

Strengthening Student-Supervisor Relationships: An Examination of Postgraduate Students' Perspectives on Supervisory Supports

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Abstract: This study examined the role of supervisors in supporting postgraduate students from the students' perspective. Through interviews with postgraduate students at two universities, the research aimed to understand how students perceive and experience guidance from their supervisors. The factors examined included meeting frequency, feedback, and guidance received by students from supervisors. The analysis identified strengths in supervisory support in these areas, as well as areas needing improvement. Results indicated quality feedback and regular communication had the greatest positive impact. However, many students desired more hands-on help with methodology and writing. The study recommends supervisor training programs focused on writing guidance and supervision skills. By implementing such programs, universities can enable supervisors to provide optimal student support, thereby improving experiences and outcomes. This research provides key insights into strengthening student-supervisor relationships.

Keywords: supervision; guidance; postgraduate students; writing; postgraduate journey; feedback

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of higher education, postgraduate studies mark a critical juncture where scholars transition from being consumers of knowledge to contributors within their academic disciplines. At the core of this transformative process lies the relationship between postgraduate students and their supervisors, an alliance that shapes the academic journey and professional development of the former. The efficacy of this collaboration is vital, not only for the immediate academic success of the students but also for their long-term contributions to their fields of study. This research delves into the multifaceted dimensions of the supervisor-postgraduate student dynamic, specifically examining the role of supervisors in supporting postgraduate students, as perceived through the lens of the students themselves.

The postgraduate landscape has evolved significantly in recent years, influenced by shifting paradigms in academia and the broader socio-economic environment. Within this evolving context, the role of supervisors has garnered increasing attention as a pivotal factor

in shaping the postgraduate experience (Ilgen et al., 2021; Yaghi and Bates, 2020; Deem and Barnes, 2023; Lu, 2022). Traditionally, supervisors were primarily viewed as academic guides, providing scholarly mentorship, and overseeing the progress of their students' research endeavours. However, contemporary perspectives highlight a more nuanced and expansive role for supervisors, encompassing not only academic guidance but also emotional and professional support (Amparbeng and Pillay, 2021; Knutelsky, 2022; Pizzolato and Dierickx, 2023).

The impetus for this research stems from the recognition that the postgraduate journey is inherently challenging, marked by rigorous academic demands, the need for interdisciplinary competence, and the imperative to navigate an increasingly competitive job market. It is within this intricate web of challenges that the influence of supervisors becomes paramount. Understanding the dynamics of this relationship from the perspective of postgraduate students is not only academically enriching but also pragmatically essential for optimizing the support mechanisms embedded within educational institutions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant implications for academia, educational institutions, and policymakers. By elucidating the intricacies of the supervisor-postgraduate student dynamic, the study contributes valuable insights that can inform the development of effective support structures within academic institutions. Moreover, understanding the nuanced needs and expectations of postgraduate students can facilitate the design of targeted professional development programs for supervisors, ensuring that they are equipped to meet the evolving demands of their roles. That is why the objective of this study is to comprehensively explore and analyze the multifaceted role of supervisors in supporting postgraduate students, elucidating the nuances of this relationship through the perceptions and experiences of the students themselves. The research questions this study aims to answer are: 1) How do postgraduate students perceive the quality and frequency of meetings with their research supervisors?, 2) What types of guidance and feedback do students receive from supervisors related to research design and writing?

PERSPECTIVES ON POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISORY SUPPORT: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The student-supervisor relationship is widely acknowledged as a pivotal factor shaping postgraduate experiences and outcomes (Lee, 2018; Mainhard et al., 2009). Effective supervision provides necessary support as students navigate the multifaceted challenges of advanced research and pursue degree completion (Ismail et al., 2017). This review synthesizes key areas on supervisors' role in supporting postgraduate students.

