

Investigating the Hindrances that Face Academic Supervision of Supervisors and the Reflections to the Research Quality Improvements at Sudanese Higher Education Institutes in Sudan

Abdelrahman Mohammedain Abdelrahman ¹, Salah E. I ^{2,*} and Sidding Mohammed Adam Ali ³

¹ Faculty of Arts and Humanities, White Nile University and El imam Elmahadi University -Kosti, Sudan.

² Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Managil University and Bahrain College, Kosti, Damazin, Sudan.

³ Faculty of Education, White Nile University Kosti, Sudan.

GSC Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 25(01), 130-135

Publication history: Received on 31 August 2025; revised on 06 October 2025; accepted on 09 October 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2025.25.1.0243>

Abstract

The paper explores the challenges that face Sudanese supervisors in supervising undergraduate postgraduate candidates in Sudanese higher educational institutions and scientific centers. The descriptive analytical method was adopted to conduct the current study. The researchers used a n interview with 16 supervisors in four universities in White Nile State to collect data that via direct interview (face to face) or mobile. Content analysis technique was adopted to analyze the data. The researchers argue that the lack of training, financial support, skills and the accumulation of candidate to supervise contribute to a low quality of candidates' research. The accountability of Sudanese higher educational institutions and research centers is to ensure that facilities provided to supervisors are always appropriate in order to supervise candidates properly. It is assumed that some universities may not have adequate staff with PhDs and MA to supervise candidates. However, the challenges of supervising postgraduate students are the lack of supervision skills, changing of supervisors, and the mode of supervision employed.

Keywords: Supervision; Candidates; Supervisors; Research

1. Introduction

This study aims to Investigating the hindrances that face academic supervision of supervisors and the reflections to the research quality improvements at Sudanese higher education institutes. There are a lot obstacles that face Sudanese supervisors in higher Sudanese's educational institutes. These problems prevent them to do their tasks which include personal, administrative supervision, academic supervision, educational evaluation, and research and development are all good indicators of a supervisor's effectiveness (Adnan et al.,2022). All supervisors, internal and external, now face a difficulty as a result of these obligations. The supervisor is seen as the motivator for teachers to maintain their health, safety, and ability to perform under any conditions (Glanz& Heimann,2019).

Educational supervision is the process of involving teachers in the educational environment to improve teaching and increase student success. It is an element of controlling and improving the educational process (Amon & Bustami,2021). This is done through the inclusion of educational activities and checking the degree of achievement of the educational institution's objectives to take the necessary measures to obtain better results for education and improve the educational process and take the necessary measures to reduce and remove obstacles in front of the educational supervisors and identify the challenges facing them and work to confront them and find solutions (FEDAİ, 2021)

* Corresponding author: Salah E. I.

It is very significant to write about this topic because it tackles one of the most vital academic issue. It is well known fact that inadequate professional qualifications in supervision, inadequate continuing training in supervisory skills, as well as routine administrative roles of supervisors results in weak academic performance.

The main hypothesis of the current study is that Sudanese supervisors at higher educational institution and research centers suffer from uncomfortable situation that hinder them to achieve their duty properly.

Supervisors need continuous and sufficient training to carry out their responsibility and make them better equipped at doing their job. Also they need administrative skills as well as financial supports. No one deny the essential role of supervisors. lack of training for supervisors, weak relationship between candidates and supervisors and lack of support for supervisors from higher offices affect the supervisors' practices in the school.

1.1. Statement of the problem

This study aims to investigate the challenges and the problems that face Sudanese supervisors in supervising researches at Sudanese higher educational and research centers. It is essential to write about this topic because it treats a n issue that relate to the quality of researches a t higher educational institutions and scientist center in Sudan. The problem is that some supervisor don't do their task properly due to the lack of training and financial support. Also some candidates are not qualified to be ideal ones. The researchers observed the problem due to their supervision at a lot candidates at some of the educational institutions and research centers in Sudan. Without effective supervision there will be no good researches and outcomes in the field of knowledge.

