MUTUAL CO-OPERATIONS AND IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO IN POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

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Abstract:

Having a supervisor who can work with students in an ideal way throughout the research process is something that is very helpful to students. PhD students or prospective students and their supervisors are a team. Although the parties who need to conduct research and complete the thesis report writing are the students, supervisors also have responsibilities and interests in the continuation of postgraduate studies. The precise cooperation of students and supervisors can usually be seen in the perfection and completion of an excellent theses. However, students need to first understand what the real role of supervisors so that students and supervisors can work well together. Among the role of the supervisor are to provide effective supervision, act as a mentor and guide and serve as an additional knowledge reference centre. Supervisors should also be able to play the role of advisor and provide guidance to students for more accurate sources of reference. The objective of this study is to discuss the mutual co-operations and it takes two to tango in postgraduate supervision and the responsibilities of both the supervisor and supervisee in creating a positive environment and an effective supervisory process for the effectiveness in the postgraduate studies. The three (3) sample of common issue and case studies

in addressing the issues encountered in supervision and the possible solutions to such problems are simulated as an option in creating better solutions and minimizing among the challenges faced. The study found that it takes two of them to tango and play their roles and understand their respective responsibilities for successful postgraduate supervision process.

Keywords:

Supervisor, Supervisee, Postgraduate, Mutual Understanding, Challenges

Introduction

The primary responsibilities that supervisors need to carry out are not only supervising but also acting as mentors, trainers guides and facilitators. Students need to understand that they will also be a supervisor to other PhD student candidates when students have succeeded and take on their trust as supervisors. It is important for students to know this fact from the beginning so that students are ready to take as much knowledge and teaching from the supervisory process they go through during their postgraduate in master and PhD degree. Supervision can be understood as a process of monitoring, assisting and motivating degree research candidates to obtain quality learning and learning outcomes. The practice of a positive supervisor-student relationship usually includes a combination of various factors such as: (1) supervisor skills and commitment; (2) student abilities and commitment; (3) the existence of clear policies or guidelines at the university level to overcome problems related to candidates and ongoing research. When these three things are given attention by the individual concerned, then the effectiveness of the supervision can be enhanced where individuals can play a role and understand their respective responsibilities.

Criteria required from a competent supervisor is someone willing to listen, guide, train, assist and be reliable. The role of the supervisor is to provide basic facilities to students, regulate and monitor the development of supervision so that students can perform their duties with excellence. They should be given the opportunity to develop talents and abilities as well as determine the goals of the study, encouraged to achieve and be proud of their performance while also raising the image of students. The effective and systematic supervisory practices will help the progress of student research, especially in postgraduate studies at the Master and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) level. To create a superior research culture, the supervisory process is carried out in an effort, to produce a quality, effective research where the research findings can be used as a form of innovation in the field of academics. As a learning organization, the teaching and learning process includes the interaction between lecturers as instructors and students not only individually, but in large groups. This concept focuses on the development of a student's self-potential. In this process, the supervisory process takes place where the lecturer is the supervisor, while the student is supervised as an individual or group (Nor Adha et. al. 2021).

Literature Review

Review of the literature brings into light various challenges faced by the university students at personal academic and administrative levels. Supervision may focus on the tasks that need to be undertaken by the doctoral student, such as the problem-oriented; or directed to the interpersonal processes in the relationship between supervisor and the student, for example the process-oriented (Emilsson and Johnsson, 2007; Goode, 2010). For those studying at

postgraduate level, the degree of success that they will have in utilising their knowledge is, in part, bounded by the quality of the teaching they receive during their PhD studies. Identifying the problems of the postgraduate education which trains academic person who plays an important role in developing the country and solving these problems are very important for the country (Karakütük, Aydın, Abalı & Yıldırım, 2008). Students are the valuable assets to the country. The mission and vision of the government is to produce students that make up human capital with a first-class mind to face the challenges of economic development based on knowledge and innovation as well as human capital development with skill knowledge and a superior personality (Nor Adha et. al, 2021). The production of a thesis is a key component of supervisory practice the professional development of the student is also important (Grant, 2003). During the thesis work, the postgraduate students and guides face a variety of difficulties (Duze 2010, Manchishi et al. 2015).

Supervision problems exist such as an inadequately low meeting frequency and depth, resulting in a stressful and lonesome PhD-education as well as frustrated supervisors (Dietz AJ, Jansen J, Wadee A, 2006). The result of the study by Gunnarsson et al. (2013) found that the disagreements in PhD education can be described with the overarching theme: the nature of the disagreements changes over time. Five categories emerged to describe the variations of the experiences: involvement in important decisions, supervisors not being up-to-date, dubious advice from supervisors, mediating between supervisors, and interpersonal relationships. In the past supervisor-student relationship has been relatively formal and supervisors have more control of the doctoral degree process (Hemer, 2012). Presently, it is more of a mentor and collaborative type of relationship (Manathunga, 2007; Wisker et al., 2007). The supervision that emphasizes more on the person and guidance are often perceived as been more supportive to the student (Murphy, 2009) but there is no one supervisory style that is effective for all students (Wright et al., 2007).

