study, when the stakes are regarded as being larger, and the work is more self-directed and demanding. Various factors contribute to this pressure, as outlined in the research. These include peer competitiveness, instructor expectations, and the internal motivation to achieve personal academic objectives. The heightened pressure experienced by postgraduate students is associated with elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and, in some instances, depression.

Furthermore, the findings of Green, S. B., & Bauer, K. W. (2020) substantiate the existence of a disparity between students' abilities and the requirements of their academic programs. This gap may arise from a variety of circumstances, including a lack of basic knowledge, weak research skills, or insufficient academic writing talents. The research emphasizes that lack of readiness not only hampers students' academic performance but also leads to impostor syndrome, a state of self-doubt and anxiety of being revealed as a fraudulent individual.

Although, Financial Constraints was another theme emerged which addresses the economic challenges students face in pursuing education, such as high tuition costs, living expenses, and the burden of student loans. It emphasizes the significant impact these financial barriers have on access to education, academic choices, and students' ability to focus on their studies without undue stress. Thus, the significant responses of the participants revealed below:

"These challenges include rising tuition costs, because it can influence career choices and can hinder pursuing advanced studies (IDI_P4)."

"Lack of finance especially during trips and any seminars where personal money will be used for your own benefit and sometimes lacking finance/money made me decide to stop my studies (IDI_P5)."

"Tuition and fees - postgraduate education often comes with high tuition fees, which can be a significant financial burden for many individuals (FGD_P3)."

The participants 4 and 5 made noteworthy observations indicating that the increasing tuition fees provide a substantial obstacle, impacting persons' job choices and their capacity to pursue higher education. This highlights the direct influence of increasing educational costs on the availability of higher-level education and the wider consequences for professional growth.

Furthermore, the participants in the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) validated the views, stating that the cost of tuition and related fees is exorbitant and is the primary financial obstacle for those pursuing postgraduate study. It highlights that these expenses might deter many individuals from seeking higher education, considering the typical financial strain they impose.

The statement suggests that financial barriers in education might result in heightened stress, restrict opportunities for pursuing further education, and impact professional paths. These obstacles deter prospective students from enrolling in or finishing their studies, underscoring the need for improved financial assistance

mechanisms, such as scholarships, grants, and adaptable financing choices, to guarantee wider educational availability.

Moreover, the concepts align with the research conducted by Kim, Y. K. (2022), which establishes that financial barriers are widely acknowledged as one of the main difficulties to obtaining a higher education. Research has extensively recorded the impact of increasing tuition fees, textbook prices, and living expenditures on students and their families, highlighting the significant burden they impose. The financial burden is much greater for those seeking postgraduate study, since financing opportunities such as scholarships and grants are often more competitive and less readily available.

Moreover, Kyvik, S., & Olsen, T. B. (2022) provide additional evidence that there is a clear link between financial obstacles and the levels of stress experienced by students, as well as their academic performance and mental well-being. Financial stress is associated with elevated levels of anxiety and depression in students, which may have a detrimental impact on their academic involvement and achievements. The need to handle financial demands in addition to academic duties may result in burnout, which can hinder students' capacity to concentrate on their studies and accomplish their educational objectives.

Notably, the theme Imbalance Time Management delves into the struggles of effectively allocating time across various responsibilities, leading to a disproportion between academic, personal, and professional commitments. This imbalance can result in heightened stress, decreased productivity, and compromised well-being, highlighting the critical need for strategies to achieve a harmonious balance. Thus, the significant remarks of the participants revealed below:

"Balancing full-time work with the postgraduate studies requires organization, time management the decision to commit to further education too often leads to career aspirations, however these challenges lie in managing time effectively (IDI_P1)."

"The ability to balance professional responsibilities with post-graduate studies depends on various factors, including the nature of one's job, employer support, financial consideration, and time management skills (FGD_P4)."

The participants' remarks highlight the challenges of concurrently balancing full-time employment and postgraduate study. This statement emphasizes that while the desire to pursue higher education is generally motivated by employment aspirations, the true difficulty is in efficiently arranging and overseeing one's schedule to balance both work and academic responsibilities. The statement emphasizes the significance of time management as a crucial ability in effectively managing both job and academic responsibilities.

