

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**CHALLENGES FOR NURSE EDUCATORS TO PUBLISH THEIR RESEARCH IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS**Israr Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Ayesha Bibi<sup>2</sup>, Asmat Shaheen<sup>3</sup>, Irum Saeed<sup>2</sup>, Arzoo<sup>2</sup>, Mehar Angeez<sup>2</sup>, Rashida Bibi<sup>2</sup>**ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Research is a structured process of knowledge generation, which means searching again and again either to confirm the existing knowledge or generate new information. In the health care system, research is the foundation for improving standards for better care. The role of nurses as a researcher in qualitative studies is crucial in maintaining standards toward care. Nursing graduates are expected to do more research work to improve evidence-based practice, thus benefiting patients. It is the responsibility of every nurse to conduct research and motivate others for the same purpose. As a researcher, nurses face numerous issues to participate in clinical research, such as negative attitude toward their personal research skill, lack of time and lack of interest, lack of tools and funds.<sup>8</sup> Publication is the process that gives value to the research work and plays a significant role in the development and progress of any occupation, especially nursing.

**Material & Methods:** A qualitative descriptive study was carried out from April 2022 to September 2022 in three private nursing colleges in Peshawar, Pakistan. Both genders were equally appreciated for their participation. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. The Braun and Clark 6 step method has been used for thematic analysis. Two researchers independently transcribed and analysed the data, which was verified by researchers who have conducted the interviews.

**Results:** A total of 25 nurse educators, 13 male and 12 female, participated in the study. Two main themes have been generated: barriers to publication and benefits of publications. Each theme consisted of subthemes and codes which were supported with direct quotes from the participants.

**Conclusion:** Publishing research work is certainly important for nurse educators in many aspects such as improving basic skills, continuous learning, educational achievements, and career development; however, certain challenges based on individual, organizational, and supervision level limit this process.

**Key Words:** Challenges, Journals, Nurse Educators, Perspectives, Publications, Research

**Authors' Declaration:** The authors declared no conflict of interest and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved. All authors contributed substantially to the planning of research, question designing, data collection, data analysis and write-up of the article.

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**This article may be cited as:** Ahmad I, Bibi A, Shaheen A, Saeed I, Arzoo, Angeez M, Bibi R. Challenges for nurse educators to publish their research in national and international journals. *Rehman J Health Sci.* 2023;5(2). 171-176

Submitted: July 07, 2022    Revisions Submitted: Dec 05, 2023    Accepted: Dec 29, 2023

## INTRODUCTION

Research is a structured process of knowledge generation, which means searching again and again either to confirm the existing knowledge or generate new information. In the health care system, research is the foundation for improving standards for better care.<sup>1</sup> There are mainly two branches of research; quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research authenticates the data, while qualitative studies involve rich data that lead to findings in the form of codes, subthemes, and themes.<sup>2-3</sup> In addition, qualitative research is an inductive way to explore a deeper understanding of specific phenomena. This type of research involves data collection methods such as conducting interviews, observation, note writing, and reflexive journal writing.<sup>4</sup> The role of nurses as a researcher in qualitative studies is crucial in maintaining standards toward care. Nursing graduates are expected to do more research work to improve evidence-based practice, thus benefiting patients.<sup>5</sup> It is the responsibility of every nurse to conduct research and motivate others for the same purpose.<sup>6</sup> Nurses are an integral part of the health care system who can improve patient care outcomes and recognize themselves as an essential and vital member of the medical team. Moreover, they have dual function; since two hands work together, one is responsible for providing safe and effective treatment to individuals, families, and communities while on the other hand, nurses carry out their duty as a leader and manager to guarantee the simplicity of the medical management system.<sup>7</sup> As a researcher, nurses face numerous issues to participate in clinical research, such as negative attitude toward their personal research skill, lack of time and lack of interest, lack of tools and funds.<sup>8</sup> Publication is the process that gives value to the research work and plays a significant role in the development and progress of any occupation, especially nursing. Moreover, it prepares professionals such as nurses with the opportunity to share their experiences of practice through research findings among their colleagues. Furthermore, an academic and scientific publication serves as a source of understanding and evidence for teachers and students. The published literature is the main source of verification for making clinical and health policy commitments. The number and importance of published studies has expanded dramatically over time.<sup>9</sup> In this

