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# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIGHT CLIQUE WHEN PURSUING YOUR POSGRADUATE DEGREE (WHILE LECTURING!)

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Doing a PhD or DBA is no small feat. Doing it part-time while working as a lecturer? That is a whole different ball game. The workload of teaching, preparing materials, handling students, endless research responsibilities, and administrative tasks to meet our working KPIs can already stretch us thin. Add in the endless cycle of reading articles, writing drafts, and facing supervisors' comments, and suddenly, the journey can feel like climbing Mount Kinabalu without training.

That is why having the right clique around you makes all the difference. Now, when we say 'clique', we don't mean a group that isolates itself or competes for who publishes faster. We are talking about a small circle of peers who are going through the same struggles, the same late-night coffee sessions, and the same "why did I even sign up for this?" moments. These are the people who remind you that you are definitely not alone in this madness.



A good clique will check in on you, not just academically, but emotionally too. They will share resources such as, "Hey, here's a good article for your literature review!", give moral support before a progress meeting, or simply listen when you need to vent about supervisors' feedback that feels harsher than it should. Sometimes, just knowing that someone else is also fighting with their problem statements, finding the right method to perform Systematic Literature Reviews (SLR) and bibliometric analysis, figuring out how to interpret PLS-SEM output, or even battling Turnitin percentages can lighten our mental and emotions load.

More importantly, the right clique keeps you accountable. It is easy to procrastinate when deadlines feel far away. However, when your friend says, "Let's each finish one section by this weekend", you suddenly feel more motivated to deliver. It is like having an academic gym buddy, where you are less likely to skip the workout when someone is there waiting for you at the door.





Personally, our little circle of DBA/PhD buddies has become a lifeline. We celebrated each milestone together; going out for coffees, cakes, and makan-makan, no matter how small. Submitted a draft proposal? That calls for a teh tarik session, for sure. Survived a tough Q&A session with panels during DRP? Time for a late-night nasi lemak. These small rituals turn the journey into something less lonely, and dare we say, even enjoyable.

So, if you are embarking on your postgraduate journey while working, our biggest advice is this: find your people. They do not have to be many, sometimes, two or three is enough. What matters is that they are positive, supportive, and willing to walk the long road with you. Because in the end, a doctorate is not just about producing a thesis, it is about surviving the journey with your sanity (mostly) intact. And trust us, the right clique can make a huge difference between giving up halfway or finally crossing the finish line with a smile.

Friends in need is a friend indeed. You've got this!





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