According to Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu,(2021,p: 122) With the increased demand for higher education, some universities or departments may not have adequate staff at PhD level to supervise postgraduate students. This issue may be an additional Bearden for supervisors at different higher educational institutions and research centers. It also might result in the allocation of students to supervisors without adequate disciplinary background to advise the student, resulting in a potential challenge of having to offer supervision services in an unfamiliar academic environment. Sometimes the supervisors may have no background on the research area of focus and methodologies for appropriate data collection. So it is well known that quality of the research may be at risk when candidates are allocated to newly graduated PhD lecturers who need time to learn how to supervise. While they can learn through training/guidance of a more experienced supervisor, prepared guidelines may be useful in providing some tips and expectations for quality supervision (Kimani, 2014). such supervisors are unable to guide the candidate to grasp the whole essence of the research focus and the entire optimal methodology to bring out the knowledge gap that the research is set to fill. Such is also possible with a supervisor who is not knowledgeable with the current theories and practices in the area of study. This has serious implications for the quality of research output and the thesis. Evidently, such supervisors either delay the candidate 'completion schedule or just allow the candidate to submit a low-quality thesis/dissertation' (Kimani, 2014, p. 65). The relationship between a postgraduate supervisor and candidate is a crucial element in the successful completion of a research, in an era where timely completions have become a key focus. It is common to view the experience of postgraduate supervision in terms of conflict, isolation from others, trauma and 'fraught discipleship' (Hemer, 2012).

1.2. The questions of the study

- What are the problems that face Sudanese supervisors in conducting supervision at Sudanese higher education institutions ?
- To what extent do academic supervisors need training courses to enable them to do reasonable supervision.
- What are administrative processes that help in hindering the academic supervision?
- To what extents do candidates directly or indirectly hinder the process of supervision?
- To what extent do supervisors suffer from lack of supervision skills?

1.3. The objectives of the study

- To investigate the problems that face Sudanese supervisors in conducting supervision at Sudanese higher education institutions.
- To ensure the essentiality of training courses to enable them to do reasonable supervision.
- To probe the importance of administrative processes in academic supervision.
- To identify the role of candidates in the process of supervision.
- To ensure weather supervisors suffer from lack of supervision skills or not.

1.4. The hypothesizes of the study

- Sudanese supervisors face many problems in conducting supervision at Sudanese higher education institutions.
- Academic supervisors need training courses to enable them to do reasonable supervision.
- There are many administrative processes that hinder the academic supervision.
- Some candidates directly or indirectly hinder the process of supervision.
- supervisors suffer from lack of supervision skills.

2. Methodology of the study

There searchers adopted the qualitative analytical approach alongside the case study as the design to conduct this study. The population of the study comprised all supervisors at Sudanese higher educational institutions and research centers. The sampling method used was convenience sampling. Sixteen supervisors were selected from four universities in White Nile State as a sample of the current study. An interview was utilized by the researchers to obtain their standpoints about the difficulties and challenges that face them in supervision. Based on this, the supervisors have been chosen due to their accumulated years of supervision as well as longevity of their services in these same institutions. Face-to-face in-depth individual interviews were used to gather in-depth information from respondents and via telephone. Data were collected using telephone recording. The researcher established a report by first greeting and asking each interviewee and also by projecting a positive image of a sincere person engaged in a harmless but important task. Each interview lasted for 10 minutes. The contents analytical method was used to analyze the collected data. Through the process of coding, the researcher places the raw data that were transcribed into logical, meaningful categories and holistically examines them. Then the researchers re-examined the themes and classified and then interpreting and create the organized data into a general conclusion or understanding.

3. Literature Review

3.1. What is suppression

The academic supervision is a systematic process that guides the candidate to the best methods in his educational and research progress under the guidance of faculty staff since these elements are essential in order to help the candidate as soon as he enrolls in the university. Whereas academic supervisor is a member of the faculty who offers guidance to one or more graduate and post graduate study candidate /s in a study program. The purpose of supervisor always involves a supervisor and candidate meeting regularly to talk about different aspects of their research. The purpose is to discuss research load, support candidates wellbeing and to promote staff development. There are seven principles of supervision, these principles include:

- Collaboration
- Thinking in depth
- Emotional reflection in relation to casework
- Explicit identification of need, risk, harm, and strengths
- Focusing on candidate defined ideas.

