



Participation in Research Conferences for Postgraduate Students at the Department of English, University of Tripoli, Libya

¹ Mabrouka Ahmed Bawa 

² Nadia Nuseir 

¹ Department of English, University of Al-jufra, Al-jufra, Libya

² Department of English, Faculty of Arts & Language- University of Tripoli, Tripoli, Libya

Corresponding Authors: m.bawa@uot.edu.ly & n.nsir@uot.edu.ly

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perspectives and experiences of postgraduate students in the Department of English at the University of Tripoli, Libya, when presenting their research at academic conferences and publishing their papers in conference proceedings. The study also focuses on the challenges these students encounter with preparing their publications and presentations, besides the strategies they adopt to overcome these challenges. A qualitative research design was adopted, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 postgraduate students who had prior experience in participating in conferences. The findings revealed six key themes related to students' perceptions and experiences in: personal benefits, development of presentation skills, improvement in academic writing skills, enhancement of research methodology skills, professional development and growth within academic networking. The study also identified five main challenges, including time constraints, formatting and citation issues, submission pressure, difficulties in responding to peer-review feedback, and technical challenges related to submission systems. To address these challenges, students employed various strategies, such as effective time management, use of digital academic tools, adherence to academic style guides, seeking supervisory guidance, peer collaboration, systematic integration of reviewers' feedback, building confidence through feedback, deepening understanding of the research topic, and learning to use submission systems. The study concludes that participation in academic conferences significantly contributes to enhancing postgraduate students' academic and professional competencies despite the challenges encountered, and practical recommendations are provided to foster a more supportive and enabling research environment within Libyan universities.

Keywords: Academic Conference, Research Paper, Conference Proceedings, Research Presentations, Challenges.

Introduction

Academic conferences play a significant role in the academic and professional development of postgraduate students. They not only provide a platform for presenting research findings but also encourage students to critically engage with existing knowledge and refine their scholarly arguments. Through participation in these conferences, students have the opportunity to interact with researchers from different backgrounds, exchange ideas, and gain exposure to emerging trends and methodologies in their fields. Moreover, conferences serve as an opportunity for receiving constructive feedback from





experienced academics, which helps students improve the quality and objectivity of their research. Beyond the academic benefits, these events foster the development of essential professional skills, such as effective communication, networking, and the ability to respond confidently to questions and critiques.

Despite these advantages, postgraduate students at the University of Tripoli encounter several challenges that may hinder their active contribution. Many students have limited experience in conducting independent research, which affects their confidence and preparedness when presenting their work. Language barriers, particularly in English, present additional challenges in conveying thoughts clearly and engaging with international audiences. Furthermore, institutional support for research dissemination is often limited, and financial constraints may prevent students from attending conferences or accessing necessary resources. These factors create a gap between the potential benefits of conference participation and the actual experiences of students, highlighting the need to explore both the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles effectively.

Study Objective

This study aims to analyze the challenges postgraduate students encounter when presenting and publishing their research at academic conferences, and to explore the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. Additionally, it provides recommendations to enhance academic participation and improve professional performance, thereby contributing to the development of a supportive research environment in Libyan universities.

Problem Statement

Postgraduate students at the University of Tripoli have limited opportunities to present and publish their research, which hinders the development of their research and presentation skills and limits their ability to engage effectively with the academic community. Moreover, there is a lack of local studies examining Libyan students' experiences with academic conferences, making it necessary to investigate this phenomenon independently to understand the challenges involved and propose appropriate solutions.

Research Question

Q1: How do postgraduate students perceive their experiences in presenting and publishing research at academic conferences at the University of Tripoli, Libya?

Q2: What challenges do postgraduate students face, and what strategies do they employ when presenting and publishing research at academic conferences at the University of Tripoli, Libya?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it highlights the importance of students' participation in academic conferences to enhance their research, presentation, and professional skills. It also provides recommendations to the university to support students and facilitate their participation in academic events, contributing to improving the quality of research in Libyan universities and enhancing their academic standing both locally and internationally.



Literature Review

This literature review examines the key concepts, previous studies, challenges, and strategies related to presenting and publishing postgraduate students' research at academic conferences, with a focus on the Libyan context. It also identifies the research gap and outlines the theoretical framework guiding this study.

Key Terms and Concepts

An academic conference is a formal gathering where researchers, scholars, and practitioners meet to present, discuss, and share research findings. Conferences provide opportunities for professional development, networking, and receiving constructive feedback, helping participants refine their research and presentation skills (Zheng Liu & Song, 2020).

