

Publication Status of Theses among Post-graduate Students in Nursing from Institute of Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Background: Publication of the research work done during the master's program is highly desirable. However, there is a paucity of data on the number of publications, especially from low-income countries. The objective was to find out the status of the publication of the theses of post-graduate students in Nursing from the Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University, Nepal from 2015-2019.

Methods: Cross-sectional analytical design with a structured interview via telephone was done for data collection. Independent variables were age, marital status, current work status, current working organization, type of research, year of graduation, and facilitators and barriers to publication, whereas dependent was the publication status of the thesis.

Results: Two hundred five (76.2%) out of 269 participated in the study. The age group ranged from 27 to 50 years (mean \pm SD = 36.6 \pm 4.8). The majority 89.3% were married. Currently working in academic institutions was 51.7%. One hundred ninety-eight (96.6%) respondents performed a cross-sectional descriptive study. Only 2.9% of studies were cross-sectional analytical and 0.5% were qualitative. Seventy-five (36.6%) respondents published their theses. Twenty-seven (36.0%) were published in PubMed-indexed journals. The most common facilitator for publication was academic satisfaction [59 out of 75(78.7%)] followed by encouragement from supervisors 52.0% and peers 40.0%, whereas the commonest barrier to publication was lack of interest [80 out of 124 (64.5%)] followed by lack of confidence 51.6%.

Conclusions: Based on the results, more than one-third of the participants published their theses in national and international journals including those indexed in PubMed. Provision of university research grants, development of publication culture among post-graduate students, and making a provision of academic publication before degree awards should be encouraged for more academic publication.

Keywords: Journals; Nepal; nursing; publication status; thesis.

INTRODUCTION

Postgraduate education offers an opportunity for students to develop their academic competencies.¹ Most universities strive to heighten their academic reputation by expanding their research abilities and encouraging their graduates to publish research articles.^{2,3} Although there is no formal obligation, students are often under pressure to publish their research work. However, prior publications have shown, only 30% - 32.7% of these get published.^{4,5}

The facilitators of publication are the support/guidance of the supervisors, and self-motivation of students whereas reasons for not publishing are insufficient academic writing experience, poor guidance, lack of time, and lack of research support.⁶⁻⁸ Globally, some universities do not graduate their students before their theses are published in journals.⁹ However, in Nepal, no such criteria exist.

The main objective of this study was to find out the status of the publication of the theses of post-graduate students in Nursing from Nepal date 2015 to 2019.

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METHODS

A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among the Nursing graduates of IOM, Nepal from 2015 to 2019 via telephone interview using a structured questionnaire. Out of 269 nursing master degree graduates in the five years, 205 (76.2%) responded.

Variables considered were sociodemographic factors (age, marital status), type of study, year of graduation, current work status, facilitators (academic satisfaction, encouragement by advisors and peers, opportunity for promotion, self-interest, and availability of financial support), and barriers (disinterestedness, no appropriate motivation, no guidance, lack of confidence to write, and lack of fund for publication). In addition, we collected data regarding the types and the rank of the journals where the articles were published. Journals were classified as national and international, PubMed indexed or not, and degree of star ranking in NepJOL based on journal publishing practices and standards (JPPS). Collected data were entered in epiData version 3.1 and exported into IBM SPSS version 17 for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. Chi-squared test was used to measure the association between the independent variables and the publication status. A p-value of < 0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Out of 205 respondents, 75 (36.6%) had their theses published in scholarly journals, six (2.9%) were in the process of publishing whereas 124 (60.5%) had yet not considered publishing their thesis work.

The age of the participants ranged from 27 to 50 years with a mean age of 36.6 (± 4.8) years. One hundred eighty-three (89.3%) were married. One hundred six (51.7%) were currently working in academic sectors, 64 (31.2%) were in the non-academic sectors and the remaining [35 (17.1%)] were currently not working. The year of graduation and number of respondents is shown in table 1.

Almost all [198 (96.6%)] respondents had done a cross-sectional descriptive type of study in their thesis. Six (2.9%) participants had carried out cross-sectional analytical and only one (0.5%) had done a qualitative research. Seventy-five (36.6%) respondents have published their theses in scholarly journals. Out of them, more than half [40 (53.3%)] of the articles were published in national journals, whereas 35 (46.7%) were published in international journals. Twenty-seven papers (36.0%) were published in PubMed indexed journals. Nepalese journals were ranked based on the

JPPS status. The details of the NepJOL status where the articles were published are described in table 2. Thirty (75.0%) journals were listed in the NepJOL indexing system.

The reason for publication was varies (Table 3) where 59 (78.7%) respondents published their articles for academic satisfaction, whereas 39 (52.0%) did the publication due to strong encouragement from their supervisors. The barriers to publishing the thesis were inherent disinterestedness, lack of appropriate motivation and guidance, lack of confidence in paper writing, limited funds for publication, and time constraints. The details are presented in table 4.

Age and current working status in an academic setting were the most significant facilitators of publication ($p < 0.01$). However, as shown in Table 5, other variables such as marital status, year of graduation, and working organization had no significant association with publication status.

Table 1. Year of graduation and the number of graduates in each year (n=205).

Year of graduation	No. (%)
2015	49 (23.9)
2016	22 (10.7)
2017	38 (18.5)
2018	50 (24.4)
2019	46 (22.4)

Table 2. NepJOL status of journals where the articles were published (n=40).