The supervision is a broad term. Supervision is for a longer time duration as well. The supervisor is bound to report the progress and the works done to the higher authorities. The word supervision commonly refers to the projects etc. The projects are supervised and not monitored. The supervision involves offering support, removing obstacles, holding accountable people, and setting expectation etc. The supervisor is responsible for the actions or the activities of the employees as well. Is an employ of the project is not doing his job properly then the supervisor is the one answering to the higher authorities.

Sheikh Md. RezaulKarim,(2025,p:4) The supervision is a broad term. Supervision is for a longer time duration as well. The supervisor is bound to report the progress and the works done to the higher authorities. The word supervision commonly refers to the projects, research, study etc. The projects are supervised and not monitored. The supervision involves offering support, removing obstacles, holding accountable people, and setting expectation etc. The supervisor is responsible for the actions or the activities of the employees as well. Is an employ of the project is not doing his job properly then the supervisor is the one answering to the higher authorities.

Nourah Mohammad Abdullah Alazzam,Imam Mohammad (2022,p391) Educational supervision is the process of involving teachers in the educational environment to improve teaching and increase student success. This task can be

achieved through the presence of educational activities and checking the degree of achievement of the educational institution's objectives of research to take the necessary measures to obtain better results of the researches and improve the educational process and take the necessary measures to reduce and remove obstacles that face supervisors and identify the challenges facing them regarding the research progress and procedures and work to confront them and find proper solutions.

3.2. Types of Supervision

According to Sheikh Md. RezaulKarim,(2025,p:4) there are three types of supervision:

- Educational supervision: it is the process of assessing the skills, evaluation of needs, provision of learning experiences, as well as upgrading of knowledge and skills.
- Administrative supervision: monitoring work and workload, assuring work completion, quality and quantity control, appreciate implementation of agency policies and procedures.
- Supportive supervision: providing support, understanding and assistance, understanding emotional needs. The supervisor provides employees with a supportive environment where they can enjoy high morale and job satisfaction.

3.3. Lack of supervision skills

According Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu,(2021,p:123-124) supervisors need to be assessed whether they have information and the necessary skills critical to supervision. They ought to be trained in specific skills in doing supervision through a practical demonstration (Harvey & Schramski, 1984).

3.4. Mode of supervision

Co-supervision can be problematic because of diversity in views which can be confusing for the candidate. There may also be those supervisors who strive to gain a candidate's favor by discrediting other supervisors. The conflicts can get out of hand to the extent that the main or the principle supervisor is unable to control, unfortunately affecting not only the quality of supervision but also the candidates' rate of completion (Kimani, 2014). While working with candidate, supervisors should maintain a system of communication and support throughout the research process, prepare candidate for research, writing, and new forms of communication, and be sensitive to candidate's life and work demands. Time pressures are an acute element within the supervisory relationship, with the emphasis on timely completions for postgraduates and the research load pressures facing academics supervisors (Hemer, 2012). Cardilini, Risely and Richardson (2021) believe that supervisors have the responsibility to give guidance and feedback on critical thinking, written communication, and relevant discipline knowledge to candidate. candidates' expectations are that more guidance on developing their academic independence, their collaboration skills, and maintaining motivation should be provided by supervisors. Yet, some supervisors may think they have little or no responsibility in guiding candidate in qualitative attributes. Similarly, Sá, Santos and Serpa (2021) are of the view that 'the role played by the supervisor in monitoring the process of design, preparation and presentation of the end-of-programme project by candidate is undeniably important'. It is up to them to make sure that the candidate follows the timetable agreed upon at the beginning of the process, attains the objectives of the project and delivers a quality product, always in an iterative relationship with the candidate. Therefore, supervisor's supervision activities must be characterized by flexibility, iteration, continuous feedback and constructive criticism, in the sense that the supervisor trains the candidate with investigative competences, in this teaching-researching process, although with specific characteristics.