Research papers is an academic document presenting original findings by the author on a specific topic based on gathering data from various sources. It can be classified into two types: primary research, involving direct investigation and data collection (e.g., through experiments or surveys), and secondary research, which involves reviewing and analyzing existing studies. Research papers should be well written and are important for contributing to knowledge in a particular field, often being published in journals (Shrestha, Tiwari, & Khatri (2021). Presenting research papers at conferences allows students to refine their work and improve its quality through feedback from others.

Conference Proceedings are formal publications that document the research presented at academic conferences, workshops, or professional gatherings. They typically consist of full papers, abstracts, or posters submitted by participants and may be distributed in printed or electronic formats. These proceedings serve as an official record of the scholarly work shared and provide insight into current research trends in the field (University at Buffalo Libraries, 2025).

Research Presentation are structured methods of sharing research and ideas with an audience during academic events. They often include visual aids such as slides, graphs, or charts to make information more accessible. Presentations help students develop communication and public speaking skills, teaching them how to deliver complex ideas clearly, and effectively (Burns & Joyce, 1997). These skills are crucial for both academic progression and professional success.

Challenges are the difficulties or obstacles researchers may encounter while conducting research or attempting to publish it. These include limited research experience, difficulties in academic writing, lack of institutional support, financial constraints, or problems accessing peer-reviewed journals (Kumar, 2019).

Academic Conferences for English postgraduate students in the Libyan Context

In Libya, academic conferences gaining more attention for postgraduate students, contributing to skill development and research collaboration since the mid-2010s. According to archival conference records, Sebha University held the First Scientific Conference for Graduate Students in 2017, providing postgraduate students with a dedicated platform to present and discuss their research (Sebha University, 2022). This conference, under the theme "For the Improvement of Postgraduate Outcomes", highlighted





the alignment of graduate theses with contemporary developments in applied and humanities sciences, aiming to enhance the quality of university outputs and advance Libya's scientific standing. The scientific lecture "Postgraduate Studies: Reality and Future Prospects" was delivered during the event, and research papers spanned areas such as humanities and social sciences, basic and applied sciences, and health sciences (Libyan News Agency – LANA, 2017). All the annual proceedings of the conferences are published at Sebha university journal (2022)

Subsequently, Sebha University continued to champion scientific research through a series of annual conferences, including key events such as the International Conference on Science and Technology, the Graduate Studies Conference, the Humanities Conference, and other disciplinary gatherings that attract researchers and students from across Libya and beyond. By 2025, the university had prepared and hosted eight consecutive annual conference events, reflecting its ongoing commitment to advancing students' research competencies at both national and international levels, with preparations underway for the upcoming 2026 session (Sebha University Conference Proceedings, 2025). The proceedings of these conferences are documented and published on the SUCP platform, providing open peer-reviewed access to high-quality research across scientific and humanities disciplines.

Nalut University pioneered this movement in English studies through the First Scientific Conference in English Language and Literature held on May 19, 2022, for postgraduate students. This conference promoted research and academic exchange in applied linguistics and English literature, allowing students to present and discuss their work, contributing to academic collaboration among Libyan universities and enhancing skills in academic writing, presentation, and methodology. It's expanding topics to include modern teaching methods and the role of literature in Libyan culture, further strengthening connections among national and international postgraduate students (Nalut University, 2022).

The 3rd Regional International Scientific Conference on Medical, Educational, and Economic Sciences was held in Tripoli on September 3, 2024, under the theme "The Role of Institutions in Leading Sustainable Development," organized by the Libyan Association for Educational Sciences and Al-Ghad University. This event provided postgraduate students with opportunities to present and officially publish research, enhancing methodological, writing, and presentation skills while receiving feedback from professional experts, motivating ongoing engagement in future conferences (Libyan Association for Educational Sciences & Al-Ghad University, 2024).

Benghazi University hosted the First International Scientific Conference from November 25–28, 2024, titled "The Reality and Prospects of Teaching Methods and Theories of Learning Living Languages and Translation in Arab Universities." Supported by institutions such as the Libyan Academy Ajdabiya Branch, postgraduate students presented research that fostered academic collaboration and skill development, encouraging students to build networks and enhance communication competencies (Benghazi University, 2024). Following its first edition, Benghazi University organized the Second International Scientific Conference on Languages from October 18–23, 2025. The conference focused on exploring advanced methods of teaching foreign languages, addressing challenges in Arab academic institutions, and strengthening academic and research collaboration among regional and international universities (Benghazi University, 2025).