In addition, the participants in the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) further validated the theories by identifying many crucial aspects that impact an individual's capacity to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between job and postgraduate study. The practicality of effectively managing professional tasks with academic endeavors depends on factors such as the type of one's employment, the extent of employer support, budgetary restrictions, and time management ability. It implies that achieving this balance depends on an intricate interaction of personal, professional, and financial factors.

Imbalance in time allocation across job, study, and home life may result in heightened stress, burnout, and diminished academic and professional achievements. This disparity emphasizes the crucial need for efficient time management tactics and support systems to guarantee that people may meet their obligations without jeopardizing their health and well-being.

The assertions are corroborated by Lee, J. J., & Bowen, W. G. (2021). An imbalance in time management may result in several adverse consequences, such as heightened stress levels, anxiety, worse academic performance, and an increased

susceptibility to burnout. These effects are especially common among postgraduate students, who often encounter the combined demands of attaining demanding academic criteria and completing professional responsibilities.

Additionally, Lovitts, B. E. (2021) corroborated that the literature places significant emphasis on time management tactics, with research indicating several methods to assist people in enhancing their time management skills. Strategies such as prioritizing activities, establishing attainable objectives, and using scheduling tools have been shown to alleviate the impact of time limitations. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of self-regulated learning techniques, which enable people to assume responsibility for their learning processes and effectively manage their time.

Correspondingly, another theme emerged was Financial Support for Teachers. This theme encompasses initiatives and mechanisms designed to alleviate the economic burdens faced by educators seeking further professional development or postgraduate studies. This includes scholarships, grants, tuition reimbursement programs, and partnerships with educational institutions, aiming to enhance teachers' access to continued education without financial strain. Thus, the remarks of the participants revealed below:

"The financial aid and scholarship. It can help the financial burden especially in tuition fees and other expenses (IDI_P3)."

"To effectively lower the barriers that teachers face in pursuing postgraduate studies, I will recommend that institutions and policy makers should prioritize providing financial support to teachers in terms for education, to motivate them to continue postgraduate studies (IDI_P4)."

"Provide financial assistance such as scholarship, grants or tuition waivers to alleviate the financial burdens on teachers (FGD_P1)."

Based on the remarks of respondents 3 and 4, it is evident that financial assistance and scholarships play a crucial role in reducing the financial challenges connected with pursuing higher education, particularly in terms of tuition fees and other related expenses. It emphasizes the significance of financial assistance in relieving the economic burdens that students encounter.

During the Focus Group Discussions, respondent 1 said that there is a need for financial help, such as scholarships, grants, or tuition exemptions, primarily aimed at teachers. This text discusses the financial challenges faced by teachers pursuing further education and suggests methods of support to alleviate the financial strain and enhance accessibility to continuing education for instructors.

Consequently, providing more financial assistance to teachers who are pursuing further studies beyond their first degree may have a substantial effect on the quality of education and the ability to retain instructors. By mitigating the financial strain associated with pursuing more education, it fosters the growth of professional skills, resulting in enhanced teaching methodologies, heightened work contentment, and eventually, superior student achievements.

The implications are corroborated by Martin, M. G., & Usher, A. (2020). Teachers who are contemplating pursuing further education often face major financial obstacles. The expenses related to postgraduate study, such as tuition fees, textbooks, and the possibility of reduced income, may discourage instructors from seeking further degrees. The research emphasizes the pivotal importance of financial assistance mechanisms, such as scholarships, grants, and tuition reimbursement programs, in alleviating these hurdles. The purpose of these financial subsidies is to incentivize more instructors to participate in postgraduate courses, therefore improving their credentials and teaching abilities.

Furthermore, McCulloch, A. (2020) endorsed the notion that the literature also investigates the crucial aspect of governmental and institutional support in furnishing financial aid to teachers. Allocating monies for teacher education and development is

crucial for fostering a supportive atmosphere that promotes teachers' professional progress. Furthermore, educational institutions that provide specific scholarships or discounted tuition rates for teachers are seen as crucial enablers of further education for educators.

Additionally, another theme emerged was Support and Reimbursement. The Support and Reimbursement theme revolves around programs and policies designed to financially assist individuals, often through the reimbursement of expenses incurred for educational purposes, professional development, or specific projects. It underscores the importance of institutional and organizational backing in facilitating access to opportunities and alleviating financial burdens. Thus, the remarks of the participants revealed below:

"Employer Reimbursement- encouraging employers to sponsor teachers' education through tuition assistance programs can be a valuable support mechanism (IDI_P1)."