3.5. Change of Supervisors

When there is no compatibility between the candidate and the supervisor, the change of supervisor is a crucial factors to have a successful research. Some time it may happen in the middle of the research process. And the change may be more of a disruption rather than a benefit as a result of which the quality of the research report may be compromised.

According to Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu,(2021,p:121-123) Exploring Challenges of Supervising Postgraduate Students in Open Distance Learning in Higher Education Settings 122 and people with disabilities. The issue of flexibility is of a greater importance to supervision of postgraduate students in distance education because they are expected to be provided with the time and space to take up their studies alongside their demanding jobs and caring responsibilities (Nasiri & Mafakheri, 2015). Therefore, the challenges in distance postgraduate supervision originate from the spatial and temporal distance and disconnection between the supervisor and student. From a timing perspective, supervisor and student may live thousands of kilometres from each other, which may create an issue when finding a mutually convenient and productive time to connect (Ibid, 2015). It is highly likely that both supervisor and student may experience a lack of good personal knowledge about each other. This may drive the supervisory conversations towards

a formal format and may make it harder to create an informal environment for discussions. This means that the encounters are in danger of being less motivating and less engaging, especially from the perspective of doctoral students that are in need of continuous technical and pastoral support for several years (Ibid, 2015). Lack of delicacy and depth in communications is yet another risk for distance supervisory discussions. Supervisors may experience an increased workload due to the expectation that they should be constantly open to requests from students and as they sometimes represent the whole university system for a distance student (Ibid, 2015). Lee (2008) opines that supervisors may see themselves as being like the family doctor. They will provide some specific expertise but will also be a gatekeeper to many more learning resources, specialist opinions and networks. The supervisor can choose which gates to open, particularly in the early stages of the student's life. Within this understanding, therefore, there is also an understanding of the power of the supervisor in its widest sense. Not only is the student 'present' but also the supervisor is also 'present' as well. There is another aspect of the power dynamic may arise from the supervisor being gatekeeper to the qualification and the academic discipline: that of ownership (or even suppression) of the result. The student needs to be aware of how powerful (or not) their supervisor is in the institution, and discussion about enculturation as a concept or an expectation could help the student to make realistic decisions.

3.6. Previous studies

This study was conducted by Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu,(2021) it was entitle as 'Exploring Challenges of Supervising Postgraduate Students in Open Distance Learning in Higher Education Settings'. The main concern of the paper is to explore the challenges of supervising postgraduate students in open distance learning in higher education. It is a scientific paper that was published in BCES Conference Books, 2021. The researcher argues that inaccessibility of information and services provided by supervisors, can contribute to a low quality of students' success. The responsibility of institutions is to ensure that facilities provided to supervisors are always appropriate in order to supervise students in distance education. Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance assumes that distance is a pedagogical, not geographic phenomenon. It raises questions about understandings and perceptions that might lead to communication gaps. The challenges in distance postgraduate supervision originate from the spatial and temporal distance and disconnection between the supervisor and student. It is assumed that some universities may not have adequate staff with PhDs to supervise students. However, the challenges of supervising postgraduate students are the lack of supervision skills, changing of supervisors, and the mode of supervision employed.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

