

# Chapter 6

## Research Supervision in African Higher Education

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter delves into the challenges and transformative potential of research supervision within the African higher education landscape. It provides practical insights into effective supervision strategies, mentoring frameworks, and innovative methodologies aimed at fostering high-quality research proposals and dissertations among postgraduate students. By exploring culturally relevant supervision frameworks through the lens of the Africanisation concept, the chapter highlights the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the academic discourse. It addresses key issues such as the gap between traditional and modern supervision models, limited mentorship programs, and cross-cultural challenges. The chapter offers solutions including structured mentorship programs, supervisor training, and enhanced research infrastructure, aiming to empower supervisors and postgraduate students alike, ultimately contributing to the development of a more inclusive and supportive research environment.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-0806-7.ch006

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Importance of Research Supervision

Research supervision is a fundamental aspect of academic development, especially at the postgraduate level. It significantly influences the quality and impact of research outputs. Effective supervision is essential for guiding students through the complexities of research methodologies and academic writing, while also fostering critical thinking, independence, and academic integrity (Manathunga, 2012). The role of a supervisor extends beyond mere oversight, as it involves mentoring, coaching, and providing intellectual and emotional support (Lee, 2008). This holistic approach is crucial for nurturing the next generation of scholars, who will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and address societal challenges through innovative research (Pearson & Brew, 2002).

The importance of research supervision is further emphasized by its impact on the timely completion of postgraduate degrees and the quality of research publications. Studies have shown that effective supervision correlates with higher rates of thesis completion and publication outputs (Halse & Malfroy, 2010). Moreover, the supervisor-student relationship is critical in shaping students' academic identities and career trajectories. A positive supervision experience can inspire students to pursue academic careers and contribute to the scholarly community (Grant, 2003).

Research supervision also plays a crucial role in maintaining the standards of academic research. Supervisors act as gatekeepers of academic quality, ensuring that research proposals and dissertations adhere to ethical guidelines, methodological rigor, and scholarly relevance (Delamont, Atkinson, & Parry, 2000). This oversight is particularly important in an era where academic integrity is constantly challenged by issues such as plagiarism and research misconduct (Morris & Laipple, 2015). Effective supervision is essential for upholding the integrity of research and maintaining the trust and credibility of scholarly work.

## 1.2 Scope and Objectives

This chapter aspires to delve into the intricacies and transformative potential of research supervision within the African higher education milieu. It seeks to provide all-encompassing insights into effective supervision strategies, mentoring frameworks, and innovative methodologies that can bolster the quality of research proposals and dissertations among postgraduate students. The purview of this chapter encompasses:

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