"Tuition Reimbursement Programs: Implement tuition reimbursement programs where teachers are reimbursed for a percentage of their postgraduate tuition expenses upon successful completion of their studies (FGD_P4)."

Participant 1 asserts that businesses may significantly contribute to the advancement of teachers' professional growth by providing tuition aid programs. These programs, in which employers pay for some or all of the educational expenses, are shown to be an excellent method for motivating and supporting teachers in their efforts to pursue more education, so improving their skills and knowledge.

Furthermore, during the Focus Group Discussion interview, participant 4 provided further details on a specific kind of employer support. This support involves promoting tuition reimbursement schemes as a means of providing financial assistance to teachers while they pursue advanced degrees. As an example, instructors would get a certain percentage of their tuition costs as payment after they successfully finish a course. This would lower the financial burden of continuing their study and incentivize them to excel academically.

Consequently, the provision of support and reimbursement programs for teachers may effectively improve their professional growth, work satisfaction, and likelihood of staying in their positions. Employers promote a culture of ongoing learning and enhance the efficiency of teachers by alleviating the financial challenges involved with pursuing higher education, so enhancing the overall quality of education.

The implications are confirmed by Nyquist, J. D., & Wulff, D. H. (2020). Research indicates that support and compensation programs significantly impact the professional growth of educators. Providing financial aid for postgraduate studies, attending conferences, or obtaining certifications helps educators acquire the necessary resources to improve their abilities and expand their knowledge. Research has shown that instructors' ability to effectively educate is enhanced and they are more prepared to meet the diverse needs of their pupils while participating in such programs.

Pearson, J. C., Wegner, J. W., & West, R. K. (2021) provided evidence that there is a correlation between support and reimbursement programs and elevated levels of work satisfaction, as well as improved rates of teacher retention. By investing in the professional development of its teachers, companies demonstrate a dedication to their advancement and welfare. Teachers who get enough assistance in their professional growth are more inclined to stay in their roles, resulting in enhanced stability and consistency within educational institutions.

Dimensions of Teachers' Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies

Prior to conducting factor analysis on the suggested 80-item scale for Teachers' Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies, the Kaiser Meyer-Okin Measure (KMO) of

Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were performed. The findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.930
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	30829.243
	df	3160
	Sig.	.000

Primarily, the aforementioned results suggest that the KMO test yielded a score of .930, which above the threshold of .5. Consequently, this implies that the sample is suitable for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Similarly, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity suggests that the data exhibit structured connections and may be factorized. Based on the available empirical data, it was justifiable to continue with the factor analysis.

Developing Factors Structures for Teachers' Obstacles in Pursuing Postgraduate Studies. In order to ascertain the quantity of components, the 80-item scale underwent testing using an unrotated factor matrix, which provided estimates of eigenvalues, the percentage of variance, and cumulative variance. Eigenvalues represent the cumulative variation that may be accounted for by a certain main component. In theory, covariances may be either positive or negative. However, in practice, they are used to explain variance, which is invariably positive (UCLA, 2021).

According to the Kaiser criteria, every component with an eigenvalue less than 1.0 is excluded. This eigenvalue represents the amount of information explained by an average individual item. According to Costello and Osborne (2005), the Kaiser criteria states that only components with eigenvalues larger than 1.0 are kept. This is the same as the eigenvalue that represents the information attributed to a typical individual item.

Table 2 displays the pattern matrix obtained using Principal Axis Factoring with a Promax rotation approach, specifically Promax with Kaiser Normalization. Based on the findings, it is evident that the loadings of items in the five variables are more than .Field (2005) supports the notion that a value of .4 is both suggested and essential in order to achieve the desired parameters. Moreover, it is evident that there are no instances of item cross-loading or non-loading, indicating that the items accurately reflect their respective components. Hair et al. (1998) highlight that loadings reflect the extent to which a variable is associated with a factor, with greater loadings indicating that the variable is more representational of the factor.