Regularity and Effectiveness of Supervisor Meetings

The consistency of high-quality meetings with supervisors cannot be overrated as it gives students needed direction throughout their academic journey (Ismail et al., 2017; Lin & Cranton, 2005). However, research presents conflicting results regarding satisfaction with meeting frequency. Some students report meeting regularly and benefiting from ample face time with supervisors (Grace and O'Neil, 2014; Todd et al., 2006). Yet others describe difficulty scheduling meetings or sporadic supervisor engagement (Acker et al., 1994; Lindsay, 2015; Sambrook et al., 2008). Even when meetings occur consistently, power dynamics between faculty supervisors and students can inhibit open dialog (Lee and Low, 2008). It is however important to note that postgraduate students desire supervisors who are readily available, approachable, and willing to collaborate as partners (Armstrong, 2004; Wadesango and Machingambi, 2011). Interpersonal rapport and mutual trust substantially impact the quality of supervisory support (Ives and Rowley, 2005; Todd and Storm, 2014).

The studies above suggest significant variability in both the frequency of meetings and the extent of positive, open interactions between supervisors and students. While some students have supervisors who meet frequently and cultivate strong connections, others appear left wanting more accessibility, approachability, and partnership from supervisors. This further indicate that supervisor training should provide concrete strategies for maintaining open communication channels. It is important to note that normalizing collaborative relationships, rather than hierarchical ones, could aid in dismantling power differentials that silence student voices during supervisory meetings.

Research and Writing Guidance

Supervisors play a crucial role in equipping postgraduate students with essential writing skills, particularly in the development of their theses and dissertations. Providing assistance with research methodology design and fostering academic writing skills is vital for students' growth in these critical areas (Ismail et al., 2017; Wadesango & Machingambi, 2011). However, studies find that the depth of research and writing support varies extensively based on the individual supervisor (Armstrong, 2004; Todd and Storm, 2014). Some take an overly hands-off approach, providing only vague direction when asked (McCallin & Nayar, 2012; Lidyasari, 2014). On the other hand, many students appreciate supervisors who supply specific, constructive suggestions and "hard scaffolding" as they progressively grasp new research and writing capabilities (Gurr, 2001; Lee, 2008). This indicates that postgraduate students clearly benefit from and desire concrete, hands-on guidance as they hone advanced research and writing skills. This also suggests that supervisors should take an active mentoring role in these areas, rather than expecting students to independently fill knowledge gaps. Research shows

that universities with comprehensive supervisor training programs on research design and writing guidance produce postgraduates highly proficient in writing (Kiley, 2011; Jeyaraj, 2020). This suggests that ongoing supervisor development is key for disseminating expertise in these intrinsically challenging aspects of the postgraduate endeavor.

Feedback Practices

Research has underscored the importance of timely, clear, specific, and constructive feedback from supervisors, as it substantially influences the value of advancing students' work (Gurr, 2001; Ismail et al., 2017). Excessive delays in receiving comments on drafts can impede progress and undermine motivation (Armstrong, 2004), yet ambiguous or overly harsh feedback without clear guidance for improvement may also block student growth (McCallin & Nayar, 2012; Zhao, 2003). In the same vein, students benefit most from feedback that precisely identifies areas needing work while also recognizing existing strengths in their writing and ideas (Ismail et al., 2017). Incorporating regular feedback exchanges as milestones over the course program has also been an important tool to facilitate student progress in their academic journey (Gurr, 2001). The above studies emphasize that high quality feedback is timely, clear, supportive, and specific in its recommendations for improvement. It is important to note that postgraduate students rely on supervisor critiques to propel their work forward. It is therefore necessary for the supervisors to be trained in providing prompt and encouraging feedback that capitalizes on strengths while precisely targeting skill gaps. Also, setting mutual expectations around turnaround times for feedback could further enhance these critical progress checkpoints.