advanced era, nurses are still unable to publish their research work due to certain reasons such as lack of time, lack of support from the organization, irrelevant hobbies, pressure of time, job title, lack of resources, skills related to research writing and knowing about computer.<sup>10</sup> The literature indicates studies about conducting research among nurses; however, limited research is available on perspectives of nurse educators to publish their research. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of nurse educators regarding challenges in publishing their research. This study can inform nurses' educators and policy makers about the challenges at different levels in developing improvement strategies and conducting further research.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A qualitative descriptive study was conducted from April 2022 to September 2022 in three private nursing colleges in Peshawar, Pakistan. Ethical approval has been granted from Prime Foundation Pakistan (Prime/ERC/2022-19) and permission was given from each institute. The Margarete Sandelowski guidelines for qualitative descriptive design have been followed in current research. This design is utilized when rich information from participants is required and researchers must provide a maximum description to better understand the readers (Sandelowski, 1997, 2010).<sup>11-12</sup> Rigour was maintained through (Lincoln and Guba, 1986)<sup>13</sup> The interview guide was developed after detailed discussion and critical review among researchers followed by review from three experts and pilot tests from five participants. Two researchers independently transcribed and analyzed the data for errors, omissions, and corrections. The transcription and analysis were verified by researchers who conducted the interviews. The inclusion criteria were both genders with at least one year of experience as a nurse educator, who can speak Urdu and English, minimally a bachelor's degree in nursing, registered with the Pakistan Nursing Council and willing to participate, while the exclusion criteria consisted of nurse educators on leave. Written consent has been obtained from each participant. Data were collected using the nonprobability purpose sampling technique through a semi-structured interview with the help of the interview guide.<sup>14</sup> The researchers

provided a proper introduction to the participants and informed them about the reason for conducting research through the participant's information sheet. Approximately 30-60 minutes were allocated for face-to-face one-by-one interviews, and the average duration was 55 minutes, leading to transferability. Approximately 40 nurses' educators were approached, and 25 participants participated in the study; 13 men and 12 women agreed to participate. Demographic details are given in Table-01.

Only researchers and participants were present at the time of the interview. Non-verbal expressions and the main statement of the participants were noted. Data saturation occurred at the 24<sup>th</sup> interview; One more participant was interviewed to ensure quality. Data were analyzed using the thematic analysis by Braun and Clark's 6-step method: a) Transcription and familiarization consisting of reading and rereading the data, b) initial coding at different levels, c) Assembling all information pertinent to each potential theme and grouping codes into potential themes, d) creating a thematic "map" of the study to show how the themes relate to the coded extracts, e) defining and naming the themes, and f) finalizing and writing the themes.<sup>15-16</sup> The details are presented in Table 02.

## RESULTS

**Characteristics of the participants:** A total of 25 nurse educators, 13 male and 12 female, participated in the study.

### Thematic Analysis

Two main themes have been generated; barriers to publication and benefits of publications with sub-themes, codes, and data extract on challenges for nurse educators to publish their research in national and international journals.

### Barriers to publication:

The first theme focused on the obstacles to publications among nurse educators. All participants found it extremely difficult to publish their research in national and international journals due to multiple reasons. In the first subtheme 'individual problems', participants expressed that there are certain personnel factors that lead to failure in publication such as problems in topic selection, lack of awareness, lack of computer skills, difficulties in the English language, lack of experience with research and journals, lack of practice with research, lack of interest in research work, difficult tasks in research, time-

consuming process, difficulties in data collection, inability to be updated, financial issues, and lack of information about research journals and their criteria. Participant no. 01 described that: *"we are weak in computer and English language, and I have less exposure to research process as well as journals and cannot keep ourselves updated."* In addition, participant no. 10 says that: *"It is very difficult to collect data and I do not have time for this lengthy process, the research is very difficult in practice and publication requires hard work."* Furthermore, Participant no. 20 stated that: *"Research and publication require continuous efforts, up-to-date knowledge with money, information about journals, and expertise, but we are very far away from this process."* Participant no. 19 said that *'Research and publication activities are collaborative processes and nurses should work together to promote publication culture in Pakistan'*.

The second subtheme 'organizational problems' discusses institutional tribulations in relation to research publication among nurse educators, which are listed as gender discrimination, lack of research training, lack of resources and budget, lack of research opportunities, lack of facilitation, low education level, failure to implement the curriculum, ignoring nurses in the research process, permission to collect data, cultural sensitivity, low education, lack of nursing journal in Pakistan, ethical approval issue, information about predatory journals and plagiarism. Participant no. 05 commented that: *"There are less training and recourses about publication process for nurses, we are totally ignored at institutional level, and you know mostly, or sometime female are preferred to move ahead."* Another participant no. 16 said: *'It's difficult to collect data from women and people with low education, and delays occur in permission at the institutional level so that we cannot publish research work.'* Participant no. 25 revealed that: *'There is no standard nursing journal in Pakistan, so the government should do something for it and plagiarism detection software is also very important in any institution for every teacher.'* One of the participants no.7 revealed that: *'There are many fake journals, so we must read carefully and submit our research work to authentic journals and the institution needs to guide us'*. The third subtheme was related to 'problems related to supervision' finding the right supervisor, accepting the supervisor, lack of

commitment and burden supervisor, supervisor behavior, supervision method, lack of motivation, grooming and facilitation. Participant no. 12 maintained that: *'There is a need for a committed senior or supervisor with good behavior for guidance about the research and publication process.'* Participant no. 24 recited that: *'Expert researchers are usually too busy and do not have time, and I have limited awareness about journals and research articles.'* Another participant no.3 said that: *'Our seniors are mostly busy with many students at a time for project work or they have many classes, and we cannot get help from them.'* Participants no.14 stated that: *'teachers are very important in motivating researchers to publish research articles, and you know that a qualified mentor always involves you in standard scholarly work.'*