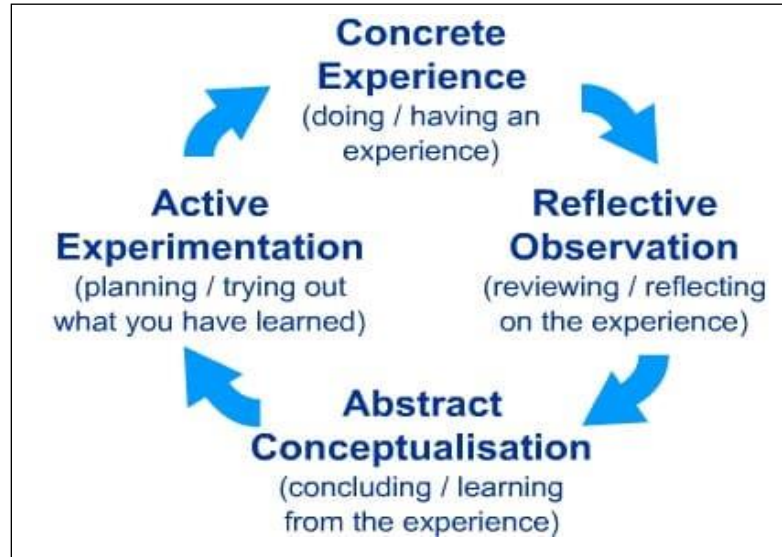




Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) as a theoretical framework, which suggests that learning occurs through a continuous cycle of ⁽¹⁾ concrete experience, ⁽²⁾ reflective observation, ⁽³⁾ abstract conceptualization, and ⁽⁴⁾ active experimentation. Figure 1 presented Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle:

Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



Note. Adapted from Simply Psychology (2025).

In the context of academic conferences, this framework provides a strong foundation for understanding how postgraduate students develop their research, presentation, and professional skills.

Participation in conferences provides concrete experiences by allowing students to present their research findings, interact with peers and experts, and receive immediate feedback. This hands-on engagement exposes students to real academic practices and the expectations of the scholarly community. Through reflective observation, students critically analyze their performance and the feedback received, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The abstract conceptualization stage enables students to connect these experiences to broader research principles, theories, and methodological approaches, deepening their understanding of effective research and presentation strategies. Finally, active experimentation allows students to apply the ideas and strategies they have learned in future research projects, presentations, and publications, thereby enhancing their overall academic competence.

By applying Kolb's framework, this study not only analyzes the challenges faced by postgraduate students in presenting and publishing their research, but also highlights the strategies they adopt to overcome these challenges. This approach provides a structured way to examine how students learn from their experiences, develop their professional identity, and improve their research skills through conference participation. Furthermore, linking experiential learning with conference engagement demonstrates the importance of institutional support, academic mentorship, and skill development programs, showing how



the study's findings can inform policies and practices to promote academic and professional growth for students in Libyan universities.

Previous Studies

In the literature related to academic conferences, and based on available studies, only one relevant study was found in the local Libyan context, which is a study by Bawa (2024), while seven other studies have been identified in the international contexts.

Local Context

Bawa (2024) conducted a qualitative study examining common errors in presentations made by Libyan postgraduate students at University of Tripoli. This study involved 15 participants and worked on categorizing and analyzing their challenges into linguistic, cognitive, performance, and contextual types. The research, also explored that presentations in public through conferences could improve academic writing especially through constructive feedback. The study also concluded that participation in conferences enhances confidence in engaging with academic audience and provided professional development through interaction with them.

The relevant international studies are listed from the most recent to the oldest:

International Context:

Zaharatos, Taylor Meyer, and Hernandez-Webster (2023) conducted a paper of practice to explore the use of a "Conference as Curriculum" model in developing students' understanding of critical approaches, challenges, and opportunities in community-engaged research (CER). The study took place in Santa Cruz, California, USA, involving 22 undergraduate and graduate students from two higher education institutions in Monterey County, who attended the "All-In: Co-Creating Knowledge for Justice" Conference in October 2022. Participation included pre- and post-conference sessions to prepare students and guide reflections on their learning and future work. Data were collected qualitatively through student vignettes, reflective observations, and experiential learning activities during the conference. The findings indicated that conference participation fostered students' connection with the community and with each other, enhanced their understanding of community-engaged research, and developed their professional acumen. The authors highlighted the potential of this model to be replicated in other higher education institutions to promote experiential learning and strengthen university-community collaborations.

Li & Huang (2022) conducted a quantitative study, a sample of 463 master's students from various disciplines in Western China was surveyed to assess the impact of online academic conferences on their skills development. The findings indicated that conference participation enhanced innovative thinking, motivation, and critical analysis. This research highlights the broader role conferences play in developing academic and professional skills across diverse disciplines, even when conducted online.

Majid, Jafri, & Siddiqui (2022), investigated the publication dynamics of postgraduate students' research in Pakistan, focusing on the challenges they face in publishing full research papers. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The study aimed to explore the publication rate of conference abstracts submitted by postgraduate students and identify the barriers that prevent them from publishing these abstracts as full research papers. The findings showed that 51.8% of





the abstracts were published as full papers, with higher publication rates for oral presentations (61.3%) compared to poster presentations (34.5%). Several key barriers were identified, including lack of time, limited writing skills, lack of funding for publication fees, and negative or statistically insignificant results.

