Metaphors of the Challenges on Project Completion: Experiences of Block Release Students and their Supervisors at Midlands State University

Marimo Simon Tirivanhu[1*] and Samuel Mashingaidze[1]

[1]*Department of Applied Education, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe.*

Authors' contributions

Both authors designed the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author MST managed the analyses of the study and author SM managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

ABSTRACT

This study examined challenges of block-release (University part-time students), post graduate and undergraduate students, with their research supervisors in the Faculty of Education at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. The study also aimed to identify ways of improving the research project practice of the block-release students. The researchers chose a triangulated mixed methods design as the strategy for this study because of its flexibility in the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. The population comprised 103 block-release post diploma Bachelor of Education students (3 year programme), 52 block-release Postgraduate students (2 year programme), 3 research projects coordinators and 43 lecturers in the Faculty of Education. The sample comprised 35 lecturers, 50 block-release post-diploma Bachelor of Education students (3 year programme), 25 block-release Postgraduate students (2 year programme), and 3 research projects coordinators in the Faculty of Education. The study was carried out in the Faculty of Education at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe between January and December 2013.Stratified random sampling procedure was employed to select a sample of students and lecturers. The methods of data collection used were questionnaire and focus group discussions. The study found that both students

*Corresponding author: Email: marimost@msu.ac.zw, mashingaidzess@msu.ac.zw;

and their supervisors were not satisfied with each other's contribution in relation to research work. There were a number of challenges the students were facing such as, the distance and lack of supervisory support due to supervisors' other work load. The study recommends training of supervisors in the following areas; research methodology, technical expertise and managing the supervision relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

Block release students constitute a significant percentage of student enrolment at institutions of higher learning such as universities. Block release students are students who decide to enroll as part-time students because they prefer to study whilst at work. The researchers' observations are that students who enroll on block-release have a multitude of challenges affecting their completion of projects. In a block- release programme, both the supervisors and supervisees are geographically and temporarily remote from each other. It is in this paper that perceptions of block release students and their supervisors are valuably treated as eye openers in an attempt to reduce challenges in project work.

Quite a number of factors contribute to students' failure to complete their research projects later alone studies within a stipulated time [1]. Although many factors can explain the failure, one of the most significant contributors is related to the role of supervisions in guiding research students along the entire research journey [2]. Lack of good student-supervisor relationship in research is tantamount to students' eventual failure to complete their project, in particular since the students are part time and that they consult as and when they get permission of absence from work.

The Faculty of Education at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe comprises three block release programmes in addition to conventional programmes. These fall under the 3-year Bachelor of Education Degree block release teacher in- service training programme, 2 year Post Graduate Degree in Education (PGDE) and the 2-year Master of Education Degree programme. All these programmes are meant for teachers in service who can only attend lectures when schools are closed for holidays. This leaves students with limited contact time with supervisors.

Completion rate for students' projects and dissertations ranges from poor to abysmal [3]. The responsibility for this must be shared by candidates, supervisors and the institutions to which they belong. In particular, supervisors create a number of problems that cause students' studies to derail. Research suggests that up to half of the students who begin post graduate studies do not complete their studies at all [4]. This is because there are a wide variety of problems that students face. Little discussion is taking place, and little research is being done about the low completion rate of post graduate students, possibly because it is an embarrassment to supervisors [3].

A study focusing on LIS schools in East, Central and Southern Africa on the supervisor-supervisee relationship among postgraduates revealed the following: delays in receiving feedback, lack of guidelines stipulating supervision, poor supervision, that is, no schedule for meetings, no records of discussions, and no mechanisms for redress, 40% supervisors were always too busy to meet students, heavy teaching loads for faculty members [5].

To ensure students success in research studies, quality of supervision should be given the utmost attention. Quality of supervision is a key determinant to success of students in their research study [6].