Furthermore, the item loadings of each item to their respective factor demonstrate a satisfactory level of correlation between factors and variables, so confirming their status as components of the factor. The EFA was used to build the four-factor model of Teachers' Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies, consisting of 66 elements, as shown in table 6, namely:

However, the items that do not fit with the factor were removed from the final questionnaire. Specifically, the items deleted are Item 8, "I have not found a postgraduate program that fits my specific interests or needs.", item 9 "I am concerned about taking on student loans or accruing debt from further studies.", item 13, "I am worried about the impact of further studies on my personal life and relationships.", item 18, "I feel that my current skills and knowledge may be insufficient for postgraduate success.", item 24, "I worry about the physical and mental stress of juggling work, study, and personal life.", Item 27, "I am concerned about losing touch with my professional network while focusing on studies.", item 28, "I feel that postgraduate studies may not significantly improve my teaching effectiveness.", item 29, "I am worried about the potential for burnout from managing teaching and studying concurrently.", item 31, "I am not familiar with the latest research or academic trends in education.", item 32,"I feel that there is a lack of mentorship or guidance for teachers pursuing postgraduate studies.",item 35, " I am unsure about the balance of theoretical vs. practical learning in

postgraduate programs.”, item 36, “I have difficulties accessing academic libraries or resources for postgraduate studies.”, item 57, “I feel that the expectations for postgraduate students may not accommodate the realities of teaching professionals.”, and item 63, “I struggle with the idea of transitioning back to a student role after being in a teaching role for so long.”

Table 2
Pattern Matrix Four-Factor Model

Items	1	2	3	4
Factor 1: Surpassing Academic Obstacles				
1. I find the distance or location of institutions offering postgraduate programs to be a barrier.	.414			
2. I am not aware of flexible learning options that accommodate my schedule.	.501			
3. I am hesitant about returning to school after spending years in the teaching profession.	.409			
4. I am skeptical about the quality of online postgraduate programs compared to in-person ones.	.441			
5. I am skeptical about the quality of online postgraduate programs compared to in-person ones.	.559			
6. I am concerned about the competitiveness of postgraduate programs in education.	.514			
7. I am unsure about the types of support systems in place for teachers undertaking postgraduate studies.	.438			
8. I worry about access to and the cost of required textbooks and resources for my courses.	.614			
9. I am concerned about the ability to maintain professional development requirements while studying.	.457			
10. I feel that the pace of postgraduate programs may be too fast for someone with my responsibilities.	.485			
11. I am worried about the level of critical thinking and analysis expected in postgraduate work.	.466			
12. I am concerned about finding a postgraduate program that values my professional experience.	.554			
13. I feel that my teaching responsibilities limit my availability for campus-based events and networking opportunities.	.452			
14. I am unsure about the effectiveness of online learning platforms for postgraduate studies.	.666			
15. I feel that there is a lack of recognition for the challenges teachers face when pursuing further education.	.829			
16. I am concerned about managing the expectations of my family, friends, and colleagues while studying.	.653			
17. I worry about the potential loss of income if I need to reduce my teaching hours for studies.	.944			
18. I struggle with the decision to invest in further education at the expense of other personal or financial goals.	.792			
19. I am concerned about the alignment of postgraduate studies with my long-term professional vision.	.888			
20. I feel that the academic language and jargon in postgraduate studies may be a barrier.	.845			
21. I worry about the social dynamics and fitting in with younger or less experienced classmates.	.672			
22. I am unsure about the process for applying for research grants or funding within postgraduate programs.	.703			