Tella & Onyancha (2021) examined the scholarly publishing experiences of postgraduate students in twelve universities in South-west Nigeria. The research employed a quantitative design, collecting data through a questionnaire from 919 postgraduate students. The study aimed to explore the students' experiences with publishing academic papers, identifying the necessary skills and the challenges they face in the process. The findings of the study revealed that 23.7% of the participants had published academic papers, with the majority having 0 to 2 years of experience in scholarly publishing. The research identified several key skills necessary for academic publishing, including data analysis, literature review, formulating research questions, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Regarding the challenges faced by postgraduate students, the study highlighted inadequate mentorship as one of the primary obstacles, along with insufficient skills, limited funding, and restricted access to research materials such as journal articles and academic databases. Finally, the study emphasized the significant role of international academic conferences, which offer valuable exposure and developmental opportunities for students, enhancing their professional growth and research skills.

Campbell et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study in the United States at the Middlebury Institute, focusing on the learning experiences of 13 graduate students participating in academic and professional conferences. The study, which involved master's level students, aimed to explore how conference participation contributed to their learning and how it complemented or contrasted with their campus-based education. The study identified several key learning outcomes, including acquiring field-specific knowledge, gaining insights into professional trends, reflecting on diversity and belonging, and benchmarking academic knowledge against that of established scholars and professionals. The findings highlight the important role conferences play in the professional and academic development of graduate students, particularly in linking conference-based learning to formal education. The study underscores the significance of conferences in fostering holistic learning and professional networking, which are crucial for both academic and career advancement.

Wood & Skeritt (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore the postgraduate students' learning and development through conference participation utilizing Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) involving 11 postgraduate students from both South Africa and Australia. The study examined how PALAR can influence students' presentations, academic skills and personal skills. The study findings emphasized that action learning through conference participation fosters confidence, collaborative skills, and a deeper understanding of academic discourse.

Yessenova (2016) explored how graduate students can enhance their conference presentation skills and improve their overall experience at academic events. This qualitative study, conducted at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, draws insights from several graduate students and alumni. The primary aim of the study was to provide practical advice for graduate students to successfully present at conferences, focusing on overcoming common fears, enhancing presentation skills, and utilizing these experiences for professional growth. The findings highlighted the importance of conference participation for boosting



students' confidence and offering networking opportunities. It was emphasized that students should be active participants, engage in discussions, and ask questions to maximize the benefits of the event. Moreover, the study stressed the need for effective time management and clear organization when preparing conference presentations.

The gap in the existing literature is that postgraduate students' participation in academic conferences is often examined in separate aspects rather than as a complete, integrated process. Previous studies have addressed different dimensions of this experience. For instance, Li & Huang (2022) focused on the academic and professional benefits of online conference participation, including innovative thinking, motivation, and critical analysis. Campbell et al. (2021) explored how attending conferences contributes to graduate students' learning, field-specific knowledge, and professional networking. Majid, Jafri, & Siddiqui (2022) and Tella & Onyancha (2021) examined challenges related to publishing, particularly converting conference abstracts into full research papers. Wood & Skerritt (2019) and Yessenova (2016) highlighted oral presentation skills, confidence building, and personal development.

In the Libyan context, empirical research on academic conference participation is very limited. Bawa (2024) analyzed common errors made by postgraduate students during presentations, identifying challenges such as weak performance, stress, and low self-confidence. However, this study did not address the publication aspect of research or strategies to overcome these challenges. Building on this, the current study is derived from Bawa's (2025) master's thesis, which explored postgraduate students' experiences in presenting and publishing research papers through academic conferences at the University of Tripoli. The data have been reorganized and reanalyzed to cover the entire process, including both presentation and publication, as well as the associated challenges and coping strategies.

Therefore, the gap persists in the absence of studies that investigate presenting and publishing postgraduate students' research at academic conferences as a unified and holistic process, particularly in the Libyan context. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of postgraduate students' experiences, challenges, and strategies in academic conference participation.

Material and Methods

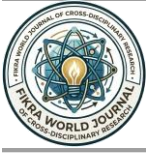
Study Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach to explore postgraduate students' experiences and perceptions regarding participation in academic conferences, research presentations, and publications. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method, allowing an in-depth exploration of challenges, strategies, and professional growth (Creswell, 2014).

Participants

A purposive sample of ten postgraduate students was selected based on their participation in the following conferences: the 3rd International Scientific Conference for Medical, Educational, and Economic Sciences (Tripoli, September 2024), and the 1st International Conference on Teaching Methods and Learning Theories in Arab Universities (Benghazi, November 2024). Participants represented different stages of the master's program to capture diverse experiences.





Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten students using eight open-ended questions, with follow-up prompts employed when necessary to elicit more detailed responses. A pilot study involving six students was first carried out to assess the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the interview questions. Feedback from the pilot study, along with comments provided by three experts, was used to make minor refinements to the instrument, thereby enhancing its clarity and trustworthiness. Following these revisions, the final version of the interview questions was administered to ten participants, whose responses established the main data for analysis. Of the interviews conducted, seven were carried out face-to-face and three via WhatsApp, with each interview lasting almost 13–15 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures the researcher followed, and possible risks might they encounter, and they also provided voluntary consent with the option to withdraw at any time without any pressure. Pseudonyms like S1, S2, S3,..... were used instead of their real names to protect their privacy. Indeed, all the data were securely stored by the researcher, while after the whole study completed the data will be deleted (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2021).

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews were analyzed to identify patterns, experiences, and challenges related to postgraduate students' participation in conferences, research presentations, and academic publications. The study employed thematic analysis as the main approach, as shown in table 2 which illustrates Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework for thematic analysis consists of the following stages:

Table1. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six- steps (stages)

Stages	Description
1. Familiarization	Reading and re-reading the data to gain deep understanding.
2. Generating Initial Codes	Identifying significant ideas or patterns in the data.
3. Searching for Themes	Grouping similar codes under potential themes.
4. Reviewing Themes	Ensuring themes accurately reflect the data.
5. Identification of themes	Describing each theme and clarifying its content.
6. Construction of the final report	Producing the final report and linking themes to literature.

Note: The figure summarizes Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework for thematic analysis.

All interviews were transcribed carefully, and the researcher read each transcript multiple times to become familiar with the data. Initial notes highlighted significant statements related to students' academic skills, personal development, research experiences, and engagement with professional networks. Data were manually coded, with key phrases and quotations labeled to represent repeated ideas. Initial codes reflected concrete aspects of participants' experiences, such as challenges in writing,



receiving feedback, public speaking, and professional growth. Similar codes were then grouped into sub-themes, allowing the researcher to systematically organize and interpret the data.

Results

The analysis revealed six main themes reflecting postgraduate students' experiences with submitting, presenting, and publishing their research papers:

1. Personal Benefits: including motivation, self-confidence, and academic curiosity.
2. Presentation Skills: covering public speaking, communication style, and handling feedback.
3. Academic Writing Skills: addressing structure, vocabulary, punctuation, and citation.
4. Research Methodology Skills: including editing, peer review, and understanding publication processes.
5. Professional Development: such as career-building and working under pressure.
6. Academic Institutions and Networks: reflecting engagement with research communities and networking opportunities. Table 2 highlights the main themes, sub-themes, and selected quotations

Table 2. The main themes, sub-themes, and selected quotations from participants

Them	Sub –theme	Quotations
1. Personal Benefits	- Self-confidence motivation - Academic curiosity	St1 <i>"It made presenting in a conference less intimidating."</i> / St3 <i>"Participating in conferences increased my motivation to explore new research topics."</i> / St10 <i>"I became more curious and eager to learn from other researchers."</i>
2. Presentation Skills	- Developing presentation skills - Improving communication style - Feedback analysis - Networking	St 1/ <i>"Preparing conference presentations has improved my public speaking skills."</i> / St 6 <i>"Feedback from peers helped me structure my presentations more effectively."</i> / St 5 <i>"Presenting at conferences taught me how to engage the audience and handle questions confidently."</i>
3. Academic Writing Skills	- Improving cohesion and Coherence enriching vocabulary - Controlling punctuation - Citation skills	St8 <i>"It taught me the process of writing an insightful research paper about something I love, which is teaching."</i> / St 5 <i>"Handling feedback helped me improve my grammar and clarity."</i> / St 9 <i>"Writing for publication required me to be more precise and organized."</i>
4. Research Methodology Skills	- Enhancing editing and reviewing - Understanding peer review - Using digital tools - Exposure to the publication processes.	St 2 <i>"Learning how the whole process goes, from writing, submitting, revising, presenting, and finally publishing, helped me understand the importance of peer review and the academic impact of publication."</i> / St 6 <i>"Using digital tools made organizing citations much easier."</i> / St 8 <i>"Editing drafts and receiving feedback strengthened my methodology skills."</i>
5. Professional Development	- Career-building, resilience - Working under pressure - Achieving professional recognition	St 8 <i>"It gave me new motivation to work on future projects."</i> / St 4 <i>"Publishing boosted my professional profile and opened new career opportunities."</i> / St 5 <i>"I felt more confident in presenting myself as a competent researcher."</i>



