CHALLENGES OF EFFECTIVE POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION OF ARCHITECTURE DEGREE RESEARCHES IN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally architecture started as a practice and practical profession which later metamorphosed into academic discipline. Supervision in postgraduate research is not only an academic exercise but a way of preserving and advancing knowledge, building capacity and developing high level manpower in the university and the society. It is the greatest instrument and relationship for high level research, transmitting and transferring knowledge in the academic environment between a student and a lecturer to develop the university and academic system. The paper looked at some literature on the concept of supervision, the relationship that exists between the supervisor and the student, the important ingredients of effective supervision. It identified indicators of effective supervision on the parts of both supervisor and the candidate from data collected in interviews, questionnaires, analysed these. It found that the relationship that exists between the supervisor and the student, as a significant ingredient for effective supervision and the understanding of the personalities involved as crucial to any successful postgraduate supervision. It concludes by advocating that all efforts to strengthen the art of

supervision of doctoral degrees in architecture should be explored by integrating the findings not only to reduce and avoid incidences of frustration rampant in most postgraduate schools but to fast tract high level manpower development and knowledge build-up in architecture in the university system in the 21st century to meet the architectural need of the digital society.

Keywords: Challenges, Effective, Postgraduate, Prospects, Supervision.

Introduction

Supervision is the act of exercising technical and informed control over someone or something with a view to achieving safely high level of targeted goals and standards of performance. As a human capital development process of the society in the academic world, supervision may be regarded as a project since it works within some given resources, time frame and target,(Moses,1985). The supervisor in a sense is a project manager and academic supervision could therefore be a failed project when the targets are not met with attendant resources and time overrun. As a process of certification, it involves initiation into intellectual ladder, where one needs to be guided, knowledge and skills transmitted or passed on from a person to another and generation to generation for sustainability. Hence academic skills and knowledge are replicated in people through the process of supervision. Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) argue that research supervision is a facilitative process requiring support and challenge. It involves providing educational tasks and activities which involve progressing the candidate, mentoring, coaching through the research project to sponsoring student participation in academic practice. Postgraduate student supervision as a long personal and professional relationship between student and supervisor involves selecting a research topic, planning the research, identifying and acquiring the necessary resources, managing the research, actively conducting the research, carrying out the literature review, analysis and interpretation of the data. Thereafter, writing the thesis report, defending it, publication of journal articles and books from the thesis finding a position and academic niche of the work in the over all academic environment. Given the length and complexity of postgraduate student supervision, it is understandable that various difficulties may arise (Brown & Atkins, 1988; Moses, 1985) due to organisational, professional, or personality factors involving various degrees of temperament. Moses, (1985) states that most

supervisory problems can be overcome if there is clear and open communication on all aspects of the project, and structure without a straightjacket framework for supervision which facilitates rather than hinders the development and creativity of the student. Cullen et al. (1994) makes similar points, and argues further on the basis that no supervisor, student or project is perfect: that supervision should be conceptualised to encompass a broad view of postgraduate education that includes more than the one-to-one interaction of student and supervisor. Three distinct stages of supervisor involvement are identified namely; helping the student choose a viable topic and initiate intensive data collection, monitoring student's progress and knowing when to terminate data collection and writing. On the basis of this stage analysis, Cullen et al, (1994), report a model of supervisory process which is common to all disciplines: negotiating or guiding the move from dependence to independence involving different degrees of direction at different stages. Varying the supervisory approach to suit the individual student's needs and personality, disciplinary differences and so on are all important even though some supervisors may prefer a particular approach and prefer to work with students who are suited to that.

 Other issues for effective supervision as given by, Zuber Skerutt and Roche,(2004) are; large and varied experience base, encouragement of the student, facilitating learning by the supervisor, resourcefulness, commitment by both, seek multidisciplinary approach, student's needs, being highly organized with positive self image, good and insightful writing, intelligence and knowledge of what is involved in the research and supportive

Methodology

The study area was the department of Architecture, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria. The research involved the distribution of thirty (30) copies of questionnaires with thirty two,(32) variables to randomly selected postgraduate students and staff of the Department. Out of the thirty two (32) copies distributed, twenty seven (27) of the questionnaires were collected and analysed using the z-test statistic.

Data Collection, Collation And Analysis:

Data collected and collated for indicators of candidate's effective supervision were as presented, analysed and interpreted;

Table I : Candidate indicator for effective postgraduate supervision

S/n	Variable	code	category	+ve value	-ve value
1	Flexibility	FL	Ordinal	Exc;5, Good; 18,Fair;5 = 28	Not important = 0
2	Good communication	GC	Ordinal	Exc;4, Good;15, Fair;8=27	Not important=0
3	holistic interaction	HI	ordinal	Exc;5, Good;14,Fair;8=27	Not important=0
4	humour	HU	Ordinal	Exc;4,Good;10,Fair;9=21	Not important=4
5	alternative approaches	AA	Ordinal	Exc;3, Good;15, Fair;8=26	Not important=1
6	Punctuality and consistency	PC	ordinal	Exc;7, Good;12, Fair;8=27	Not important=0
7	open-mindedness and reliability	OR	ordinal	Exc;3, Good;11, Fair;12=26	Not important=0
8	atmosphere of freedom	AF	ordinal	Exc;3, Good;14, Fair;7=24	Not important=3
9	Guidelines for Postgraduate programmes	GP	ordinal	Exc;5, Good;16, Fair;4	Not important=2
10	Commitment to succeed	CS	ordinal	Exc;9, Good;14,Fair;1=24	Not important=3
11	Mutual respect and trust	MR	ordinal	Exc;3,Good;13, Fair;8=24	Not important=4
12	Responsibility for the Work.	RW	ordinal	Exc;7, Good;12, Fair;8	Not important=0
13	Working within acceptable limit	WA	ordinal	Exc;7,Good;12,Fair;7=26	Not important=1
14	Researchable Topic:	RT	ordinal	Exc;7, Good;12, Fair;8=27	Not important=0
15	Originality of The topic	OT	ordinal	Exc;5, Good;13, Fair;9=27	Not important=0
16	Resource Compliant	RC	ordinal	Exc;0, Good;14, Fair;13=27	Not important=0
17	Area of interest		ordinal	Exc;4,Good;12, Fair;7	Not important=2