23. I feel that my current teaching methodologies may be challenged or outdated by new academic perspectives.	.685			
24. I am concerned about the level of personal sacrifice required to successfully complete postgraduate studies.	.799			
25. I worry about the ability to apply theoretical knowledge from postgraduate studies to practical teaching scenarios.	.772			
26. I struggle with the notion of critiquing educational theories or practices that I currently use.	.798			
27. I am concerned about the potential for significant life changes (e.g., relocation, job change) as a result of pursuing postgraduate studies.	.442			
Factor 2: Balancing Professional Growth				
28. I worry about keeping up with technological requirements of online postgraduate courses.		.485		
29. I am concerned about the time it will take to complete a postgraduate program.		.414		
30. I am hesitant about the level of commitment required for successful completion of postgraduate studies.		.629		
31. I feel that there is a lack of postgraduate programs specifically designed for working teachers.		.792		
32. I am concerned about the impact of postgraduate studies on my professional reputation if I fail.		.891		
33. I worry about the potential for conflict between postgraduate studies and my teaching philosophy.		.602		
34. I struggle with the decision of whether to pursue a Masters or Doctoral program.		.781		
35. I am concerned about the cultural relevance of postgraduate programs to my teaching context.		.707		
36. I feel that postgraduate studies might not address the unique challenges of my educational setting.		.696		
37. I am unsure about the financial aid options available for postgraduate studies.		.705		
38. I feel that my personal commitments may limit my ability to engage in postgraduate studies fully.		.595		
39. I am concerned about the potential for discrimination or bias in postgraduate programs.		.807		
40. I worry about the relevance of postgraduate studies in the rapidly changing field of education.		.563		
41. I struggle with the idea of being both a student and a teacher at the same time.		.466		
42. I am unsure about the potential for career advancement following postgraduate studies.		.818		
43. I feel that there is a lack of postgraduate study options that align with my teaching schedule.		.672		
44. I am concerned about the physical demands of attending classes after teaching all day.		.798		
45. I worry about the emotional toll of balancing studies with personal and professional responsibilities.		.708		
46. I am hesitant about engaging in group work or collaborative projects in post graduate environments due to my professional experience level.		.648		
47. I struggle to understand the long-term benefits of postgraduate studies in my specific teaching context.		.638		
48. I am concerned about the impact of my absence from teaching on students during intensive study periods.		.417		
49. I worry about the impact of postgraduate studies on my health and well-being.		.621		
Factor 3: Assessing Support Frameworks.				
50. I find the cost of postgraduate programs to be a significant barrier to my enrollment.			.526	

51. I am concerned about balancing work, family, and study commitments.			.686	
52. I feel overwhelmed by the application process for postgraduate studies.			.787	
53. I am uncertain about the career benefits of pursuing postgraduate studies.			.647	
54. I worry about my ability to cope with the academic rigor of postgraduate courses.			.775	
55. I am unsure about which postgraduate program is right for my career goals.			.804	
56. I struggle to find time for study due to my teaching responsibilities.			.632	
57. I feel that there is a lack of support from my current employer for further education.			.483	
Factor 4: Overcoming Academic Solitude				
58. I am unsure about the return on investment of postgraduate studies in education.				.435
59. I feel isolated in my pursuit of further education, with little support from peers.				.687
60. I have faced discouragement from family or friends regarding further education.				.514
61. I am concerned about the relevance of available postgraduate programs to my current teaching role.				.604
62. I feel that there is a lack of accessible and relevant professional development opportunities in my area.				.556
63. I feel that my age or stage in life may be a barrier to pursuing further education.				.603
64. I struggle with self-motivation for independent study required in postgraduate programs.				.667
65. I worry about my proficiency in academic writing and research after years of professional practice.				.573
66. I worry about the impact of further studies on my work-life balance.				.574

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

Reliability Test of the Scale

The data in table 3 shows that the overall reliability score for the barriers faced by teachers in pursuing postgraduate studies is high, with a Cronbach's value of $\alpha = 0.890$. The reliability scores for each subscale or dimension, namely Surpassing Academic Obstacles ($\alpha = 0.890$), Balancing Professional Growth ($\alpha = 0.865$), Assessing Support Frameworks ($\alpha = 0.905$), and Overcoming Academic Solitude ($\alpha = 0.915$), are also above the criterion for reliability.

Huck (2007) states that reliability refers to the degree of consistency among the different components of a measuring device. Furthermore, a scale is considered to possess a high level of internal consistency dependability when its items are interconnected and measure the same underlying concept (Huck, 2007, Robinson, 2009).

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is the most often used metric of internal consistency. According to Whitley (2002) and Robinson (2009), the use of Likert scales is considered the most accurate way to quantify dependability. Although there are no particular guidelines for internal consistencies, it is generally agreed upon that a minimum internal consistency coefficient of .70 is acceptable (Whitley, 2002; Robinson, 2009).

Table 3	
Reliability Test Scale for Teachers' Barriers In Taking Post Graduate Studies	
Scale	Cronbach's alpha
Surpassing Academic Obstacles	0.875

Balancing Professional Growth	0.865
Assessing Support Frameworks	0.905
Overcoming Academic Solitude	0.915
Overall Reliability	0.890

Final Version of Teachers’ Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies Model.