Methodology

This research uses qualitative method, adopts a library-based-research and applies the method of literature review through content analysis of documents. The literature highlights the opinions and views of researchers to the study. Hence, the analysis used was based on the content analysis especially previous academic studies conducted on the student-supervisor relationships. The objective of this study is to discuss the mutual co-operations and it takes two to tango in postgraduate supervision and the responsibilities of both the supervisor and supervisee in creating a positive environment and an effective supervisory process for the effectiveness in the postgraduate studies. The three (3) simulation of common issue and case studies in addressing the problems encountered in supervision and the possible solutions to such problems are simulated as an option in creating better solutions and minimizing among the challenges faced.

Analysis and Discussion

Cullen et al. (1994) present a high level three-stage model of supervision that attempts to encompass the key features of how experienced supervisors seek to structure the supervisory relationship as a student's PhD study progresses. The first stage is characterised by a significant input of time and effort helping the student to find or establish a question problem or topic for their thesis. In the next stage the student is monitored but allowed to operate with greater independence. Unless there are warning signs, contact is most often left to the student to initiate. The final stage involves writing up and, like stage 1, is again characterised by an increase in the time and effort exerted by the supervisor.

Cullen et al. (1994) claim that this model is common to all disciplines and highlights certain basic elements: - negotiating/guiding the transition from dependence to independence (i.e. the level of direction given varies bi-modally) - adapting the supervisory approach to individual student's needs and personalities, disciplinary differences etc. - recognising that a key to the entire process is the deft formulation of the problem/topic/question since it is that which ensures focus and engagement. The tension here arises from the delicate task of guiding students away from non-productive paths without taking over or undermining student 'ownership' of the problem. Being as postgraduate students, it involves them in organizing measures and strategies to deal with all future challenges as the backbone in being leaders in various employment sectors (Nor Adha & Norfaezah, 2020).

Nor Adha (2018) states that the role of the supervisor is to provide effective supervision, act as a mentor and guide, and serve as an additional knowledge reference center. Supervisors should also be able to play the role of advisor and provide guidance to students for more accurate sources of reference. The brief explanation as follows:

Provide Effective Supervision.
Effective supervision goes beyond the purpose of research and production of the thesis itself by including the following: Willingness to provide support for a student's intellectual development; Being a liaison and facilitator to the network between students and experts in research-related fields; Raise and encourage PhD students to become highly regarded thinkers and scientists. These roles are not easy. A student's performance is interrelated with personal and academic issues. Supervisors need to balance the style of supervision between personal and academic natures according to the needs of different students.

Act As a Mentor and Guide.
Apart from supervising and meeting the comprehensive demands of the needs of a PhD student, supervisors serve as mentors and guides to their supervised students. In an ideal situation, the supervisor is to be a patient teacher to deal with the various frustrations of his students. As a student, you need to understand that such a role is very challenging for a supervisor because they also have other responsibilities and duties in their respective institutions and departments. Apart from that, a supervisor also usually acts as a researcher who needs to review every fact that students highlight in their research.

Serve As an Additional Knowledge Reference Centre.
As a supervisor who is a student reference for all matters related to the research work and production of their thesis, a supervisor should equip himself with a high level of knowledge. This is to prepare him to face any question that students will ask during the study process. A supervisor is ideally able to be a knowledge reference center for his / her PhD students. It does not mean that a supervisor needs to know everything, but at least they should be able to give advice and guidance to students in taking their action and making decisions in their research process. Supervisors should be role models and setters who can provide good examples in terms of discipline, working ethic, attitude seriousness and self-motivation. Supervisors should not teach and impart all knowledge directly, instead act as role models and set examples by showing high self-discipline, out-of-the-box thinking while throwing ideas, concrete views, systematic hard work and thoughtful thrusts of motivation. Supervisors are also at least able to advice and guide students towards obtaining reference sources that coincide with their study field and research subject.