Block release students need special treatment and attention from supervisors in their research journey compared to full time students. Supervisors should ensure they have good relationships with their research students because "the supervisory relationship often leads to lifelong friendships" [7] (p. 18). Thus, it is important for both block-release students and their supervisors to maintain a good relationship.

Equally important is supervision time. Supervision time is a crucial factor whose significance is in maintaining the interpersonal relationship between supervisors and students [8,9,10,11,12,13,14]. Supervisory time is a gray area with block-release students since they are part timers. Time is a valuable resource for such students to clarify, discuss and solve their problems in research. Supervisors who devote little time to supervise such students may lead to students' lack of guidance and loss of focus and direction, especially at the beginning of their research [1]. It is therefore against this background that experiences of block release research students are drawn from the students' and supervisors' points of view in an effort to ease challenges of the students during project practice.

2. METHODOLOGY

The researchers chose a triangulated mixed methods design as the strategy for this study because of its flexibility in the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. In this study concurrent procedure involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time during the study in an attempt to confirm and cross validate or corroborate the findings, followed by integrating the information of the overall results [15]. The population comprised 103 block-release post diploma Bachelor of Education students (3 year programme), 52 block-release Postgraduate students (2 year programme), 3 research projects or dissertations coordinators and 43 lecturers in the Faculty of Education. The sample comprised of 35 lecturers, 50 block-release post diploma Bachelor of Education students (3 year programme), 25 block-release Postgraduate students (2 year programme), and 3 research projects or dissertations coordinators. Stratified random sampling procedure was employed to select a sample of students and lecturers from the different categories of participants.

The methods of data collection used were questionnaire and focus group discussions. The questionnaire was administered in the absence of the researchers and focus group discussions to the Faculty of Education lecturers were follow-ups to certain responses to questionnaire. The focus group discussions were structured around a set of predetermined seven questions, but the discussions were free flowing. They were 5 groups, each discussion group comprising seven participants. The group participants were guided by one of the researchers who introduced topics for discussion or helped the group to participate lively and maintain a natural discussion amongst themselves. The other researcher took notes and ran the tape recorder.

Descriptive statistics using numbers (n) and corresponding percentages (%) were used to present and analyse questionnaire data and the highest percentage was taken to mean the most prevailing view by participants. Qualitative data gathered were analysed using the manual sort and count, grouping, and coding, classifying and categorising information to identify trends and patterns as they emerged [15].

3. RESULTS

In this study, the researchers employed descriptive statistics (percentages and tables) to summarise and analyse quantitative data. Recurring themes were used to analyse qualitative data collected from focus group discussions [16]. Data analysis involved finding the frequencies of questionnaire responses falling in each of the 5-point likert scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree. The responses made in this study were based on the majority of participants' responses in the strongly agree (SA) and agree (A) or disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) category. The responses from students' questionnaire were corroborated by responses from the supervisors' focus group discussions and research project or dissertation coordinators.

The data presented in this section were generated from the post Diploma Bachelor of Education Degree students' questionnaire, Postgraduate Degree students' questionnaire, Faculty of Education Lecturers' focus group discussions and research projects or dissertations coordinators' interview in an attempt to establish challenges faced by supervisors and supervisees when carrying out research projects or dissertations.

3.1 Lecturers' Responses on the Challenges Faced in Supervising Block-Release Students

Focus group discussions were held with thirty-five lecturers in order to establish lecturers' experience in research project supervision, supervisor-supervisee relationship, supervisor support and the allocation of supervisees, supervisor role in project supervision and challenges encountered in project supervision with block release students.

In relation to lecturers' experience of the challenges in research project supervision data was collected from 35 lecturers out of which one lecturer was at a professorial grade, five hold doctorate degrees and 29 hold a master of education qualification. The thirty-five lecturers have more than five years of supervising students' research projects. At the time when the interviews were held each lecturer was supervising at least seven to ten students per semester although 5 students per semester was considered as ideal.