The final iteration of the instrument, obtained from the investigation, is shown in the manner described below, in Table 4, with the original inventory of 80 components condensed to 66 pieces. The research reveals significant concerns with face validity, mostly inferred from the component loadings linked to each question. Based on the recommendations provided by Hair et al. (2010) and the aforementioned criteria, components that have very little coherence or lack reflective power may be deemed unneeded in the model. In addition, according to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2010), researchers may strategically determine loading coefficients to include only the items that best represent the underlying factor, and thus exclude items with low coefficients from the final factor structure.

The questionnaire for investigating the obstacles faced by teachers in pursuing postgraduate studies was prepared using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). This scale consists of 66 elements. The study on the barriers faced by teachers in pursuing postgraduate studies includes a total of sixty-six (66) items. These items are divided into four factors: Surpassing Academic Obstacles (27 items), Balancing Professional Growth (22 items), Assessing Support Frameworks (8 items), and Overcoming Academic Solitude (9 items). Below is the five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Table 4
Final Tool for Teachers’ Barriers in Taking Post Graduate Studies Questionnaire

Items	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1: Surpassing Academic Obstacles					
1. I find the distance or location of institutions offering postgraduate programs to be a barrier.					
2. I am not aware of flexible learning options that accommodate my schedule.					
3. I am hesitant about returning to school after spending years in the teaching profession.					
4. I am skeptical about the quality of online postgraduate programs compared to in-person ones.					
5. I am skeptical about the quality of online postgraduate programs compared to in-person ones.					
6. I am concerned about the competitiveness of postgraduate programs in education.					
7. I am unsure about the types of support systems in place for teachers undertaking postgraduate studies.					
8. I worry about access to and the cost of required textbooks and resources for my courses.					
9. I am concerned about the ability to maintain professional development requirements while studying.					
10. I feel that the pace of postgraduate programs may be too fast for someone with my responsibilities.					

11. I am worried about the level of critical thinking and analysis expected in postgraduate work.					
12. I am concerned about finding a postgraduate program that values my professional experience.					
13. I feel that my teaching responsibilities limit my availability for campus-based events and networking opportunities.					
14. I am unsure about the effectiveness of online learning platforms for postgraduate studies.					
15. I feel that there is a lack of recognition for the challenges teachers face when pursuing further education.					
16. I am concerned about managing the expectations of my family, friends, and colleagues while studying.					
17. I worry about the potential loss of income if I need to reduce my teaching hours for studies.					
18. I struggle with the decision to invest in further education at the expense of other personal or financial goals.					
19. I am concerned about the alignment of postgraduate studies with my long-term professional vision.					
20. I feel that the academic language and jargon in postgraduate studies may be a barrier.					
21. I worry about the social dynamics and fitting in with younger or less experienced classmates.					
22. I am unsure about the process for applying for research grants or funding within postgraduate programs.					
23. I feel that my current teaching methodologies may be challenged or outdated by new academic perspectives.					
24. I am concerned about the level of personal sacrifice required to successfully complete postgraduate studies.					
25. I worry about the ability to apply theoretical knowledge from postgraduate studies to practical teaching scenarios.					
26. I struggle with the notion of critiquing educational theories or practices that I currently use.					
27. I am concerned about the potential for significant life changes (e.g., relocation, job change) as a result of pursuing postgraduate studies.					
Factor 2: Balancing Professional Growth					
28. I worry about keeping up with technological requirements of online postgraduate courses.					

29. I am concerned about the time it will take to complete a postgraduate program.					
30. I am hesitant about the level of commitment required for successful completion of postgraduate studies.					
31. I feel that there is a lack of postgraduate programs specifically designed for working teachers.					
32. I am concerned about the impact of postgraduate studies on my professional reputation if I fail.					
33. I worry about the potential for conflict between postgraduate studies and my teaching philosophy.					
34. I struggle with the decision of whether to pursue a Masters or Doctoral program.					
35. I am concerned about the cultural relevance of postgraduate programs to my teaching context.					
36. I feel that postgraduate studies might not address the unique challenges of my educational setting.					
37. I am unsure about the financial aid options available for postgraduate studies.					
38. I feel that my personal commitments may limit my ability to engage in postgraduate studies fully.					
39. I am concerned about the potential for discrimination or bias in postgraduate programs.					
40. I worry about the relevance of postgraduate studies in the rapidly changing field of education.					
41. I struggle with the idea of being both a student and a teacher at the same time.					
42. I am unsure about the potential for career advancement following postgraduate studies.					
43. I feel that there is a lack of postgraduate study options that align with my teaching schedule.					
44. I am concerned about the physical demands of attending classes after teaching all day.					
45. I worry about the emotional toll of balancing studies with personal and professional responsibilities.					
46. I am hesitant about engaging in group work or collaborative projects in post graduate environments due to my professional experience level.					
47. I struggle to understand the long-term benefits of postgraduate studies in my specific teaching context.					