Characteristics of Excellent Supervisors

The supervisor role is very much needed to guide and provide useful guidance to students so that they can complete their research on time. Bond (1991) states that the practice of effective research supervision is important along with guiding motivating and advising students. This is because without supervision, students cannot plan their research well. This conventional function has undergone some changes and adjustments. Individuals supervised by supervisors do not necessarily follow instructions alone, they should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions. As such their minds are trained to develop ideas and creatively think. The criteria required of a supervisor is that one should be competent, willing to listen, guide, train, help and be reliable. The role of the supervisor is to provide basic facilities to students, as well as regulate and monitor the development of supervision so that students can perform their duties with excellence. They should be given the opportunity to develop their talents and abilities as well as to determine the goals of the study, always encourage them to achieve a proud performance and raise their image. Effective and systematic supervisory practices will successfully aid a student's research progress. According to Lovitss (2001), a good supervisor should inculcate the following attitudes: Tendency to help; Communicate effectively; Easy and open to be contacted by students and interacts informally often; Helping students in a timely manner. The effective supervision is crucial to career success and satisfaction in various aspects to Doctor of Philosophy students. Good supervision and satisfactory relationships between students and supervisors are important components of the successful training of Doctor of Philosophy students. According to Kam (1997), Lovitts (2001) said that constructive supervision greatly contributes to beneficial outcomes for students. These include a positive environment, successful departmental social relation and timely study.

The supervisor, therefore, performs friendship and a nurturing role but at the same time they strive for quality. He has emotional intelligence with which to manage conflicts and to encourage the student to work as a team member. The student on the other hand becomes affirmed (Lee, 2010). Consequently, the relationship is influenced in a positive way. Lee (2012) cites a study subject displeasure about a supervisor's judgemental attitude and negative commentary, and Lee posits that students are more interested in knowing that their supervisors' "critical judgement is good enough and their communication skills are clear enough to ensure that students understands accurately where they stand". In terms of practice, "there seems to be little research on how extensively it is practiced" (Calma, 2007). Table 1 shows Lee's framework on supervision in terms of the research process.

Table 1 - Lee's Framework in Terms of The Research Process

Functional phase of managing research	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Framing	Looking at other examples in the discipline	Asking: What is excluded? What is assumed? Completing a risk analysis	Assessing where this approach could take the student both professionally in the career and personally	Discussing whether this is something that 'we can work on together
Negotiation	Asking who else in the	Looking at collaboration and	Who else in the society might be	Discussions about the tenor of

	department or discipline is doing similar work? What opportunity for collaboration might be approached?	links to work in or across other disciplines	usefully included or involved in this study?	the approaches to be made and how to negotiate effectively
Generating	By reviewing the research methods commonly used in the discipline. Looking for opportunities for joint fieldwork	By identifying and arguing for the most appropriate research methods. Creating new research methods	By exploring and understanding the methodological imperatives behind different approaches to research and the implications of these approaches	By sharing own research methods, experience, and concerns
Creating	Through team discussion, by analysing data, looking for advances in the field	By creating new models and theories and critiquing their generalisability	By linking advances to areas of personal growth	By sharing the interpretative process
Disseminating	Through departmental seminars and conferences	Through conference discussions, responding to referees' report, writing journal publications and books Further grant applications	Through performance and open discussions Wider publications (not necessarily just academic journals)	Shared publications and presentations
Reflecting	On epistemological progress. On how the team supported and were involved in the research process	On how knowledge is created/ discovered on the appropriateness or otherwise of the implicit and explicit frameworks employed	On impact on self and ontological development	On impact on relationship development and ability to work productively Also assessing the impact on friends and family

(Adapted from Lee's (2012, p. 14) framework to explore doctoral students' experiences at the different phases of the research cycle).

Characteristics of Successful Phd Students

Nor Adha (2018) said that once students understand and have thought about furthering their studies, students need to know how they are assessed while going through their studies at the PhD level. The pattern of study and the way students are assessed are not the same as their

studies at the undergraduate level. In postgraduate studies, whether at the Master or Doctor of Philosophy level, students will be assessed through several aspects, such as: Commitment to producing quality and critical research; Ability to perform responsibilities as a student; and Ability to identify roles as postgraduate students. It is therefore important for them to meet the expectation of the supervisor by having these characteristics as postgraduate students:

With Positive Attitude and High Perseverance.
A student must be willing to work hard and stay the effort. Students should not easily admit defeat let alone give up in the face of difficulties in completing their thesis. It is also important for students to not be easily swayed by criticism. Willing to take any criticism as a catalyst for enthusiasm and the door of opportunity to success.

Takes Things Seriously.
When doing any job, always strive to do it diligently and enthusiastically to get the best results. To get a quality study report and writing, they must avoid the attitude of doing something on a rate basis because that attitude spoils a person. Having good focus and confidence on efforts spent in completing a research thesis and not easily influenced by any external interference.

With a High Confidence in Articulating and Defending Arguments.
Apply self-confidence that what is done is the best and courageous to defend the opinion that has been investigated accurately and truthfully. In this case, a student needs to equip themselves with sufficient knowledge regarding the field of study of their choice. Prepare yourself by deepening effective argumentative techniques so that you look more skilled and intelligent in presenting arguments and views, but never being arrogant of said skill.

Understands Expectations.
Students need to understand that as a postgraduate student, many expectations and goals need to be met. In general, these expectations include the hopes and responsibilities to religion, society, self, and family.