METHOD

This study is part of a more extensive research project titled "Navigating the Academic Odyssey: Exploring the Role of Supervisors in Supporting Postgraduate Students". This study focuses on two research questions from the main study. This qualitative study employs in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore postgraduate students' lived experiences with supervisory support at two South African universities. Participants were 12 currently registered doctoral and master's students recruited through purposive maximum variation sampling, to obtain diversity in discipline area, gender, race/ethnicity, and stage of study. This cross-sectional approach allowed for capturing a breadth of student perspectives (Ma et al., 2022).

In addition, one-on-one interviews were conducted by the research team either in person when possible or via videoconferencing using Zoom. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions to elicit PG students' experiences and perceptions related to aspects of supervisory support, such as frequency and quality of meetings, feedback processes, availability, research assistance and writing guidance. Follow up prompts and probes were used

to encourage expansion on answers. Interviews averaged 20-45 minutes, were audio recorded with participants' consent, and professionally transcribed afterwards. The recruitment and interviews continued until data saturation was reached, as evidenced by no substantial new themes emerging.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, an inductive process aimed at identifying and organizing common themes and meaning within textual data. The lead researcher first familiarized themselves with the data through close reading of the transcripts. Initial codes were then generated from the raw data through line-by-line coding, maintaining codes close to the participants' own language. Codes were iteratively refined, sorted into categories, and developed into salient themes related to supervisory support. Member checking occurred via participants reviewing their transcript and themes to ensure validity, while quotations illustrating themes were extracted.

The methodological rigor of this study was upheld through credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability strategies. Credibility was established through member checking, peer scrutiny of the coding process, and reaching data saturation. Dependability was addressed by creating an audit trail documenting the research process. Confirmability was supported through reflexivity and recognition of researcher biases. Finally, thick description of themes and context allows readers to evaluate transferability. Finally, the sensitive nature of exploring student-supervisor relationships required protecting participant confidentiality and anonymity through de-identified data and aggregating results. By centering students' voices, this study provides invaluable and in-depth understanding of postgraduate supervision experiences to inform improvements in supervisory support and training.

RESULT

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF SUPERVISORS IN SUPPORTING POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

This section presents key findings that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview data on postgraduate students' perspectives on supervisory support. Several salient themes were identified that provide insight into postgraduate students' experiences with their research supervisors. Both positive and negative elements were expressed regarding the guidance, mentoring, and assistance students receive from their supervisors. In presenting the findings, themes are presented using anonymous description from the interview transcripts. After discussion of each theme, connections were drawn to existing literature on postgraduate supervision relationships and outcomes. Comparison of the current findings to prior research allows for identifying areas of alignment versus potential new contributions to the literature.

Based on the concepts drawn from the interview data of this study, the following themes emerged: (i) Supervisor-student interaction in postgraduate research, (ii) supervisor's guidance on research design, methodology, and writing feedback.

Theme 1: Supervisor-Student Interaction in Postgraduate Research

The responses from the interviewed PG students provide nuanced insights into the dynamics of the supervisor-student relationship in postgraduate research. The overarching concerns revolves around the frequency, preparedness, consistency, and the impact of these interactions. The interviews unveil crucial discoveries into supervision, spotlighting exemplary interactions facilitating progress but also revealing acute frustrations with inconsistencies obstructing advancement. The themes center around session frequency, preparedness and engagement and their impacts on outcomes.

A predominant finding underscores students greatly valuing weekly hour-long meetings where supervisors thoroughly review work and provide extensive personalized feedback grounded in subject mastery. For these students, deeply engaged supervisors accelerate capability building through incisive critique nurturing critical thinking and research skills. Such responsiveness facilitative guidance centered on goal-clarity and tailored support closely aligns with models of best practice (Mainhard et al., 2009). It signifies the realization of supervision's long-espoused pedagogical promise smoothly progressing aspirants into rigorous scholarship. Conversely, students facing monthly, or less regular short meetings yearn for increased contact to obtain answers facilitating advancement between discussions. Bereft of timely responses, unresolved questions breed uncertainty hindering momentum. Such gaps reveal that postgraduate students strategize around scarce supervisor access amid evident systemic strains on even willing supervisors. This echoing the growing concerns over limited availability despite escalating supervisory burdens (Han and Xu, 2021). Hence, deficits illuminate supervisor pressures more than individual shortcomings, although students personally absorb frustrations.