48. I am concerned about the impact of my absence from teaching on students during intensive study periods.					
49. I worry about the impact of postgraduate studies on my health and well-being.					
Factor 3: Assessing Support Frameworks.					
50. I find the cost of postgraduate programs to be a significant barrier to my enrollment.					
51. I am concerned about balancing work, family, and study commitments.					
52. I feel overwhelmed by the application process for postgraduate studies.					
53. I am uncertain about the career benefits of pursuing postgraduate studies.					
54. I worry about my ability to cope with the academic rigor of postgraduate courses.					
55. I am unsure about which postgraduate program is right for my career goals.					
56. I struggle to find time for study due to my teaching responsibilities.					
57. I feel that there is a lack of support from my current employer for further education.					
Factor 4: Overcoming Academic Solitude					
58. I am unsure about the return on investment of postgraduate studies in education.					
59. I feel isolated in my pursuit of further education, with little support from peers.					
60. I have faced discouragement from family or friends regarding further education.					
61. I am concerned about the relevance of available postgraduate programs to my current teaching role.					
62. I feel that there is a lack of accessible and relevant professional development opportunities in my area.					
63. I feel that my age or stage in life may be a barrier to pursuing further education.					
64. I struggle with self-motivation for independent study required in postgraduate programs.					
65. I worry about my proficiency in academic writing and research after years of professional practice.					
66. I worry about the impact of further studies on my work-life balance.					

Legend:

- 5 = Strongly agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = Moderately agree
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly Disagree

CONCLUSIONS

To elucidate the investigation, the following findings are listed.

1. The qualitative data analysis yielded eight distinct themes regarding the barriers faced by teachers in pursuing postgraduate studies. These themes include Time Commitment and Management, Financial Strategies, Stress and Anxiety, Academic Pressure and Unpreparedness, Financial Constraints, Unequitable Time Management, Financial Support for Teachers, and Support and Reimbursement. The development of these seven topics underscores the complex and diverse character of the obstacles encountered by instructors in postgraduate studies. It emphasizes the need for educational institutions and governments to create specific initiatives that target and tackle each of these obstacles. Possible solutions may include adaptable programs, customized financial assistance for educators, psychological well-being assistance, academically equipped programs, and initiatives to guarantee sufficient resources and support.
2. Furthermore, the results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) indicate that there are four underlying dimensions of teachers' barriers to pursuing postgraduate studies. These dimensions are Surpassing Academic Obstacles, Balancing Professional Growth, Assessing Support Frameworks, and Overcoming Academic Solitude. These four variables, identified by exploratory factor analysis (EFA), provide a systematic framework for comprehending and tackling obstacles in teacher education. This framework may provide guidance for the development of more comprehensive strategies that not only address particular obstacles, but also take into account the interplay between several aspects that impact teachers' capacity for ongoing learning.
3. The Cronbach's alpha score of 0.890 suggests that the final scale of the questionnaire, which measures the hurdles faced by teachers in pursuing postgraduate courses, has a good level of reliability. Each dimension or subscale exceeds the standards for dependability, as shown by the score alpha values: Surpassing Academic Obstacles ($\alpha = 0.890$), Balancing Professional Growth ($\alpha = 0.865$), Assessing Support Frameworks ($\alpha = 0.905$), and Overcoming Academic Solitude ($\alpha = 0.915$). The high level of dependability of these results indicates that actions based on them are very likely to successfully address the main concerns. This tool may be used by education leaders and scholars to pinpoint particular obstacles within their institutions or areas and customize their assistance programs appropriately.
4. The final instrument for assessing the difficulties faced by teachers in pursuing postgraduate degrees consists of four aspects and a total of 66 questions. Consequently, these objects have been deemed suitable and have successfully met the criteria for measuring instruments in the study.

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