The researchers doped as has been mentioned the interview with some supervisors who supervise at Sudanese higher educational institutions and research centers. The responses of the interviewees revealed the following: concerning question one which is, What are the problems that face Sudanese supervisors in conducting supervision at Sudanese higher education institutions ? most responses relate the problem that face supervisors have something to with candidates themselves, they refer to the issue qualification of the candidate, experience and knowledge of the research methodology. Some interviewees think that the time management is one of the problem that face supervisors in conducting good supervision. The accumulation of the candidates to one supervisors that make them to do inaccurate supervision. They are so busy so they have enough time to conduct precise supervision. They spend most of their time in teaching, preparing their lectures as well as focusing on the non-academic activities such administration. Question two is, to what extent do academic supervisors need training courses to enable them to do reasonable supervision. Training is important for supervisors so as to increase their skill and proficiency in supervision, this is said by Dir. Mhideen Ahmed, associate professor in English language, White Nile University, Faculty of Arts. it important because supervisors are advice and they are the only person who make sure of the ethic of doing a research properly and honestly. Concerning question three which is what are administrative processes that help in hindering the academic supervision. Dr. Malka Elsadig, Ahmed, associate professor in English language, El imam El mahadi University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities believes that sometimes administrative impose some topics to be researched by the students and sometimes rejected topics that is suggested by the candidates. Candidates are not interested to write about but any way they write about it because it has been chosen to him. sometimes they allow supervisor that are not qualified experienced to do supervisor. sometimes they have no clear road map, enough knowledge about this particular field. also sometimes there is no following up from administration that is contribute to the academic supervision. what is said concerning question four which is to what extent do candidates directly or indirectly hinder the process of supervision? the lack of the fundamental principles of writing research by the candidates result in hindering the progress of supervision as well as the development of the study as a whole. Also they believe that some candidates are lazy the don't prepare we and not serious and others are busy that is to say they are not ready to be free candidate to just doing their research. some students don't have commitment regarding their study. some candidates have ethical standards so they sometimes plagiarize. They depend on readymade information in the internet without filtering. finally question five which is to what extent do supervisors suffer from lack of supervision skills? Some supervisors lack a lot of supervision

skills. some supervisors lack the skill of effective communication with candidates. some supervisors are very aggressive toward their candidates because of the effective communication. some supervisors don't give the candidates clear plan and fix time for revising and giving feedback. some supervisors don't have the skill of establishing a good relation with the candidates. There should be mutual understanding which create healthy and educational environment. According to what has been said above by interviewees, one could say that all these skills are very important for supervisors if they lack any one the supervision will not be effective and there will be weak performance of the students outcome concerning their research.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion on the implementation of educational supervision on the performance of APIPSU Medan Vocational School teachers, it can be generally concluded that the principal's management in carrying out academic supervision has been going well. Specifically, the conclusions that can be drawn from this study are as follows: The challenges of postgraduate distance supervision for students include engaging in the research culture of the university, dealing with isolation, self-regulating their learning, and effectively using online communication. Supervisors should maintain a consistent system of communication and support throughout the supervision process. The challenges faced by supervisors when supervising postgraduate students are lack of supervision skills, change of supervisors, and mode of supervision employed.

References

- [1] Adnan, A., Sujiarto, H., Iriantara, Y., & Mulianai, Y. (2022). Management of Academic Supervision to Improve Teacher Performance at MTsN 3 and MTsN 4 Banjarmasin City. *International Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences*, 3(3), 1297-1306
- [2] Amon, L., & Bustami, M. R. (2021). Implementation of School-Based Management in Curriculum and Learning Processes: a Literatur Review. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah (Dikdasmen)*, 1-11.
- [3] Fedai, L. (2022). A longitudinal Study On The Opinions Of Supervisor And Teachers On Educational Supervision In Trnc. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education-April*, 12(2).
- [4] Glanz, J., & Heimann, R. (2019). Encouraging reflective practice in educational supervision through action research and appreciative inquiry. *The Wiley handbook of educational supervision*, 353.
- [5] Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu,(2021) Exploring Challenges of Supervising Postgraduate Students in Open Distance Learning in Higher Education Settings University of South Africa, South Africa, *New Challenges to Education: Lessons from Around the World BCES Conference Books*, 2021, Volume 19. Sofia: Bulgarian Comparative Education Society ISSN 2534-8426 (online), ISBN 978-619-7326-11-6 (online)
- [6] Sheikh Md. RezaulKarim,(2025) Supervision and Monitoring of Educational Institutions Principal, Govt. Teachers' Training College, Khulna
- [7] Nourah Mohammad Abdullah Alazzam,Imam Mohammad (2022). Challenges facing the educational supervision methods of the Ministry of Education in light of Saudi Vision 2030 *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*,Vol. 13(4). 390-401.