Nonetheless, the paramount importance that the interviewed postgraduate students ascribed to guidance indicates underlying beliefs in supervision's unmatched capacity accelerating intellectual growth integral to researcher identity cultivation, when reliably accessible (Lim, 2018). Whether actively assisting development or passively hindering it, supervisors represent conduits to privileged insider knowledge and practices enabling participation. So, students demonstrate resilience reconciling unmet needs with deep-rooted understandings of supervisors' singular role of transforming potentials.

Additionally, supervisors' preparedness proves pivotal for productivity by signaling commitment. Some of the students praise diligent supervisors who review work beforehand to

enable focused meaningful discussions. The preparation of the supervisors conveys dedication through individualized feedback and critique enabling scholarly advancement. Equally distraction during limited sessions proves deeply detracting by shifting concentration from progressing specific projects. Students, however resent supervisors unable to direct full attention during private meetings when access remains scarce. Hence, present preparedness and undivided focus reinforce supervisors' essential role in nurturing success (Cross, 2021).

Similarly, supervisor reliability and consistency strongly emerge as central for mitigating student frustrations. Also, unpredictable short-notice cancellations foster uncertainty around guidance timelines. Such unpredictability challenges planning, priority setting and work rhythms while delaying feedback. Accordingly, it hinders smooth progress, affirming arguments for dependable coordination supporting supervisor compassion without abandoning students (Orellana et al., 2016). Certainly, flexible norms enable supervisors to balance priorities, yet frequent unilateral cancellations signal secondary importance amidst isolation pressures for postgraduates lacking collegial integration. This reveals tensions between legitimate governance strains and students' learning needs and a careful equilibrium promises a path upholding support continuity for postgraduate supervision.

The findings also illuminate supervision pedagogy's core role in transmitting procedural knowledge for initiating students into specialized research and rhetorical conventions (Toncich, 2022). This indicates that supervisors impart cultural capital, albeit highly variably by scaffolding investigations and texts befitting disciplinary fitness. Thereby supervision facilitates identity shifts, but narratives by postgraduate students reveal inequities with progress implications, yet demonstrated perseverance promises hard-won gains by piecing together networks that uphold advancement despite unmet desires showcasing fortitude sustaining gradual progress in the absence of reliable structures.

The interview therefore reveals adaptable students reconciling evident structural deficiencies by pursuing stopgap support to advance projects where formal provisions lag. Reluctant to overburden limited supervisors further, students settle for suboptimal continuity rather than stall progress awaiting adequate backing. Therein lies admirable resilience navigating through postgraduate journeys made unnecessarily more arduous by dependencies and strains (Lee, 2008).

The findings further reveals that by transitioning supervision towards more sustainable scaffolded models, research institutions could uphold excellence standards while responsively nurturing escalating aspirations. Therein lies pivotal promise - equipping systems to furnish inclusive personalized continuity promises immense dividends if supervision realizes its full pedagogical potential. The path ahead resides in resolving tensions where latent supervision

gains remain contingent on governance capabilities balancing support with manifold obligations.

In summary, the interviews reveal student encounters with exceptional supervision accelerating progress but also opaque structural barriers breeding impressive perseverance. Postgraduate students unveil supervision's immense dormant capacity amidst strains on realization, spotlighting crisis and opportunity. This study therefore argues that with reformed provisions, supervision's passageways can transport more aspirants into rigorous scholarship.

Theme 2: Supervisors as guides on research design, methodology, and providing feedback on writing

The responses from PG students here shed light on the varied nature of the guidance provided by their supervisors, particularly focusing on research design, methodology, and feedback on academic writing. Several students expressed satisfaction with their supervisors' extensive involvement in refining research design and methodology of their research works.

