

Pursuing your PhD can be an arduous task, especially if you are not mentally or financially prepared for the marathon. As a MEXT scholarship recipient, I only had to worry about the former. For the next 3 ½ years, I spent many days and nights immersed in my studies. I lived, breathed and thought about nothing but my field of research for a prolonged time, making me think that it was all there was to life. Occasionally, I looked up, and all my friends and former colleagues were already on their way to their 2nd and 3rd promotions, buying their homes, luxury cars and taking exotic vacations. Oh, how I wish I would not have that catching up to do.

Having committed to my studies however, I continued to apply myself, and before long, my analytical skills began to sky rocket. I now had a set of transferable skills, including problem-solving, critical reasoning, and the ability to think in greater detail as well as from different perspectives. These skills have all enabled me to make a difference in the workplace. My employer now boasts of the wider benefits that they are receiving having employed me, implying that I have enhanced their institutional reputation and contributed to knowledge spill-over.

There has also been a marked growth in my personal development, of which the level of maturity and independence are the most obvious, in addition to further development in the areas of perseverance, persistence, time management and organizational skills, among others. I currently utilize these skills not only in the workplace, but also in my everyday life. Personal satisfaction through my doctorate helped to boost my confidence. My sense of achievement, self-awareness and self-actualization, especially in terms of meeting professional aspirations and performing self-fulfilling employment roles, are invaluable benefits which I have obtained through the rigor of the PhD. Staying the course was a sure-fire way of heightening my esteem and belief. I discovered that there is no secret source of knowledge to which I was being denied access. I had it all!! I have learnt how to be tough (mentally) from all the grilling, criticisms, and second guessing that I endured whenever I presented my research.

Being a MEXT scholarship recipient introduced me to a plethora of different benefits, reflecting my unique and individualized experience of not just a doctoral

degree but being a human being.

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