When asked on the supervisor support and the allocation of supervisees, the lecturers agreed that there were research project guidelines and supervision workshops held by the Faculty of Educations although the respondents suggested that the Faculty of Education can do more by inviting experts from outside the institution. When asked on how the Faculty of Education ensures that supervision of research projects was going on and how they got the information, the lecturers mentioned failure by students to meet deadlines as a major challenge. Ten lecturers felt that absence of structures such as those that ensure effective and smooth supervision remained a challenge in as far as achieving quality in this enterprise.

Lecturers were also asked on how they were allocated students to supervise and twenty lecturers indicated that they were allocated according to the area of specialisation whilst fifteen felt the practice was rather done randomly. Such practice became a challenge because a lecturer would supervise a student in an area divorced from one's research interest. The lecturers were also asked about how they organised meetings with their supervisees and out of the thirty-five supervisors, five did not give supervisees their contact

details. Worse still because the supervisees are on block-release students would end up with unsupervised work which supervisors would not approve of.

When asked about the adequacy of the duration given to students to carry out the research project the lecturers agreed that the time frame given was adequate although the lecturers felt that students left most of the work towards the last semester of research project submission resulting in hurried and shoddy submissions by students. The lecturers noted with concern that students were not doing much in the first semester leaving most of the work until the second and final semester of the project.

On how lecturers were meeting the student for consultation purposes, *twenty* of the lecturers were meeting the students as and when the students come whilst *sixteen* were meeting the students as per appointment. Twenty supervisors indicated that they were accessible for consultation and discussion with their supervisees and the same lectures indicated that there was limited and inadequate time for students' consultations. Since these students are on block release they only show up for consultation when they come for their block sessions. The lecturers were also asked on how they ensure continuous supervision for the student if absent for extended periods and eighteen lecturers revealed that they left the onus to the student to re-appear whilst the rest said they either contact the student or alert the research projects coordinator or the chairperson of the department of the circumstance.

Common challenges on supervision as espoused by supervisors include; lecturers overloaded with students to supervise in one semester, lecturers allocated students not aligned to their research interest, students who start to be serious in the last semester of the project, and failure to meet deadlines.

In order to improve the research project supervision practice the lecturers made the following recommendations: Participants suggested the bringing in of experts from other institutions as this creates a platform for the sharing of practice, allocation of supervisees to supervisors to be done early enough at the beginning of the semester, organise research workshops for students on how to succeed in carrying out research, students to do research proposal assignment during the Research Methods and Statistics module, students to present their proposal to a panel of examiners ,lecturers to do group consultations with their supervisees, and supervisors to give supervisees timelines.

3.2 Research Projects or Dissertations Coordinators Interview Response

The three research projects coordinators interviewed indicated that they had more than three years of experience in coordinating the supervision of the research projects in the Faculty of Education. According to the responses of the research projects coordinators the Faculty of Education does not have laid down terms of reference that guide them in carrying out their duties.

The coordinators revealed the following as some of their duties: allocating students to supervisors, setting up submission deadlines, arranging oral presentations (viva voce), distributing projects for marking, and compiling final mark profiles for the students. The coordinators are also responsible for organising research project supervision workshops for supervisors. Workshops are held at least once per year and they said such workshops were quite helpful in increasing the quality of research output in the Faculty of Education.

The following were some of the challenges reported by coordinators as envisioned by students; non availability of the lecturers for consultation, late feedback from the lecturers after submitting work for marking, some lecturers having no interest in using e-mails for fast, cheap and efficient communication with the student and financial constraints limiting frequency of consultation visits .

When the research project coordinators were asked about the internal systems and practices that have been developed to effect and sustain quality in student research output they revealed that the Faculty of Education introduced an oral presentation (viva voce) which contributed 30% to the final mark of the research project. The research projects are marked by two independent markers who have not supervised the research.

Students are allocated to the supervisors whose research interests are compatible with their proposal topics. This according to coordinators is meant to ensure thorough and effective supervision. When asked how the research project coordinators ensured that students' and lecturers' work met standards of the university and the academic discipline they revealed that as a faculty they adhered to the university quality assurance policy. In the event of a lecturer being away for a long time the coordinators assist the students by allocating them to another supervisor who will give guidelines in the absence of the principal supervisor.