Variables	No. (%)
Working towards JPPS status	10 (25.0)
One-star	12 (30.0)
Two-star	8 (20.0)
Not registered	10 (25.0)

Table 3. Facilitators for thesis publication* (n=75).

Facilitators	No. (%)
Academic satisfaction	59 (78.7)
Encouragement by supervisors	39 (52.0)
Promotion	33 (44.0)
Encouragement by peers	30 (40.0)
Others (For obtaining a faculty grant, motivation for dissemination, self-interest, spouse' motivation)	18 (24.0)

*Multiple responses

Table 4. Barriers to the publication of thesis* (n=124).

Barriers	No. (%)
Inherent disinterestedness	80(64.5)
Lack of appropriate motivation and guidance	78(62.9)
Lack of confidence in paper writing	64(51.6)
Limited fund for publication	33(26.6)
Time constraints	2(1.6)

*Multiple responses

Table 5. Association between publication status and current working status.

Characteristics	Status of Publication		x2 value	p-value
	Yes (%)	No (%)		
Age				
≤36	48(64.0)	56(43.1)	8.330	0.004
>36	27(36.0)	74(56.9)		
Marital status				
Married	68(90.7)	115(88.5)	0.668	0.716
Single	7(9.3)	15(11.5)		
Working organization				
Government	16(21.3)	37(28.5)	2.147	0.342
Semi-government	24(32.0)	45(34.6)		
Private	35(46.7)	48(36.9)		
Work setting				
Academic setting	61(81.3)	45(34.6)	42.294	<0.01
Non-academic setting	11(14.7)	53(40.8)		
Current not working	3(4.0)	32(24.6)		

DISCUSSION

In this study, the response rate was two hundred five (76.2%) out of 269 which is adequate for the generalization of the results. More than one-third of the participants published their theses in the scholarly journals.¹⁰ These finding is contrast to the study conducted in 2018 by Japanese.¹¹ Only, 2.9% were in the process of publishing whereas nearly two-thirds of the participants had yet not considered publishing their thesis work.

The age of the participants ranged from 27 to 50 years with a mean age of 36.6 (±4.781) years. The majority of the participants were married. More than half of

the participants were currently working in academic sectors, more than two-thirds of them were in the non-academic sectors and the remaining were not working at all.

Almost all (96.6%) respondents had conducted cross-sectional descriptive study in their post-graduate thesis. Six (2.9%) participants had carried out cross-sectional analytical and only one (0.5%) had done qualitative research. The study from Turkey revealed 75.5% of the study type were cross-sectional descriptive contrast the findings of the study conducted in Iran showed that 44.1% of the theses were cross-sectional descriptive. The remaining research types were analytical-descriptive, semi-empirical, clinical, cohort, and case-control studies respectively.¹² In addition, the study conducted in Finland showed that 62.3% were quantitative studies.¹³

Seventy-five (36.6%) respondents have published their theses in scholarly journals.¹⁰ Out of them, more than half [40 (53.3%)] of the articles were published in national journals, whereas 35 (46.7%) articles were published in international journals. Twenty-seven articles (36%) were published in PubMed-index journals. Nepalese journals were ranked based on the Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) criteria. In another study, the publication rate of nursing theses was found to be nearly similar to our study [58 (40.0%)].¹² The study conducted in Turkey showed more than thirty (31.4%) were published in the science citation index, science citation index expanded, and social sciences citation index, 3.5% in an emerging sources citation index, 25.0% in other international refereed journals, 19.9% in national academic network and information center, and 20.2% in other national refereed journals.¹³ Similarly, a study conducted in Finland showed that [61 (23.8%)] had been published in indexed scientific journals.¹³

Fifty-nine (78.7%) respondents published their articles for academic satisfaction, whereas 39(52.0%) published them due to strong encouragement from their supervisors. In addition, the facilitator was career enhancement and encouragement by peers followed by financial support, dissemination purpose, self-interest, and spouse motivation. These facilitators of publication were similar to results presented from the study conducted in Iran and Finland.¹²⁻¹³

The barriers to publishing the thesis were inherent disinterest, no appropriate motivation, no guidance, lack of confidence in paper writing, limited funds to pay for publication, and time constraint. Prior studies also revealed a similar finding.^{6-8,16-19,21} In the other studies

the barriers found were lack of student motivation, lack of guidance, limited time due to more assignments, the lengthy publication process, low-quality design, and financial limitations.^{10, 12-17, 20}

In the current study six (2.9%) respondents were either in the process of developing the manuscript or their manuscript was under review by the editorial team. Hence were not categorized in either group. Despite barriers, it seems students are still motivated to publish their thesis.

Our study is limited only to those graduates from nursing campuses affiliated with IOM, TU.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results, there was no compulsion to publish the thesis report. However, more than one-third of the nursing graduate published their theses in national and international journals including those indexed in PubMed. Academic satisfaction and encouragement from advisors were the main facilitators of publication whereas disinterested as well as lack of confidence in publishing were the main barrier. Working status significantly associated with the publication status of these. Having a master's degree holder is common nowadays, but an attitude to a published thesis is not developed as a culture. Since there were, fewer articles related to qualitative studies and no experimental studies, it is necessary to encourage nursing students to do qualitative and experimental studies.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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