

Supervision of Research at Makerere University: Perspective at the College of Education and External Studies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter envisions research as a formal and supportive process whose success depends upon the commitment of and the relationship of trust between both the supervisor and the supervisee. Hypothesising that supervision should ensure that the research project be completed within the specified time, it accordingly seeks to find out the relationship underlying supervision and completion of research projects among the postgraduate students in the College of Education and External Studies at Makerere University. A close-ended questionnaire and an interview schedule were used. The findings revealed that about 33% of the students completed their research beyond two years of the stipulated time. The chapter concluded that students that are better supervised tend to complete their research within the stipulated time. Recommendation was for the supervisors to exercise more availability and dedicated support to the supervisee; adding that the supervision-partnership should be respected by both the supervisor and the supervisee.

INTRODUCTION

Definition and Concept

Supervision has undergone gradual processes to change from inspectorial character to instructional improvement character. This is owing to the ovation that definitions of supervision vary from a custodial orientation to a humanistic one. All notwithstanding, supervision may retain the focus of inspection for its proper functioning as it “is a phase of administration”. And it is due to the instructional character that supervision relates to research. Moreover, supervision is not only concerned about coordinating, stimulating and directing for sustainable improvement of the educand but also for group development and action research. Educational supervision “rests on two fundamental principles: “instructional enhancement, and curriculum development (Naseer, 2009).

Cognisant that “instructional supervision is the function in educational systems that draws together the discrete elements of instructional effectiveness into a whole educational action” (Fritz and Miller, 2003), it is imperative to stress at the threshold that inherent in supervision is professional development, which can be divided into the related tasks of staff development, informal observations, rating, and individual development. Far from indulging in a treatise onto the foregoing, it suffices to highlight that while “individual development” refers to growth or maturation in the individuals of a species due to aging, learning, or experience (Individual Development and Characteristics, n. d), “professional development” per se entails activities that enhance professional career growth (Professional Development. n. d). Accordingly, this chapter advances and subscribes that modern supervision has shifted from its narrower understanding to a much more complex concept; thus it is “cooperative”, “broader in its scope”, and “a peer relationship”. To this effect, the distinct characteristics of supervision include service for improvement. For, the concept of supervision is based on the belief that improvement of the instruction is a cooperative enterprise. Meanwhile, the main objective of supervision is the evaluation of the project in question. For, the responsibilities of a good supervisor include: Setting realistic and practicable programmes for improvement, creating harmony and cordiality, providing constructive feedback and guidance, playing a motivating and inspiring role, studying latest practices in the field, keeping the requisite confidentiality, being critical and creative in the analysis of issues, and creating work culture and encouraging team work (Glatthorn, 2012).

In the brainchild of Lee (2008), the relationship between student and supervisor has many facets, opportunities and problems. It is an arena where training can raise awareness, enable the creation of professional boundaries and prevent arising

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