In an attempt to improve the research project supervision the coordinators made the following recommendations: introduction of an on-line data base of all the research projects supervised in the faculty to counter reinvention of the wheel, staff develop lecturers in the faculty so that they value communication with their student through the e-mails and workshoping students doing research projects or dissertations on how best to handle challenges during the project practice.

Fifty block-release post diploma Bachelor of Education students and twenty-five block-release Postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education were administered with a questionnaire and the following were their responses as shown in Table 1, 2, and 3.

The questionnaire to the block-release post diploma Bachelor of Education and postgraduate students revealed that seventy percent and sixty-four percent expressed views that agreed and strongly agreed that the module for Research Methods and Statistics prepared them adequately in carrying out a research project or dissertation against twenty percent who were in disagreement (Item 1). Sixty-eight post diploma Bachelor of Education and seventy-four postgraduate students have positive attitudes towards their supervisors. Sixty-eight percent of both post diploma Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate students strongly agreed and agreed that their supervisors are accessible for consultation.

Supervisors were not assisting students in selecting suitable and manageable research topic as indicated by fifty percent and fifty percent from the two groups respectively. The responses revealed mixed reactions between the two groups on whether supervisors assisted supervisees in gaining access to facilities of research material as indicated by forty-two post diploma Bachelor of Education and seventy-two Postgraduate who agreed.

Table 1. Responses from block-release post diploma bachelor of education Students (3 year programme) N=50

Section A	SA	A	% A	N	D	SD	% D
1 Module BED101 prepared me adequately to carry out research	15	10	70	5	10	0	20
2 I like my supervisor	21	17	76	7	0	5	10
3 I understand the role of my supervisor	26	15	82	4	2	3	10
4 My supervisor is always available to help me at every stage of the research process	24	12	72	7	4	3	14
5 My supervisor assisted me in selecting a suitable and manageable research topic	13	12	50	13	7	5	24
6 My supervisor is accessible to me for consultation	16	18	68	11	3	2	10
7 Allocation to a supervisor is fairly done	23	18	82	3	2	4	12
8 My supervisor responds in a timely and thorough manner to work submit ted for marking	10	12	44	16	6	4	20
9 I am supervised by an expert in my research area	27	14	82	3	2	4	12
10 The project coordinator makes arrangements to ensure continuity of supervision when supervisor will be absent for extended periods	13	14	54	9	9	5	28
11 My supervisor assists the me in gaining access to facilities of research material	12	9	42	13	9	7	32
12 I have contacts of my supervisor	37	4	82	5	4	0	8
13 My supervisor assists me in being aware of programme requirements deadlines and implications of not meeting them	11	17	56	9	10	3	26
14 There are internal mechanisms in place that support us as we do research, i.e. research guidelines	33	6	78	3	6	2	16
15 My supervisor demonstrates familiarity with the research culture	37	7	88	6	0	0	0
16 I have access to internet resources at the institution for purposes of research	10	18	56	14	8	0	16
17 The project coordinator is very supportive when I face problems with my supervisor	11	18	58	6	8	7	30

Scoring direction
Each item receives a score based on the following points; strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