Mutual Co-Operations and It Takes Two to Tango: Supervisor-Supervisee Simulation Case Study and Proposed Solution
The relationship between supervisor and student plays an important role in successful completion of doctoral studies (Ives and Rowley, 2005). Many factors affect the thesis works and determine the quality of the thesis writing. These factors may be personal for example the students' knowledge, experience, commitment, socioeconomic condition, communication skill, stress, time management etc (Bocar 2009), institutional for example the cooperation, guidance, fund, physical facilities and many more (Safari et al 2015), supervision related for example the student supervisor relationship, supervisor knowledge and interest, regular contact between supervisor and student, timely feedback etc (Yousefi et al. 2015). Three samples of common issues and its possible roles of the supervisor and supervisee are discussed below (Nor Adha et. al, 2021):

ISSUE 1: Students Who Have Too Many Research Ideas and Are Unable to Focus on Realizing the Proposal.
Role of the Supervisor: The role and responsibility of the supervisor is to approach the situation and problem thus understanding the students. Supervisors are responsible for providing awareness and learning objectives to students. Supervisors should inform students about their responsibilities as candidates, the role of supervisors in the supervisory process and other

related processes. Supervisors need to guide candidates to get the focus of relevant study topics and focus on the field of study/learning of candidates. Supervisors need to guide and inform candidates about the importance of producing a good proposal in accordance with the standards. The role of the supervisor is to help the candidate know and foresee the upcoming processes and the due date of the proposal so that the candidate is on the right track.

Role of Supervisee: Need to focus on the areas in interest of the research and be responsive to the good input given by the supervisor.

ISSUE 2: Students Do Not Show the Progress of The Proposal or The Process of Study or Thesis Writing Because They Are Part-Time Students and Work While Studying.

Role of Supervisor: Supervisor has the role and responsibility to approach students and understand the status of students as employees in the workplace or family members at home (mother, father, children, etc.). Supervisors need to track the candidate's progress and make them aware of the need and importance to progress in the postgraduate journey. Provide motivation and related words or related provocations (if necessary). Provide final dates/ expectations for students to submit research progress reports periodically and in a controlled manner.

Role of Supervisee: Need to plan-ahead on the projection of studies and be active every quality time having the opportunity to discuss with the supervisor.

ISSUE 3: Supervisors Do Not Supervise Because They Are Busy and Are Difficult to Contact for Supervision Session Appointments.

Role of Supervisor: Reflection and re-evaluate the role and responsibilities of being a supervisor to students. Divide time well and communicate effectively with students. Schedule a virtual meeting if there are no face-to-face opportunities such as communicating by appointment, mail, email, whatsApp and text messaging. Talk to students and other supervisors about the problem. Set aside ego and act maturely and professional.

Role of Supervisee: Need to plan-ahead the timing and when to be with the supervisor and make time to soft-remind the supervisor about the scheduled time.

In the study by Eugene (2012) found that the respondents reported that doctoral students will be more successful in their studies if they: Take time in planning data collection methods and are patient in carrying out research tasks; Try as much as possible to strike a balance between time spent on professional life and private life to avoid conflict of interests; Take some time off after completion of Master's degree before undertaking doctoral studies to know whether one really like to be a researcher; Develop interest in the subject of the research project; Try to discuss their ideas with other members of the research team to get more ideas and inspirations as well as develop the habit of asking questions; Strive to learn statistics because it is important in designing data collection methods and analysis; Try to communicate with their supervisors more often because it helps to strengthen supervisor-student relationship and trust.

Some suggestions made by the respondents in the study by Eugene (2012) regarding how supervisors could be more successful in supervising doctoral students include: Supervisors should make themselves relatively accessible to students especially at the early stages of doctoral programme; Supervisors should be more transparent to students and should carry them along throughout the research design and data collection as well as monitor the activities of the students to avoid them deviating from the research project plan; Supervisors should not serve as supervisor for many students at the same time to enable she or he have considerable time for

students; They should be aware that students differ. Some may need more guidance in their research project while others may need less, and they should be interested in the subject of the research.

Conclusion

Supervision is only effective if there is a good rapport and respect between the supervisor and the student. Therefore, while the PhD supervisor has specific roles to play so too does the student. A PhD thesis is a unique and original study. Research for thesis completion and perfection work requires specific guidance especially in the evaluation and analysis of the entire research. PhD students are generally given guidance by supervisors. However, students must take the initiative to be proactive in determining the direction and production of the thesis. The mutual understanding and a positive supervisor-student relationship that combines the various factors such as the supervisor skills and commitment and the student abilities and commitment make the perfect combination of supervision. It takes two of them to tango and play their roles and understand their respective responsibilities in facing challenges throughout postgraduate studies.

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