The interviews reveal crucial discoveries into multiple dimensions of postgraduate supervision, spotlighting strengths but also uncovering acute needs requiring attention. Indeed, the findings cohere around an overarching argument - the unambiguous primacy of consistent meticulous supervision for enabling student excellence. When present, engaged expert supervisors accelerate progress through tailored guidance on research designs and writing. Yet support deficits seriously obstruct advancement, leaving students' potentialities unrealized.

Ultimately, postgraduate students account converged upon impactful supervision centered on transmitting procedural knowledge through concrete modeling and feedback. By scaffolding technical sophistication, supervisors enculturate students into specialized competencies and conventions, uplifting scholarly skillsets (Masuku, 2021). However, attendance reliability and commitment consistency vary alarmingly, revealing systemic strains impacting even dedicated supervisors. This underscore well-documented structural pressures on supervisor availability amidst mounting supervision burdens and inadequate support.

So, while spotlighting supervision's latent promise, erratic access also illuminates postgraduates' dependence upon elevated gatekeeping agents. Students remain beholden to supervisor's controlling resources optimizing robust projects. Within this unequal relationship, they must strategize around unpredictable conditions and minimal direction from overloaded supervisors prioritizing other duties. Lacking alternative options, students reluctantly accept an unsatisfactory status quo, working around inconsistencies and delays. Therein lies a core finding: supervisors' capacity enabling rigorous research exists but remains constrained by norms students must reluctantly accommodate while progress suffers.

Indeed, supervisees interviewed recognized their supervisors' singular potential accelerating their trajectories through knowledge transmissions and dedicated mentoring if consistently available. All of the interviewed postgraduate students conveyed this underlying belief in their supervisor's latent ability to optimize their projects through expert guidance. However, when faced with distraction or unclear directives, self-doubt displaced blame onto supervisors. Students who questioned their own abilities internalized a personal sense of inadequacy which obscured the systemic pressures faced even by willing supervisors (Cheng and Leung, 2022). This reveals a pivotal discovery - students believe supervision can transform potential but they largely attribute difficulties to personal deficits when progress stalls.

Nonetheless, the postgraduate students interviewed unanimously underscore meticulous methodology assistance and writing feedback as pivotal for participation. They know their supervisors' input - when sufficiently concrete, regular and attentive - unlocks otherwise uncertain terrain and accelerating competence. Whether actively assisting skill development or enabling struggles through absence, supervisors represent conduits for students accessing and activating academic capital undergirding reputable research (Wallaert, 2022). Indeed, engaged responsive supervisors receive great praises for collaborative guidance identifying and addressing project issues. By reviewing student work closely then providing constructive concrete recommendations, they smooth majestic leaps towards research originality. For students, this hands-on commitment conveys supervisors' investment in their success through wisdom transmissions cultivating intellectual prowess. This signifies exceptional supervision fulfilling associated pedagogical promises (Bradbury, 2023).

Conversely, the interview revealed that absent, irregular or distracted supervisory input leaves students anxiously improvising forward through pivotal hypothesis testing stages bereft of expert oversight ensuring alignment with methodological realities. Bereft of tailored assistance on operationalizing questions or data collection, students risk credibility gaps emerging. Thus, unmet needs reveal an empathy shortfall where resource-deprived students must pursue external critiques filling support gaps (Darley, 2021). The interviews of this study spotlight supervisory inconsistencies antithetical to customized profound interventions at formative stages which close competence gaps.

Ultimately the postgraduate students' accounts highlight exceptional supervisors' immense yet unevenly realized capacity nurturing students into rigorous scholars. The interviewed students underscore supervision's role transmitting procedural knowledge through hands-on collaborative guidance. Concrete modeling and feedback accelerate competence cultivation, affirming studies that identity shifts through academic socialization (Li and Gong, 2022). Yet, reliable access variations reveal structural strains impacting even dedicated

mentors. Therein lies a paradox: supervisors represent singular conduits enabling student excellence, but conditions often constrain actualization. It underscores the need to strengthen capacities for more inclusive support amid accommodation and resilience driving progress, nonetheless. Postgraduate students recognize supervision promises transformation if only systems furnish conditions granting supervisor's abilities to unlock collective potential.

