



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# How to Manage Your PhD

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**How would you describe your intellectual  
journey now?**

Is it like this?





Or like this?

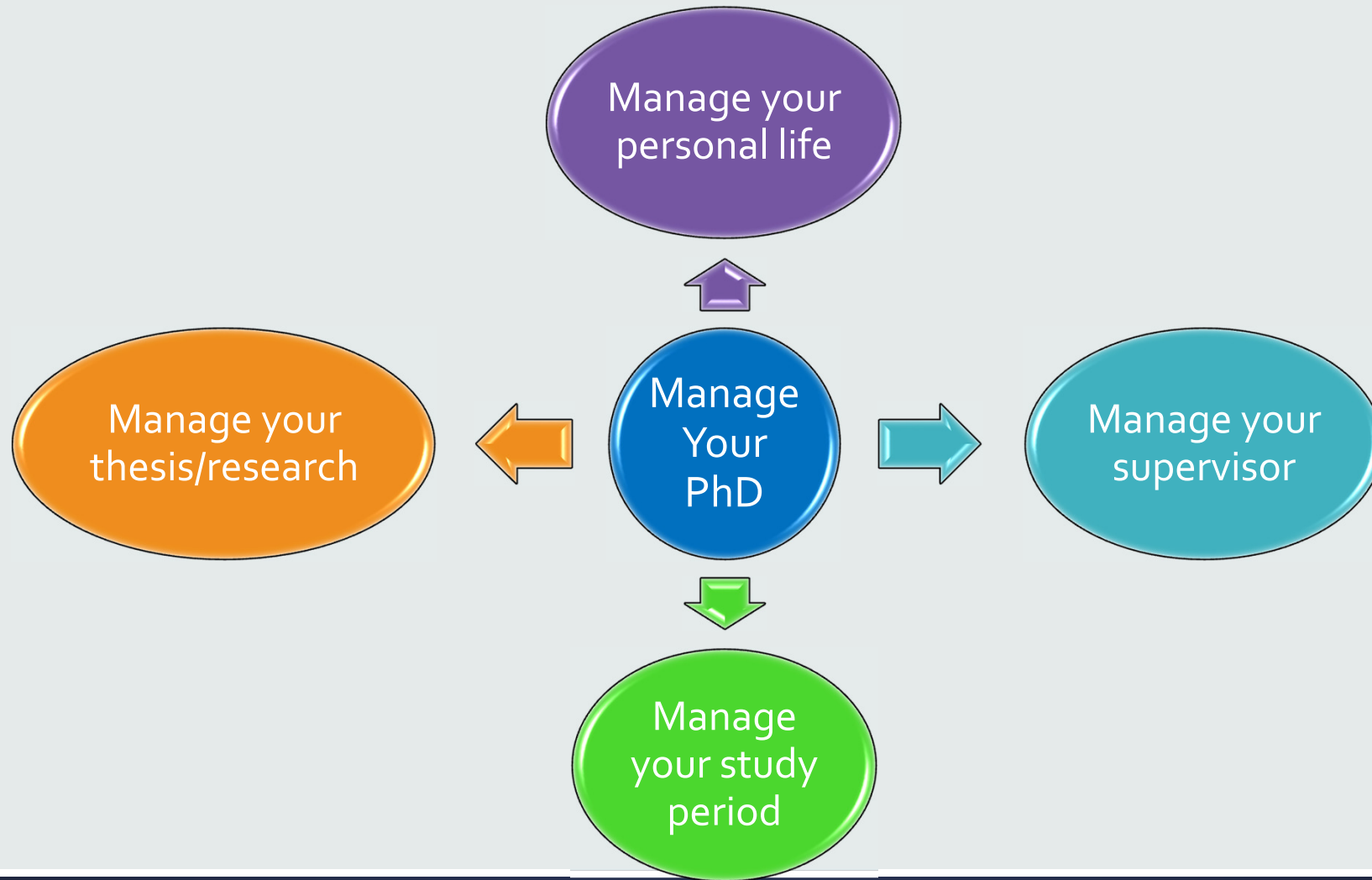


# **Common Problems among PG Students in Doing PhD**

## Problems:

- Vague research direction / topic
- Poor research planning
- Difficulties with research methodology
- Writing problems
- Personal problems
- Poor guidance from supervisors
- Social isolation

# Presentation Outline



**What is the purpose of your  
PhD?**



## ❑ Set your niyyah

- Az-Zumar ayah 9:
- Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)? Say: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah's Signs and Verses).

