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Academic Challenges that Postgraduate Students Face in Proposal Research Writing in Kenya: A Case of Pan Africa Christian University

Abstract

When students enrol for postgraduate studies, the expectation is that, they will all finish their courses and graduate within the stipulated period of time. However, this has not been the case because research proposal writing has remained a real challenge for most postgraduate students in Universities across the world despite the exercise being one of the requirements that they must meet before they are allowed to go to the field for data collection. The result has been that, only a small percentage of students who enrol for postgraduate studies ever complete them. The aim of this study was therefore, to establish the academic challenges that postgraduate students at Pan Africa Christian University face while writing their research proposals and propose the necessary remedies. The study was purely qualitative and phenomenological in nature where data was collected using interview from 10 postgraduate students through in-depth interviews by use of face-to face and telephone interviews as well as online zoom meetings depending on the prevailing circumstance at hand. The data collected was analysed qualitatively after it was categorized into themes based on the study objectives. The study findings indicated identification of a research problem, development of a research topic, reading widely in the intended area of research, and crafting a conceptual framework as some of the academic challenges that postgraduate students encounter in the process of developing their research proposals. The study recommends for the intensification of both the postgraduate research writing courses and supervision as well as involvement of postgraduate students in practical research. The study further recommends for continuous proposal research writing seminars for all postgraduate who are developing their proposals.

Keywords: - Academic challenges; Postgraduate students; Research Proposal writing

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