6. Academic Institutions and Networks	- Institutional support - Academic guidance - Networking opportunities.	St1 <i>"Publishing gives me recognition and credibility, which is important for my career."/</i> St 7 <i>"Interacting with experienced researchers taught me how to approach collaborations professionally."/</i> St 6 <i>"Conferences are great places to meet others and exchange ideas."</i>
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Note. This table presents the main themes, sub-themes, and selected participant quotations, identified in the study

1. Personal Benefits

The findings indicate that conference participation had a positive impact on students' personal and academic development, particularly in terms of self-confidence, motivation, and academic curiosity. Conferences provided students with real academic experiences, which helped reduce anxiety, related to public speaking and increased their confidence in presenting research ideas. Some students also perceived this experience as an important step in their academic journey rather than merely an additional academic requirement.

In this context, **St1** stated, "It made presenting in a conference less intimidating." This comment reflects how conferences can serve as supportive environments that gradually help students overcome fear associated with oral presentations. With repeated exposure to such academic settings, students are likely to become more comfortable and willing to participate in future scholarly events. Similarly, **St3** explained, "Participating in conferences increased my motivation to explore new research topics," indicating that exposure to diverse research areas can stimulate intrinsic motivation. In addition, **St10** noted, "I became more curious and eager to learn from other researchers," suggesting that academic interaction during conferences enhances curiosity and encourages continuous learning. This reflects students' perception that research continues beyond degree requirements.

Based on these findings, several sub-themes can be identified, including enhanced motivation, the development of academic curiosity, increased engagement with research, and the expansion of academic networks. These results highlight that conferences function not only as platforms for presenting research but also as valuable spaces for personal and academic growth.

2. Presentation Skills

The experience significantly improved students' ability to deliver clear and confident presentations. Receiving and analyzing feedback was particularly important for refining communication and organization skills, while conferences also facilitated networking opportunities. As **St 1** noted, *"Preparing conference presentations has improved my public speaking skills."* **St 6** said, *"Feedback from peers helped me structure my presentations more effectively."* And **St 5** explained, *"Presenting at conferences taught me how to engage the audience and handle questions confidently."* These responses indicate the following sub-themes: developing presentation skills, improving communication style, feedback analysis, and networking.

3. Academic Writing Skills

The data show a pattern of development in cohesion, coherence, vocabulary usage, and citation skills. Challenges included structuring paragraphs, managing submission time, and handling feedback, but overcoming them strengthened overall writing quality. For instance, **St8** explained, *"It taught me the*



process of writing an insightful research paper about something I love, which is teaching.” **St 5** said, “Handling feedback helped me improve my grammar and clarity.” And **St 9** stated, “Writing for publication required me to be more precise and organized.” That indicates sub-themes: improving cohesion and coherence, enriching vocabulary, controlling punctuation, and applying citation methods.

4. Research Methodology Skills

Also, the data highlight the enhancement that students gained experience in editing and reviewing research content, understanding peer review, and using digital tools for citations. Exposure to the publication process motivated them to continue pursuing research projects. **St 2** described, “Learning how the whole process goes, from writing, submitting, revising, presenting, and finally publishing, helped me understand the importance of peer review and the academic impact of publication.” Also **St 6** said, “Using digital tools made organizing citations much easier.” Additionally **St 8** explained, “Editing drafts and receiving feedback strengthened my methodology skills.” So sub-themes: editing and reviewing, understanding peer review, using digital tools, and familiarity with publication processes.

5. Professional Development

Participation contributed to career-building, resilience, and the ability to work under pressure, in addition to personal satisfaction and professional recognition. **St 8** reflected, “It gave me new motivation to work on future projects.” **St 4** stated, “Publishing boosted my professional profile and opened new career opportunities.” And **St 5** explained, “I felt more confident in presenting myself as a competent researcher.” Sub-themes: career-building, resilience, working under pressure, and achieving professional recognition.

6. Academic Institutions and Networks

Institutional support from national conferences and universities provided guidance, motivation, and credibility for publishing. Students valued opportunities to connect with experienced researchers and expand professional networks. **St1** said, “Publishing gives me recognition and credibility, which is important for my career.” **St 7** explained, “Interacting with experienced researchers taught me how to approach collaborations professionally.” **St 6** noted, “Conferences are great places to meet others and exchange ideas.” Sub-themes: institutional support, academic guidance, and networking opportunities.

Challenges Faced by Postgraduate Students and Strategies for Overcoming Them, Elicited from the Findings

Regarding the second question of the research, the study explored how postgraduate students handle the processes involved in presenting and publishing their research, beyond the developmental themes discussed above, the analysis revealed that postgraduate students encountered various difficulties during their experiences in presenting and publishing research at academic conferences. Table 3 summarizes the obstacles faced by students and the methods they employed to handle them effectively.