However, the accounts of the interviewed postgraduate students also crucially spotlight admirable persistence amidst unmet needs from postgraduates' bargain with unreliable systems to propel projects forward. Under-supported resilience sustaining gradual competence gains despite obvious barriers signals hard-won incremental wins. Reluctant to overburden limited supervisors, students settle for suboptimal gains rather than stall progress awaiting adequate support. Their demonstrated perseverance promises scholarly participation albeit through a far more laborious journey. Thus, postgraduate students underscore supervisors idealized potential but reluctantly accommodate a minimal reality well below optimal provisions for all.

In conclusion, the findings spotlight supervisors' immense dormant capacity presently constrained. Postgraduate students highlight its latent promise transforming potentials but also accommodate variability and delays from supervisors managing overwhelming obligations. By transitioning supervision to more sustainable models, institutions can uphold excellence standards while responsively attending to mounting scholar aspirations. Therein lies a pivotal opportunity: equipping systems for inclusive personalized support meeting escalating needs promises immense dividends. The path ahead thus resides in resolving tensions where supervision promises immense capability gains contingent upon structures furnishing conditions for supervisors provide them.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the multifaceted role of supervisors in supporting postgraduate students. The findings reveal the importance of regular and engaged meetings for productive supervisor-student interactions. For instance, postgraduate students who had frequent sessions with prepared, focused supervisors reported greater satisfaction and perceived their discussions as more valuable. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the need for consistent communication and undivided supervisor attention during mentoring meetings to foster meaningful interactions (Jalilifar, 2012; Lumadi, 2008; Van Wyk et al., 2016). Factors such as inconsistent schedules, distractions, and rushed meetings posed barriers to effective support as perceived by some postgraduate students. This highlights that both the frequency and quality of supervision sessions significantly impact students' progress and supervisory relationships.

Furthermore, this study evidence that weekly meetings for at least one hour optimized outcomes. Students who met biweekly or monthly with supervisors expressed desiring more contact for timely guidance and motivation. The findings suggest that implementing regular schedules and cadences early on ensures dependable communication channels. Though virtual conferencing enabled some remote supervision, most students preferred regular in-person meetings which they perceived as more engaging and focused. The findings indicate that while flexible arrangements have a role in contemporary education, traditional academic interactions remain impactful. Overall, committed supervision time, whether virtual or face-to-face, facilitates strong bonds that propel students forward academically and professionally.

In addition, the study points to the vital role supervision plays in developing students' academic capabilities through input on research design and writing. For examples, students who received regular, concrete feedback exhibited improved critical thinking, arguments, structure, and clarity in their projects and other research activities. This demonstrates the profound impact that tailored guidance can have in elevating student skills. Specifically, the findings showed that students valued assistance with constructing problems statements, determining appropriate methodologies, developing theoretical frameworks, creating data analysis plans, and crucially, refining academic writing. These findings confirm existing research emphasizing that hands-on supervision across all facets of research is indispensable for rigorous work and skill growth for postgraduate students (Sidhu et al., 2017; Singh & Kaur, 2023). However, some students desired more detailed writing feedback from supervisors, indicating potential mentorship gaps. The study also makes evident that supervisors must take an active role in collaborating with students on methodology while also dedicating time providing nuanced critiques on writing structure, clarity, cohesion, and flow. Specific and constructive feedback pushes students to strengthen arguments, analyze deeper, and articulate ideas better on paper. The findings emphasize both technical advising and writing mentoring are integral for enrichment.