### **Benefits of Publications:**

The second theme revealed advantages of publications in higher education, career development and successful job. The first subtheme 'improvement in basic skills' disclosed improvement in communication skills, computer skills, writing skills, and English language command. As participant no.9 elaborated, *'You can feel improvement in writing and typing skills while doing research work for the sack of publication.'*

The second subtheme 'continuous learning' showed thoughts such as practice with rationales, learning from seniors, appropriate research environment and repo building with researchers. Participant no.11 disclosed that: *'Publication means learning a lot about everything in research and interaction with different experts.'*

The third subtheme 'educational achievements' relates to in-depth knowledge, higher education, the opportunity to supervise others and research collaboration. Participant no.15 expressed that: *'Publication opens many doors to success in obtaining higher education, and today you have to publish your research to teach others or work with them.'*

The fourth subtheme 'career development' discussed competency, group work, promotion, grooming, confidence, multiple opportunities, and recognition as a nurse researcher. Participant no.18 commented that: *'The image of nursing is improving in terms of scholarly activities and patient care, now we have a doctor of philosophy in nursing and*

*professors...this is due to publications and research.'*

### **DISCUSSION**

In the first theme multiple challenges were reported regarding research publication among nurse educators. Firstly, participants said that they have personal issues that pose a barrier in the publication process. Similarly, a study revealed some personnel problems which delays publication process such as lack of time, financial support, complexities in writing, and almost no awareness paper submission to different journals.<sup>17-18</sup> Second, participants revealed some organizational gaps leading to difficulties in publishing their scholarly work. These findings are supported by a study that showed that nurses face intuitional encounters in the form of poor facilitation, lack of required materials, multiple opinions by senior scholars, not as important to nurses, high demand for payment by journals and limited access to certain search engines.<sup>19,20,21</sup> Issues such as difficulties in being updated, support from others, selection of a good journal, and availability of qualified supervisor which are in line with the existing literature. Again, the findings were similar to those mentioned in the previous studies.<sup>22-23</sup>

Thirdly, participants discussed barriers about supervisor in relation to publication. These encounters have been thought to slow the process of publication. One of previous studies support these findings.<sup>24-25</sup>

The last theme elaborated information about benefits of publishing research work in certain categories like learning basic skills, opportunities for learning, success in education and securing job with maximum benefits. Previous studies support these findings.<sup>26-27</sup>

The sample was small, purposive, and limited to three private nursing colleges. A large sample from the maximum institutions with participants who have higher education may be included in future research.

Mixed-methods research studies may be helpful in better understanding the problems of nurse educators to publish their research in national and international journals.

### **CONCLUSION**

Publishing research work is certainly important for nurse educators in many aspects such as improving basic skills, continuous learning, educational achievements, and career development; however, certain challenges



based on individual, organizational, and supervision level limit this process.

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Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the n=25 participants.

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency
Gender	Male	13
	Female	12
Educational Level	PhD	1
	Master	4
	Bachelor	20
	Specialty	10
Having Publications	Research Journals	7

Table 2: Constructed themes, sub themes and codes related to challenges faced by nurse educators in publishing their research.

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Barriers to Publication	Individual Problems	Selection of topic. Poor background knowledge. Incompetency in computer skills, nursing research, English language. Lack of interest, experience, practice, time, awareness, and support from others. Time-consuming and difficult process. Inability to be updated. Financial problems. Lack of information on research journals and their criteria.
	Organizational Problems	Gender discrimination. Unavailability of training, resources, nursing research environment, facilitation, guidelines, background education, budget, practical application of curriculum, ignoring nurses, data collection permission, lack of nursing journal in Pakistan, ethical approval issue, cultural sensitivity, low education, information about predatory journals and plagiarism.
	Problems related to supervision.	Difficulty in finding a good supervisor, acceptance of supervisor, lack of commitment and over burden supervisor, supervisor behavior, method of supervision, lack of motivation, grooming, and facilitation.
Benefits of Publications	Improvement in Basic Skills	Communication skills, computer skills, writing skills, and command of the English language.
	Continuous Learning	Practice with rationales, learning from seniors, appropriate research environment and building repo with researchers.
	Educational Achievements	In-depth knowledge, higher education, chance of supervising others, and research collaboration.
	Career Development	Competency, group work, promotion, grooming, confidence, multiple opportunities, and recognition as a nurse researcher.