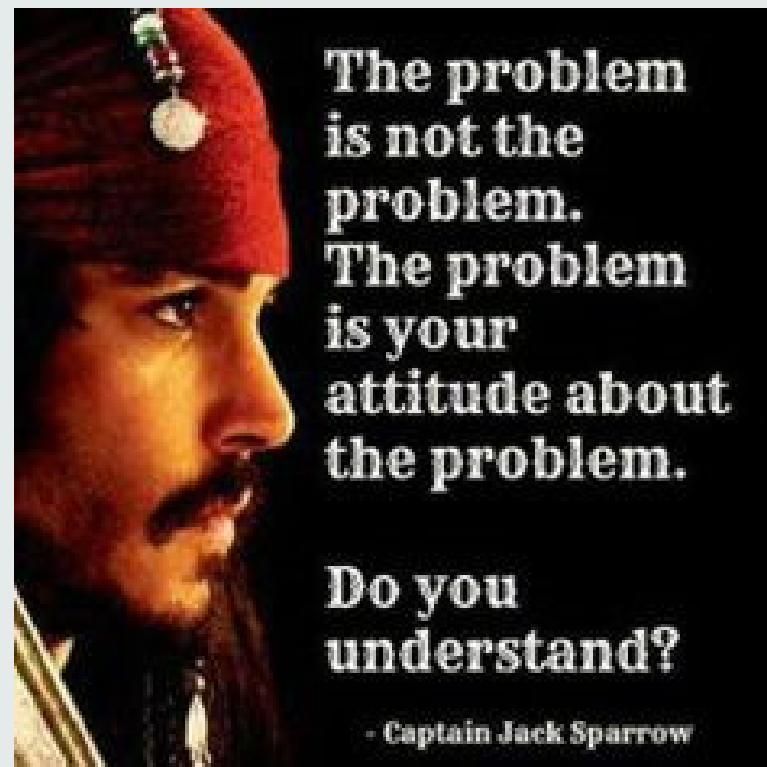
- PhD is **NOT** the **DESTINATION** but the **FIRST STEP** towards greater intellectual achievements in life
- It is the means to contribute to the Ummah

# Manage Your Personal Life

## Some common problems:

- Death in family
- Divorce
- Sickness of close relatives
- Health problems
- Unavoidable
- Inflicted upon you

“As humans, we cannot run away from personal problems. Even when we cannot avoid them, DO NOT CREATE THEM” ~ Adlina





“And once the storm is over, you won’t remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won’t even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. **When you come out of the storm, you won’t be the same person who walked in.** That’s what this storm’s all about.”

— [Haruki Murakami](#)

## In Islam

- A test is a sign of God's love to us, His creation.
- He will not test us beyond what we can bear (Al-Baqarah verse 286)

So,



# Manage Your Supervisor

# Get to know your SV. Why?

- Guides you in producing quality research
- Approves your work
- Writes the recommendation letter
- Decides whether your thesis is ready to be examined
- Assists you in publication
- Pays your bill for research expenses e.g. equipment, chemicals (when using monies from grants)



# Get to know your SV

- What are his/her **skills**?
- What are his/her **likes and dislikes**?
- What kind of **expectations** does he/she have on you?
- Arrive at a **common understanding** of each others' expectations on the research
- When is his/her **favourite time** for consultation?

# Get to know your SV

- Regard him/her as a collaborator
- Do the think that **will satisfy** him/her **not** what **you THINK** will satisfy him/her
- Get him/her to **do things** on time **without delays**
  - you take charge, do not wait; be proactive
  - Arrange for a meeting between you and the Supervisory committee

# Conflicts in Supervision

- Supervision =



- Conflicts can lead to



# The 4Cs to Deal with Conflicts

- **Communicate** – to resolve miscommunication
- **Compromise** – win-win solution
- **Consult** – approach co-SV for advice
- **Change** – if all else fails, request for a change of SV via the formal procedure

# Manage Your Study Period



**Do you know how much time you have to  
complete your study?**

# Study Period for Master & PhD

Type of Programme	Type	Minimum Duration (Academic Years)	Normal Duration (Academic Years)	Maximum Duration (Academic Years)
Master	Full-time	1	2	3
Master	Part-time	2	4	5
Master of Education (Counseling)	Full-time	2	3	4
Clinical Specialist Training Programme	Full-time	4	4	7
Ph.D	Full-time	2	3	6
Ph.D	Part-time	3	6	8

## Master – Registration of Research Proposal & Defence

Mode	Status	Reg. Res Prop.	Defence (2 sems)	Remaining Sem	GOT (semesters)
Mixed mode	Part-time	3 <sup>rd</sup> regular sem	End of 4 <sup>th</sup> sem	4 sems	8 semesters
	Full time	2 <sup>nd</sup> regular sem	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sem	1 sems*	4 semesters
Full research	Part-time	1 <sup>st</sup> regular sem	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> sem	6 sems	8 semesters
	Full time	1 <sup>st</sup> regular sem	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> sem	2 sems	4 semesters

## PhD – Registration of Research Proposal & Defence

Mode	Status	Reg. Res Prop.	Defence (3 sems)	Remaining Sem	GOT (semesters)
Mixed mode	Part-time	5 <sup>th</sup> regular sem	End of 7 <sup>th</sup> sem	5 sems	12 semesters
	Full time	3 <sup>rd</sup> regular sem	End of 5 <sup>th</sup> sem	1 sem*	6 semesters
Full research	Part-time	1 <sup>st</sup> regular sem	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sem	9 sems	12 semesters
	Full time	1 <sup>st</sup> regular sem	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sem	3 sems	6 semesters

# **Manage Your Thesis / Research**

## Common Problems:

- Vague research direction / topic
- Poor research planning
- Difficulties with research methodology
- Writing problems
- Low motivation
- Social isolation
- Procrastination

# How to come up with clear research topic?

- Read, read, read
- Discuss with colleagues, experts in the field
- What issue are you trying to tackle?
- Why is it so important?