**Table 2. Responses from block-release postgraduate students (2Year Programme)
N=25**

Section A		SA	A	% A	N	D	SD	% D
1	Module AE521 or MED 702 prepared me adequately to carry out research	7	9	64	4	4	1	20
2	I like my supervisor	7	11	72	3	1	3	16
3	I understand the role of my supervisor	13	8	84	2	2	0	8
4	My supervisor is always available to help me at every stage of the research process	14	5	76	3	2	1	12
5	My supervisor assisted me in selecting a suitable and manageable research topic	4	9	52	6	2	4	24
6	My supervisor is accessible to me for consultation	16	18	68	11	3	2	10
7	Allocation to a supervisor is fairly done	14	8	88	3	0	0	0
8	My supervisor responds in a timely and thorough manner to work submitted for marking	7	5	48	7	5	3	32
9	I am supervised by an expert in my research area	15	7	88	3	0	0	0
10	The project coordinator makes arrangements to ensure continuity of supervision when supervisor will be absent for extended periods	7	8	60	4	2	4	24
11	My supervisor assists the me in gaining access to facilities of research material	9	9	72	3	4	0	16
12	I have contacts of my supervisor	21	4	100	0	0	0	0
13	My supervisor assists me in being aware of programme requirements deadlines and implications of not meeting them	11	7	72	3	1	3	16
14	There are internal mechanisms in place that support us as we do research, i.e. research guidelines	18	4	88	1	1	1	8
15	My supervisor demonstrates familiarity with the research culture	16	5	84	3	1	0	4
16	I have access to internet resources at the institution for purposes of research	7	8	60	2	3	5	32
17	The project coordinator is very supportive when I face problems with my supervisor	6	10	64	2	3	4	28

Table 3. Responses from Block-Release Post Diploma Bachelor of Education Students (3 Year Programme) and Block-Release Postgraduate Students (2 Year Programme)

Question	N=50 Responses from Bachelor of Education students		N=25 Responses from Postgraduate students	
What internal mechanisms are in place to support you in doing research?	Access to internet	(33)	Access to internet	(10)
	Books in the library	(11)	Journals in the library	(6)
	The supervisor	(6)	The supervisor	(4)
			Research guidelines	(5)
What is the duration of project completion?	1 semester	(35)	1 semester	(9)
	2 semesters	(10)	2 semesters	(10)
	Not sure	(5)	Unaware	(6)
Do you think the duration is adequately serving the purpose?	Time allocated for projects too short		Time allocated is limited, first semester not utilised ,lecturers too busy and time too short to serve the purpose	
Elaborate on the relationship you have with your supervisor?	Supportive	(27)	Friendly and supportive	(12)
	Cordial relationship	(7)	Cordial relationship	(7)
	Not very cooperative	(16)	Not very cooperative	(6)
What do you consider to be the qualities or personal characteristics of an exemplary/outstanding supervisor?	Helpful when consulted	(20)	Helpful when consulted	(10)
	Should not harass students	(11)	Friendly and a colleague	(5)
	Gives immediate feedback	(10)	Gives timely feedback	(6)
	Approachable	(9)	Available when needed	(4)
What challenges are you facing in carrying out research as a block-release student?	Time allocated too short	(22)	Time allocated too short	(8)
	Difficult to be released by head	(12)	Accessibility of supervisors	(4)
	No immediate feedback	(8)	Feedback from supervisor not immediate (6)	
	Lecturer busy to attend to me	(8)	Pressure of work form our work places	(7)
What do you think should be done to improve supervision of projects?	Supervisors should provide a timetable for consultation	(30)	In service for supervisors	(5)
	Supervisors to give students working time lines	(12)	Supervisors should provide a timetable for consultation and supervision	(4)
	Remove other modules in the final semester	(8)	Supervisors to be answerable on students failing to meet deadlines	(6)
			Guidelines should be clear and elaborate (3)	
			Two semesters for dissertation supervision (1)	
Who else do you consult other than the supervisor when you encounter challenges?	Project coordinator	(23)	Colleagues	(13)
	Other lecturers	(27)	Dissertation coordinator	(7)
			Other lecturers	(5)

From the post diploma Bachelor of Education group there were students operating without their supervisors' contact details. Supervisor were not responding in a timely and thorough manner to work submitted for marking by their supervisees as indicated by forty-four percent of post diploma Bachelor of Education and forty-eight Postgraduate students. The results show that the coordinators were sometimes not very helpful when students confront challenges with their supervisors.

