Navigating the Doctoral Journey: Reflections on Skill Development

1. Pre-Pandemic – Pre-Transfer Stage
   - Challenges faced: New to Everything, Rapport, Academic writing, Lost in wide literature, Am I Stupid?
   - Overcome the challenges: Supervisor’s support, Developing the skill development plan, Peer discussions, Reflective practice
   - Academic Development: Communication, Project Management, Review of Literature, Research Skills, Criticality
   - Personal Development: Public Speaking, Leadership, Collaboration, Open-mindedness, Self-awareness, Networking and teamworking
   - Ongoing Journey
   - SKILLS DEVELOPED: critical thinking, be strategic, flexibility, resilience, patience

2. During the 1st and 2nd Waves of the Pandemic - The Transfer Stage
   - Challenges in Front
   - Designing the Methodology
   - Approval - Research Ethics Committee
   - Qualitative Design
   - Phenomenological Study
   - Data Collection
   - Documents
   - Interviews
   - To Collect Data
   - Plan A – Face to Face Interviews
     - Go to the field.
     - Have face to face communication.
     - Obtain relevant documents and conduct face to face interviews.
   - Plan B – Online Interview
     - essential nature of this trip.
     - the a good support network on the ground
     - obtained permissions from the Sri Lankan government
   - Challenges faced
     - Lockdown in UK
     - International Travel Restrictions
     - Potential Risk to All
   - Overcome the challenges - skills into practice
     - Highlighted on the
       - CHALLENGES WITHIN THE CONTEXT
     - Authorities - Not responding – no participant information
     - Participants - Lack of willingness and knowledge towards online interviews (some)
     - Technology
       - Lack of technological knowledge
       - broadband - less effective in rural.
       - Technical and system Problem with Zoom
     - Skills Developed
       - Assessing the Risk
       - Negotiation
       - Clarity of documentation
       - Procedures to follow
       - Adjust to the situation
       - Patience

3. The 3rd Wave of the Pandemic – Post Transfer Stage
   - Challenges in Hand
     - Inability to go to the field due to continuous lockdown.
     - Delaying Data collection
     - Project completion timeline has changed.
     - Uncertainty
   - Conduct of Research study
     - Activate Plan B – Online interviews
     - Plan for unavoidable delays and obstacles outside my control
     - Take account of contingent and rapidly changing circumstances, with the need for flexibility and alternative plans.
   - Academic Development
     - Submit abstract / poster to Online Conferences
     - Participate in Online Student Conferences
     - Planning of a Journal Article
   - Doctoral journey of each PGR is unique and rarely runs smoothly, so PGRs need to be equipped with skills and qualities in good measure to face the challenge.
   - What I am experiencing...
   - ...... Is the reality.

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