Source: Field work, 2014

Table II: Supervisor indicator for effective postgraduate supervision

S/n	Variable	Code	Category_	+ve	-ve value
1	Listening skill and ability	LS	Ordinal	Exc;12, Good;11, Fair;4=27	Not important=0
2	Adequate	AK	Ordinal	Exc;11,Good;9,	Not

				Fair;6=26	important=1
3	Exposure to varieties of techniques,	EV	Ordinal	Exc;11, Good;11,Fair;3=25	Not important=2
4	Communicate fluently	CF	Ordinal	Exc;3, Good;16, Fair;7=26	Not important=1
5	Non-perfectionist attitude.	NA	Ordinal	Exc;1, Good;7,Fair;8=16	Not important=10
6	Eclectical frame of mind	EF	Ordinal	Exc;3, Good;14, Fair;3	Not important=6
7	Avoid derogatory remarks	AD	ordinal	Exc;4, Good;9, Fair;9=22	Not important=4
8	Ability to discern		Ordinal	Exc;3, Good;8, Fair;7=18	Not important=9
9	use and understand non-verbal behaviours	UN	ordinal	Exc;3, Good;8, Fair;6=17	Not important=6
10	Knowing your candidate'	KC	Ordinal	Exc;3, Good;5, Fair;10=18	Not important=9
11	area of interest		Ordinal	Exc;14, Good;8, Fair;3=25	Not important=2
12	cognate qualification	CQ	Ordinal	Exc;7,Good;12, Fair;4	Not important=3
13	An encourager	EN	Ordinal	Exc;8, Good;13; Fair;3=22	Not important=3
14	Motivator	MO	Ordinal	Exc;9, Good;13, Fair;4=25	Not important=2
15	Inspirer	IN	ordinal	Exc;9, Good;10, Fair;6=25	Not important=2

Source: **Field work, 2014**

Table 111: Summary Candidate's indicators

S/n	Value	Total Freq	%	Mode	Remark
1	Excellent	81	17.6		
	Good	231	50.9	231	
	Fair	128	27.8		
	SubTotal	440	95.4 (0.954)		
	Not important	21	4.6 (0.46)		
	Grand total		100		

Source: Field work, 2014

Table 1V: Summary of Supervisor indicator

S/n	Value	Total Freq	%	Mode	Remarks
1	Excellent	101	38.4	101	
	Good	15	5.7		
	Fair	87	30.1		
	SubTotal	203	77.2 (0.772)		
	Not important	60	22.8 (0.228)		
	Grand total				

Source: Field work, 2014

Analysis of Data and testing of Hypothesis:

'Z' test statistic: $Z = PQ/\sqrt{NPQ}$……………….1

Where;

P = Proportion of positive responses

Q = Proportion of negative responses

N = sample size

B = level of significance = 0.05

C= critical value at 0.05 level of significance, the 'Z' score taking value between -1.96 to 1.96.

D = Decision rule: if the computed 'Z' value is between -1.96 to 1.96 of our critical value, we reject the null hypothesis

E= Computed 'z' value

Ho1 = There is no significant candidate indicator in effective postgraduate supervision. Putting in appropriate values for candidate indicator in the formula (1)

$Z = 0.954 \times 0.046/\sqrt{30 \times 0.954 \times 0.046} = 0.0.043884/1.14739705 = 0.0382$

Decision: Since the computed 'Z' value of 0.0382 is between -1.96 and 1.96 of the Critical value the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Ho2 = There is no significant supervisor indicator in effective postgraduate supervision in the Department of Architecture, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University,Anambra State.

$Z = 0.772 \times 0.228 / \sqrt{30 \times 0.772 \times 0.228} = 0.176016 / 5.28048 = 0.0333$

Decision: Since the computed 'z' value of 0.0333 is between -1.96 and 1.96 of our Critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS/RESULTS:

1. **Candidate indicator**: Since the computed 'z' value of 0.0382 is between -1.96 and 1.96 of our Critical value the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is therefore a significant candidate indicator in the effective supervision of postgraduate supervision in the Department of Architecture.
2. **Supervisor indicator**: Since the computed 'z' value of 0.0382 is between -1.96 and 1.96 of our Critical value the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is therefore a significant candidate factor in the effective supervision of postgraduate supervision in the Department of Architecture.

Discussions:

Significant issues in effective postgraduate supervision in the Department of Architecture are flexibility, alternative approaches devoid of rigidity, knowledge of the various guideline for postgraduate research, clarity of expression and communication and area of interest.

Conclusion:

The indicators exhibited by the candidate and the supervisor are therefore very important for any effective postgraduate supervision. The Departments of architecture and indeed the school of postgraduate studies in universities could enhance effective postgraduate supervision by paying attention and improving on the indicators looked at in this research but also encourage the staff

and students to pay attention to the indicators and imbibe the indicators considered in this research. This could be achieved through regular seminars, orientation, reorientation and practical workshops and demonstrations of these indicators. These could be followed by evaluations using these as checklists.

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