Results, in Table 3 indicate that the internet was playing a major role in supporting students' research work as indicated by forty-three students out of the seventy-five students who responded to the questionnaire. The students revealed that they were also supported by the library resources such as books and journals. Surprisingly eleven students indicated that they were not aware about the duration of project or dissertatation completion. All the seventy-five students who responded to the questionnaire expressed concern over the time

allocated for project completion. Informants indicated that the time is limited and is hard to come by since they are part timers and as a result the first semester is not fully utilised.

When asked to elaborate on the relationship with their supervisors twenty-two respondents revealed that their supervisors were not very cooperative although thirty-nine said they were supportive and friendly and fourteen indicated that there was a cordial relationship. The response from the students' questionnaire revealed the following characteristics of good supervisors: helpful when consulted, friendly and a colleague, gives timely and immediate feedback, approachable, available when needed and the one who does not harass students.

The students revealed a number of challenges that they were facing as block-release students in carrying out their research projects such as accessibility of the supervisor, slow feedback from the supervisor and pressure of work from their work places. In this mode of entry students do face many pressures from both the institution they enrolled with for their studies and their work place, depriving them of the study time. In order to improve the supervision of research projects or dissertations the students proposed the following; provision of a workable timetable for consultation which is appreciative of their mode of entry, supervisors should set timelines in consultation with students, reducing the number of modules done in the final semester and that the supervisors should be answerable for students who fail to meet deadlines.

4. DISCUSSION

Supervisors should be approachable by their students for supervision. Supervisors should take the initiative in supporting and encouraging their students in research [1]. In other words a good supervisor should be patient and friendly, dedicated and caring. They (supervisors) should always be with their supervisees throughout the research journey. However a lot seems lacking in this regard as supervisors lamented on supervisees who disappear for prolonged periods of time only to reappear close to submission of the final report. The supervisee should not feel lonely or frustrated in this journey, because they need encouragement and inspiration.

A major highlight on supervisor weaknesses was about slow feedback and lack of a clear cut time plan on expectations. Findings from this study thus reveal little or no interest from supervisors to follow up on students' work. Supervisors should set schedule on regular meetings with their students in order to solve their research problems and fill the gap in supervisor-student relationship [7]. Besides, supervisors should have great commitment with their students and be sensitive to their needs in order to produce high quality of supervision [7]. According to Brown and Krager [17], the supervisor needs to be sensitive to students' time and competence limitations, and to assist them to become aware of their own limitations and any constraints on them. Thus, it can be concluded that the supervisors should invest their time and energy to follow up students' work and understand their students' needs and support them timely.

According to Spear [7], one of the criteria to build up a good supervisor-student relationship is through an effective communication. Supervisors who interact well with their students, and are willing to listen, respond and understand students' needs as well as wise in exchanging opinions with students without embarrassment can build up close relationship with supervised students. However, findings in this study reflect limitations in constant communication between supervisor and supervisee. Such discontinuity in communication compromises the quality of the final report, as a result of a failure to cultivate an academic

relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. Thus according to Chiappetta-Swanson and Watt [18] failure for a match between student and supervisor academically has a negative impact on the progress of a student.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers noted with concern that a significant number of block-release students were failing to meet the project or dissertation submission deadlines. There were no progress reports written by both the supervisors and supervisees. The Faculty of Education should have some checks and balances to ensure students' project or dissertation progress. From the study the following recommendations were made:

- ✓ Lecturers should be given a form to record whenever they are consulted by the students and they should sign students' submitted work on receiving and after marking so that there is transparency in research projects or dissertations supervision. In other words every supervision visit has to be acknowledged by way of signing by both supervisors and supervisees.
- ✓ Project or dissertation supervision should be time-tabled so that supervisors and supervisees have constant meetings during block-release sessions. That is lecturers should have at least 2 hour slots per week reserved for students' consultation.
- ✓ It should be made mandatory that supervisors and supervisees give one another contact details in order to allow for constant communication between both parties since distance is the only stumbling block. Lecturers in the Faculty of Education are encouraged to hold group consultations with their supervisees.
- ✓ Supervisors and supervisees should agree on research supervision timelines hinged on the tentative submission deadline.
- ✓ Research projects coordinators should have clear terms of reference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONSENT

A letter of informed consent was sent to every participating subject before taking part in the research. All participants signed a consent letter.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The two authors declare that approval to carry out this study was obtained from the institution ethics committee. A written communication to this effect is available for review by the Editorial office/Chief Editor/Editorial Board members of this journal.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Concerns have been raised by the faculty leadership regarding research projects completion rate by post diploma Bachelor of Education block release students and so supervisors would not be comfortable disclosing certain contributing factors because of fear of exposing their weaknesses. Hence failure by some participants to be honest in their responses compromised the study findings.

REFERENCES

1.   Yeoh JS, Doan T. International Research Students' Perceptions of Quality Supervision. International Journal of Innovative Interdisciplinary Research. 2012;3:10–18.
2.   Deem R, Brehony KJ. Doctoral students' access to research cultures-are some more unequal than others? Studies in Higher Education.2000;25(2):149-165.
3.   Lubbe S, Worrel L, Klopper R. Challenges in Postgraduate Research. Durban: Dolphin Pub; 2005.
4.   Golde CM, Dore T. Questions to Ask when Thinking about Pursuing a PhD; 2001. Available: http://www.phdsurvey. org/advice/advice.htm> (Retrieved on 12 January, 2011).
5.   Mutula SM. Building Trust in Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship: Case Study of East and Southern Africa. Paper Presented at the Progress in Library and Information Science in Southern Africa (PROLISSA) Conference at the University of South Africa(UNISA). 2009;4-6.
6.   Abiddin NZ, Ismail A, Ismail A. Effective supervisory approach in enhancing postgraduate research studies. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. 2011;1(2):206-217.
7.   Spear RH. Supervision of research students: Responding to student expectations. Canberra: The Australian National University; 2000.
8.   Harrison SD, Emmerson S. The challenges of supervision of a doctorate in practice-based research in music: Perceptions of students and supervisors. Text 6. Retrieved from; 2009.
      Available:http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue6/Harrison&Emmerson.pdf
9.   Craswell G. This unfathomable thing called supervision: Negotiating working relationships with supervisors. Quality in Postgraduate Research. Conference Proceedings, Adelaide. 1996;18–19.
10.   Aspland T, Edwards H. Tracking new directions in the evaluation of postgraduate supervision. Innovative Higher Education. 1999;24(2):134-154.
11.   Bartlett A, Mercer G. Postgraduate Research Supervision: Transforming Relations. New York: Peter Lang Publishing; 2001.
12.   Taylor J. Changes in teaching and learning in the period to 2005: The case of postgraduate education in the UK. Journal of Higher Education. 2002;24(1):53-73.
13.   Bak N. Completing Your Thesis. A Practical Guide. Pretoria: Van Schaik; 2004.
14.   Mapesela MLE, Wilkinson AC. The pains and gains of supervising postgraduate students from a distance: The case of six students from Lesotho. South African Journal for Higher Education. 2005;19:1238-1254.
15.   Creswell JW. Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc; 2009.
16.   Shumba A. Teachers' Conceptions of the Constructivist Model of Science Teaching and Student Learning. Anthropologist. 2011;13(3):175-183.

17. Brown RD, Krager L. Ethical issues in graduate education: Faculty and student responsibilities.Journal of Higher Education. 1985;56(4):403-418.

18. Chiappetta-Swanson C, Watt S. Good Practice in the Supervision and Mentoring of Postgraduate Students. Retrieved on 17 January 2013 from 2011. Available:http://cll.mcmaster.ca/resources/pdf/Supervision%20&%20Mentoring%20of%20Postgrad%20Students.pdf.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
http://www.sciencedomain.org/review-history.php?iid=596&id=21&aid=5289