Table 3. Challenges Encountered by Students and Strategies for Overcoming Them

Challenge	Strategy to overcome challenges	Quotes
1. Time	- Prioritizing tasks	St9: “Each submission helped me develop my time-



constraints and submission pressure	- setting realistic timelines - using structured schedules	<i>management skills.</i> ” / St3 : “The pressure of deadlines was overwhelming, but it helped me learn how to manage time effectively”.
2. Formatting and citation issues	- Using digital citation tools - Using word templates - Academic style guides	St1 : “I faced difficulties such as following strict formatting guidelines.” / St10 : “I struggled with citation formatting, but after researching specific citation and organization tools, I was able to overcome this issue.” / St 2 : “Preparing my paper and presentation required learning to use digital tools for writing, formatting, and referencing. Using Word templates, citation managers, and presentation software helped me organize my work efficiently.”
3. Handling peer review feedback	- Seeking supervisor guidance - Integrating feedback systematically	St1 : “Navigating peer review feedback was a major challenge.” / St5 : “I overcame them by following my supervisor’s guidelines and seeking feedback.”
4. Group collaboration	- Setting shared goals - Dividing tasks, structured communication, and teamwork	St4 : “Working in a group with differing opinions, ideas, and tastes was difficult.” / St7 : “The submission process provided me with a team-working experience and improved my analytical skills.”
5. Emotional and psychological challenges	- Building confidence through feedback - Peer support - Deepening topic familiarity - Learning submission systems	St9 : “Next time I will read more about the topic and dig deeper.” / St8 : “Online submission systems can be confusing.” / St10 : “The feedback was positive, which boosted my confidence.”

Note. This table presents the main challenges encountered & solutions by postgraduate students during the processes of presenting and publishing their research in conferences

The table demonstrates that time constraints, formatting requirements, peer review processes, Challenges in group collaboration and emotional pressures were among the most frequently reported challenges. However, students actively responded to these difficulties by developing some strategies such as time-management skills, using digital tools, seeking academic guidance, and relying on peer support. The findings of the study revealed the following key challenges:

1. Time Constraints and Submission Pressure

Students reported that managing tight deadlines while maintaining the quality of their work was one of the most significant challenges. Feelings of stress and pressure were common among participants. As noted by **St 9**: “Each submission helped me develop my time-management skills, as I had to balance deadlines with quality work, a skill necessary for future academic research.” Similarly, **St 3** stated: “The pressure of deadlines was overwhelming, but it helped me learn how to manage time effectively.”

To manage this challenge, students used strategies such as prioritizing tasks, setting realistic timelines, and using structured schedules to balance workload and submission requirements. As mentioned by **St 9**: “Each submission helped me develop my time-management skills.”



2 . Formatting and Citation Issues

Meeting strict academic guidelines for formatting and citation proved difficult for many students. This required additional effort to ensure accuracy and adherence to institutional standards. **St 1** noted: *“I faced difficulties such as following strict formatting guidelines.”* Likewise, **St 10** stated: *“I struggled with citation formatting, but after researching specific citation and organization tools, I was able to overcome this issue.”*

Students addressed this challenge by using digital referencing tools, citation managers, and Word templates. They also consulted academic resources to achieve consistency. As described by **St 2**: *“Preparing my paper and presentation required learning to use digital tools for writing, formatting, and referencing. Using Word templates, citation managers, and presentation software helped me organize my work efficiently.”*

3. Handling the Peer Review Process

Receiving and responding to feedback from peers and supervisors required flexibility and the ability to adjust work accordingly. Initially, integrating feedback was challenging. **St 1** highlighted this by saying: *“Navigating peer review feedback was a major challenge.”*

Students addressed this challenge by seeking guidance from mentors and incorporating feedback to improve the quality of their work. As **St 5** explained: *“I overcame them by following guidelines from my supervisor and seeking feedback.”*

4. Group Collaboration

Working within research groups created difficulties related to differing ideas, expectations, and academic preferences. These differences sometimes affected the progress of collaborative work. **St 4** explained: *“One of the main difficulties I encountered during the submission process was working in a group with differing opinions, ideas, and tastes”:*

To overcome this challenge, students applied strategies such as setting shared goals, assigning clear roles, and using structured communication. **St 7** described this experience: *“The submission process provided me with a team-working experience alongside colleagues, as well as continuous feedback from my supervisor, which improved my analytical skills and attention to detail.”*

5. Emotional and Psychological Challenges

Students experienced emotional and psychological pressures throughout the submission process, including stress, uncertainty, and decreased confidence. Difficulties with online submission systems also contributed to frustration. For example, **St 9** stated: *“Maybe next time I will read more about the topic I am considering and dig deeper to see more examples.”* Additionally, **St 8** noted: *“Online submission systems can be confusing”:*

Students used strategies such as building familiarity with their topics, seeking support from peers and mentors, and engaging in reflective learning to strengthen their confidence. As **St 10** mentioned: *“The feedback was positive, which boosted my confidence.”*



Discussion

This section discusses several aspects of the student conference experience that were revealed by the findings of the present study.