Moreover, the findings also highlighted that effective supervisors connect students with resources and communities to promote engagement. Students felt energized and supported when supervisors facilitated collaborations, invited them to conferences or seminars, provided additional learning materials, and helped them navigate administrative processes. By actively integrating students into the broader scholarly network, supervisors enabled meaningful growth beyond core academics. Those supervisors served as true mentors supporting multifaceted success. However, some students expressed needing more guidance leveraging professional development opportunities, signaling an area for improved practice. Overall, the study illuminates that good supervisors holistically invest in students' journeys by caring for their wellbeing, developing technical abilities, and connecting them to opportunities - a

comprehensive approach leads to fruitful outcomes.

In fact, the findings showed positive supervisor relationships increased student enthusiasm, efficacy, productivity, and satisfaction. Students felt motivated to produce their best work when supervisors expressed genuine care for their progress and aspirations. They also reported a heightened sense of capability in their research and writing after receiving constructive mentorship from engaged supervisors. This aligns with self-efficacy theory which postulates that support from credible sources like faculty elevates one's confidence to perform tasks and achieve goals (Bandura, 1977). By empowering through guidance, good supervisors catalyze students' outcomes. Hence, investing in the supervisor-student alliance reaps measurable rewards. At the same time, detached or unavailable supervisors had a dampening effect on some students' motivation and progress. This again signals the need for involved and dedicated supervision for thriving postgraduate experiences.

In summary, this rich study provides compelling evidence that integrating academic and professional supports facilitates enriching postgraduate supervision experiences for both students and supervisors. It points clearly to the value of interactive supervision relationships to enhance scholarly skills and efficacy beliefs. When supervisors take a tailored, holistic approach towards supervision - actively collaborating on research, providing detailed writing critiques, facilitating professional connections, and offering morale support, student outcomes across multiple dimensions can be enhanced. Such comprehensive mentoring leads students to higher overall achievement, opportunity attainment, and satisfaction. Ultimately, students' success reflects positively on the caliber of supervision. Hence, these findings offer insights into strengthening postgraduate supervisory practices across all dimensions for the betterment of students and programs alike. By embracing a multifaceted mentorship role, supervisors can profoundly transform students' postgraduate journeys for the better.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

While these findings highlight the vital role supervisors play in shaping postgraduate experiences, several limitations indicate the need for further research. Firstly, the study relied solely on students' perceptions of supervision quality without input from supervisors themselves. Incorporating supervisors' perspectives could lend critical insights into supervising challenges and desired training to strengthen their practice. Secondly, the broad focus on supervision overlooked nuanced complexities within different academic programs and disciplines. Further exploration is needed that directly captures students' lived experiences from their own lens within each context. In-depth student-centered assessments can provide

invaluable specific understandings to enrich supervision relationships in each setting.

Though generalized guidelines exist for quality supervision, the intricate interpersonal mechanisms by which individual supervisors can optimize support for each PG student remain unclear. Future research should closely examine effective training interventions for enhancing supervisors' advising capacities across various contexts and disciplines. With targeted training and student-centered input, supervisors can be equipped to facilitate strong postgraduate experiences through supportive partnerships tailored towards students' individual needs.

Suggestion

The recommendations stemming from this study include increased oversight of supervision quality through student feedback mechanisms. Also, it is recommended that supervision training be provided to supervisors, and these training should provide supervisors with tools to actively build interpersonal relationship and trust with each supervisee through consistent meetings and accessible supervising. However, truly strengthening supervision requires centering student voices as student-supervisor relationships exist in a broader system. It is worth noting that enhancing training and oversight alone treats the symptom without addressing underlying cultural issues, and that is why authentic student-centered reforms must emerge from open dialogues between universities, supervisors and students. With collaborative commitment from all these stakeholders to sustaining supportive supervisory systems, PG students can be empowered to navigate the postgraduate journey.

In conclusion, centering student perspectives provides critical guidance for enriching supervision practices, and through the implementation of cultural and structural changes informed by students' lived experiences, supervision can be strengthened to empower students as partners in their postgraduate development.

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