**Synthesis Paper – Role of a Researcher**

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**Introduction**

In general, doctoral programs involve research and evidence-based studies. Thus, the need for doctoral students to remain properly equipped with robust research skills, competencies, and knowledge is crucial for successful achievement of a doctoral course. Inouye and McAlpine (2017) argues that the amount of a doctoral course and work is usually marked by increased and significant anxieties for learners to navigate through different research studies. To decrease the level of anxiety among students, they need to strengthen their research and writing competencies, including analytical skills, among other abilities. Students also must understand the basics and the advanced role of a researcher. Therefore, Coffman et al. (2016), Garcia and Yao (2019), and Inouye and McAlpine (2017) synthesize the role of a researcher using two themes: scholar and reflection.

**Common Themes**

**Scholar Theme**

Coffman et al. (2016) argue that that a doctoral experience is not complete without being a scholar. For them, a scholar as someone with field expertise or an expert within a given field. In addition, they similarly define scholar as an identity creation, which is beyond that of the undergraduate and master’s level learners. They also compare the terms ‘scholar’ and ‘expert,’ which they suggest can be used interchangeably depending on the researcher’s profession and interest. For them, an expert is someone with a complete and dependable knowledge of a given field that is not possessed by most people. Besides, Coffman et al. (2016) assert that being a scholar is a necessary aspect of completing a doctoral program. For them, students need to gain more knowledge and understanding because having these two is evidence of a scholar or expert in a specific area. In other words, they suggest that a scholar is a person with high research skills and acumen in different study practices. Coffman et al. (2016) also note that a scholar generally must show excellent presentation skills, learned through extensive research capabilities. Besides, they acknowledge that for one to become a better scholar, they must exhibit a transition from a graduate level course to a doctoral program.

Coffman et al. (2016) similarly relate being a scholar with developing a good scholarly identity in a doctoral program. They assert that developing a scholarly identity is pertinent for a doctoral learner because it develops them into researchers. For instance, they call every doctoral student to strive and develop an excellent scholarly identity. They further argue that the process of understanding scholarly research challenges and crafting the best practices to resolving such issues is critical. Likewise, they confirm that to assume the role of a researcher, doctoral learners must readjust their thinking styles and adopt superior research skills that encompass dynamic learning. The practice through which doctoral learners become scholars is complex and highly evolving (Coffman et al., 2016). They agree that this progress varies substantially from other academic levels, such as the undergraduate level.

According to Garcia and Yao (2019), doctoral programs often entail increased research and scholarly evidence-based practices. They assert that doctoral students must have impeccable scholarly skills since such competencies can help them to effectively complete of their programs. For them, scholarly development is an integral aspect that a student needs to become an efficient and accomplished researcher. Like Coffman et al. (2016), they also affirm that the process of forming a scholarly competence is challenging for students but ensuring best practices is critical to developing scholarly identity. They also ask doctoral students to adjust and readjust their ways of thinking while embracing research skills that promote dynamic learning. They further suggest that doctoral students must understand that research is always a process and not an event. As for Garcia and Yao (2019), good scholarly identity is developed from various research endeavors and efforts throughout the doctoral program.

As for Inouye and McAlpine (2017), a doctoral scholarly identity must be demonstrated by students’ ability to perform high-quality research while using evidence-based understanding to alter and promote academic and collective learning. They propose that scholars must take part in various academic work and writing. For them, scholars may provide academic feedback that is supported by practical research work. They ask doctoral students to always maintain credible and superior scholarly throughout their program through research publications and engagement. For instance, they argue that students must develop their research acumen through undertaking diverse research efforts and practices. According to Inouye and McAlpine (2017), for doctoral learners to enhance their researcher roles, they must increase their knowledge and abilities. In addition, they support collaborative learning to increase research efforts, including putting more efforts and commitments in participating in different academic learning.

**Reflection Theme**

As for Coffman et al. (2016), reflection plays a significant researcher role and essentially ensures scholarly success. For them, reflection is fundamental for students’ academic success as it helps them reflect on different research and academic practices. They define it as looking back at various life and learning experiences. Thus, they agree that reflection is based on experience and is an essential process in transforming learners’ knowledge gain. Inouye and McAlpine (2017) also agree that reflection is crucial in transforming students’ learning because it entails changing their perspectives on things while helping them to see things from different angles. For them, a transformative learning process usually occurs when learners’ perspectives change and transform, contributing new insights. Garcia and Yao (2019) also support the significance of reflection in doctoral students’ lives, saying that it helps them look at things differently than masters and undergraduate students. For Garcia and Yao (2019), reflection demands learners to assess their experiences and use critical reflection in writing. Garcia and Yao (2019) similarly assert that reflection leads to transformative learning experiences, which students can use alongside their learning to become successful researchers. Thus, they stress that reflection is essential because it allows students to learn new idea about their academic specializations.

**Conclusion**

The identified themes above, scholar and reflection, remain essential in shaping students’ learning process and research skills. Using the case studies provided, the authors have argued in favor of these themes as instrumental in transforming doctoral students to researchers. In other words, all the authors agree that scholar and reflection play vital roles in researchers’ work and writing. They are critical to improving students’ scholarly identity by engaging them in more or extensive research practices, writing, and reading. They also offer students excellent academic opportunities to address many emerging issues in research.

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