When exploring students' perception about their experiences in presenting and publishing research at academic conferences, participants described the participation in academic conference process as a developmental academic experience. They mentioned personal development, rise in confidence, and the ability to communicate with academic audiences. Likewise, students highlighted the development of presentation skills, as presenting their research in front of an academic audience encouraged them to deal and respond to the questions. These results agree with Bawa (2024), which assisted that presenting at academic conferences rise confidence and help engagement with the academic community. In the same context, Zaharatos et al. (2023) stated that students participation in conferences help them in academic communication process and provide professional interaction. Furthermore, the findings show that conference participation contributes to improve students' academic writing and research methodology skills. Preparing a conference paper need an organized plan of ideas, discussion, and real attention to academic writing. Through revising papers by reviewers and gain feedback, students developed a better understanding of structures, referencing process, and the whole academic style. These are similar to Li and Huang (2022), who indicated that research activities encourages analytical thinking and academic writing. The present study linked these findings to the Libyan EFL postgraduate experience, where publication opportunities are limited. Participants highlighted professional development, supervisors guidance, and peer review whenever necessary, encouraged them to engage in more research activities. Exposure to new ideas, and methodological practices was also noted, aligning with Zaharatos et al. (2023), who highlighted that conferences create an academic environment connection and support students' career growth.

As for challenges, postgraduate students encountered some challenges such as time constraints, formatting and citation issues, submission pressure, and technical problems. These challenges were faced students for the first time when submitting their papers. This align with Majid et al. (2022), who mentioned that stress usually related to deadlines pressure and writing weaknesses, and supported with Tella and Onyancha (2021), who stressed that the lack of preparation and guidance problems. Moreover, Campbell et al. (2021) and Wood and Skeritt (2019) similarly highlighted the strategies of understanding presentation techniques and preparation time. These challenges were countered by the students through various strategies including effective management time, using technology, consulting their supervisors for direct guidelines, working with other students, and receiving feedback. The practice sessions also increased their confidence in submitting their work. All these strategies align with Yessenova (2016), Li and Huang (2022), Tella and Onyancha (2021), and Wood and Skeritt (2019), who all agree about the significance of time management, digital tools, guidance, collaboration, and active learning for skill development. Overall, the study showed that participation in academic conferences considered to be a training experience activity. Although, the challenges students encountered but they could develop strategies to overcome them. At the same time, the study highlighted an essential point, which have limited attention in local and international research in the Libyan postgraduate context,.





Conclusion

This study explored the experience of how postgraduate students experienced writing research papers, the academic conference journey and publishing process. The findings identified six main themes: personal benefits, improved presentation and academic writing skills, enhanced research methods, professional growth, and networking.

Some challenges were addressed including lack of time, formatting problems, stress from submission deadlines, dealing with reviewer comments, and sometimes technical issues. Students applied several strategies to deal with these challenges. For example, planning time effectively, using digital tools, following supervisor instructions, peer collaboration, and practicing presentations. Most students felt that feedback from peers, supervisor, and other experts helped them feel more confident and understand their research better.

The findings suggest that regularly participating in conferences, enhances and teaches students' academic and professional skills. Therefore, more university support in training and publishing process could encourage many students to participate.

Contribution

The current study highlights actual experiences, which reflects the local context of postgraduate students in the Department of English at the University of Tripoli in presenting and publishing research at academic conferences, which is unexplored in literature before. In addition, it combines both the challenges students face with the strategies they employ to handle with them, while all the previous studies searched each point separately. Besides, the study offers strategies that universities can implement to enhance research process, professional growth, and academic support for students, which improving research quality and encouraging a research through its different stages within Libyan universities. Indeed, the study adding a deep insights to students' perceptions and experiences, a context rarely discussed in previous studies.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest how students can benefit from academic conferences in doing research and communicating with other researchers in academic environment. At the same time, students' need more institutional financial support to engage in professional activities. Therefore, Universities could conduct regular workshops to enhance presentation, writing, and research skills.

Recommendations

The current study suggests that universities may consider:

1. Enhance supervision to better guide students through publishing process.
2. Conducting practical workshops writing, presenting, and using research tools.
3. Offering financial support for conference requirements.
4. Students benefit from working with peers and getting feedback often during research.



5. Supervisors could also keep students motivated by giving guidance and helping them stay active.

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