# How to plan research activities effectively?

- Divide the activities according to realistic duration
- Develop a study plan
- And STICK TO IT!!!!



Project Activities	Mac 11	Apr 11	May 11	Jun 11	July 11	Aug 11	Sep 11	Oct 11	Nov 11	Dec 11	Jan 12	Feb 12	Mac 12	Apr 12	May 12	Jun 12	July 12	Aug 12	Sep 12	Oct 12	Nov 12	Dec 12
-submit concept paper	X																					
-search for sources	X	X	X																			
-Phase 1 -contact law lecturers		X																				
-contact students -interview lecturers -interview students			X																			S
Qualifying Exam				X																		U
-analyse interview feedback -analyse documents				X	X																	B
-prepare research proposal				X	X	X																M
Defend research proposal							X															I
-Phase 2 -identify cases											X											T
-identify lawyers								X	X	X	X											
-identify students										X	X											
-conduct TAP with students												X	X									
-conduct TAP with lawyers												X	X									
-analyse findings														X	X				X	X		
Writing up the research	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X	
LITERATURE REVIEW	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				

# How to handle research methodology?

- The **type of research** you conduct will determine the **resources** you need
  - Qualitative
    - Data Collection methods?
  - Quantitative
    - Data Collection methods?
  - Mixed method

- Important question to ask yourself:
- Are you skilful in the different methods?

# How to address writing problems?

- **Practice** writing skill from the beginning of journey
- Make writing a **habit**
  - Allocate time to write everyday
  - But what if I got stuck (writers' block)?
- **Read different types** of materials
  - To learn various types of sentence structures
  - To get more and better ideas

# How to increase motivation?

- Focus on **small signs** of progress
- **Self reward** after you have made some progress
- Get **advice** from a good mentor or someone who have positive outlook on life
- Close your eyes and **imagine** your convocation day

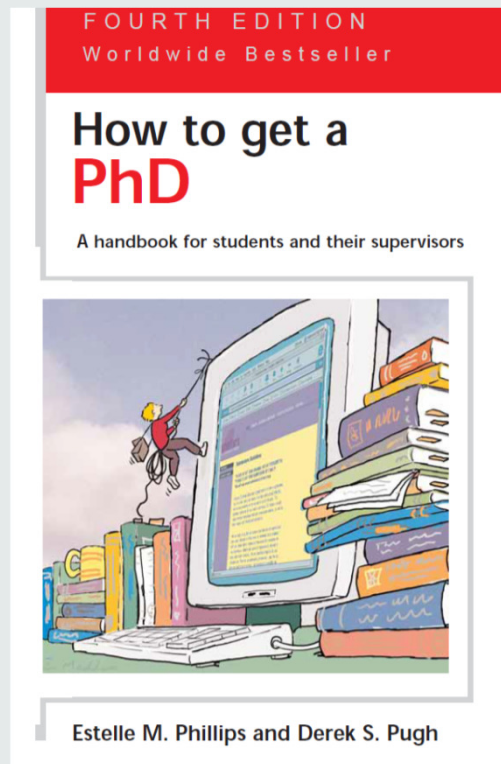
# How to not isolate yourself?

- PhD is a lonely journey; BUT,
- Find time to meet your friends to **TALK** and **SHARE** what you have done and what you plan to do
- Every time you talk to people you are **refining** your ideas

# How to overcome procrastination?

- Make a To Do List
- Set reasonable goals
- Stay focused
- Do not expect perfection
- Give up something as a trade off

# A wise advice



- “It is important that research students eventually realise that it is **DETERMINATION** and **APPLICATION**, **rather than brilliance** that are needed [in this journey]” (Phillips & Pugh (2005, p.26).



**Remember!!! Whatever happens**



So, plan and manage your PhD wisely  
and strategically

May Allah ease your tasks and grant you success.  
All the best!!!



# References

- Al-Baqarah verse 286
- Az-Zumar ayah 9
- Bentley, P.J.(2006). *The PhD Application Handbook*. Open University Press : New York
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- Phillips, E.M. & Pugh, D.S.(2010). *How to Get a PhD: a Handbook for Students and Their Supervisors*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Open Univ. Press: England.