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The Influence of Supervisor's Attitude and Workload on Student's Academic Performance in Post Graduate Research in Cross River State

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Abstract: Post graduate projects forms the requirements for the fulfillment of doctoral and Master degree progamme. Therefore, the success of these academic exercises depends on the cordial relationship between the supervisor, the academic mentor and the learner. This study therefore investigates the influence of supervisor's attitude and work load on student academic performance in postgraduate research in Cross River State. The study adopted the ex-post factor research design. The population of the study comprised of all the Postgraduate students who completed their theses defense between 2019 to 2021 academic year among Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. A sample size of 406 was selected using simple random method. The study adopted the Theses and Dissertations supervisor variables scale (TADSVS) via a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Using the Simple Linear Regression Analysis the findings of the study revealed that: supervisor's attitude towards thesis supervision have no influence on students' performance in post graduate thesis. Similarly, it was discovered that supervisor's academic workload has no influence on students' performance in post graduate theses and dissertation. The study therefore recommended that deans of school of post-graduate studies in all Universities in Cross River State should ensure supervisor with positive attitude to supervise their post graduate student since supervisors' attitude to theses and dissertations supervision significantly influence students' performance in post graduate research and more than one supervisors should be allocated for post graduate project supervision to enhanced adequacy of time for both the supervisor and the learner in producing a qualitative research work of global standard.
Keywords: Influence; Supervisor's Attitude; Workload; Student's Academic Performance; Post Graduate Research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Students' research projects, at the level of the master degree known as theses and dissertation at the doctoral stage are pre-requisites for completing the degree programme. Conduct of this critical academic project is an exercise where students are expected to demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and skills in data gathering and processing using various techniques, methods and instruments. It is a creative and systematic inquiry that begins with identification of research problem, setting of research objectives and formulation of hypotheses, data collection, analysis, interpretation and report writing as well as referencing. It is also a requirement for graduation in most courses in which the research students work under the supervision of a competent, experienced academic in a kind of mentor-mentee relationship.

The thesis supervisor is the academic mentor who has the responsibility of providing academic guidance in project exercise and an enabling environment that makes the inquiry a creative and exciting activity. The project is in most cases a year long exercise. It runs in parallel with the other courses taken by students in some universities, while in others, it begins after course work. All these supervisors are members of academic staff and are generally assigned a number of students per session. A supervisor's

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responsibilities include providing help and guidance with the planning of the project and the execution. It also involves giving students' encouragement throughout the module and helping them to develop research skills. These include their writing skills, analytical and oral skills. The help provided may also come in the form of knowledge in data collection techniques, computing, statistics and library information retrieval. The procedure for starting a research project in most universities includes the student identifying the area of concern, and discussing the problem with an expert to confirm the degree of researchability of the identified problem. The agreed topic has to be registered with the research coordinator; the student and supervisor then work together on the research topic for the proposal to be developed and presented (Bassey, 2019).

The conduct of the research project is a learning process that is different from the conventional classroom setting and it involves a more direct relationship and interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee. The relationship between the supervisor and the learner is crucial and could determine the degree of success of the research. Research supervision involves training and development of students undertaking research projects.

According to Norhasni, (2008) research supervision is seeing, overseeing, directing, or managing a supervisee. It involves helping, providing psychosocial support and role modeling (Dickinson & Johnson, 2000). Supervision has been accepted in whole or in part as a form of teaching. The implication then is that an effective teacher could be an effective supervisor. Good communication between students and their supervisors is the most important element of supervision (Taylor, 2005). Carrying out a research project makes a student's adjustment to the new role of learning. The teaching and learning literature are also a very important part of the research writing because of the interrelationship between them. A learner should be responsible for his or her own research activity and hence the personal career development. The supervision of a student as a form of teaching aimed at developing the students and their potential to become independent researchers focuses upon good communication between supervisor and students as opposed to ordinary chalk–talk instructional relationship.

Students' experience in project writing is likely to be varied with good and bad supervision. Performance in research (research ability) is a process of carrying out a research work under an assigned supervisor or supervisors as the case to guide the supervisee on how to carry out the research work for the purpose of grading the supervisee for the final graduation from the university.

This exercise is very important because it exposes the students to search for knowledge and to find solution for any situation in life. There are also some challenges during the process of carrying out research work. Challenges like lack of funds, lack of time by either the supervisor or the supervisee to mention but a few. Some universities have established formal requirements for regular meetings between supervisors and students and for the establishment of adequate arrangements for supervision when the supervisor is away for an extended period (Hussain, 2009). Regular meetings ensure contact with supervisor and may assist introvert students to voice out their concerns.

Clearly, the nature of the student-supervisor relationship may be influenced by the duration of the research, the volume of research undertaken and the stage the work has reached (Latimer, 2009). Where no such student-supervisor relationship exists, it may be difficult for the supervisor to identify the training needs of the learner and adequately mentor the learner. It is expected that all supervisors act as mentors to the learners. Despite the effort being made by the government to have an informed and educated nation, anecdotal information suggests that most of the students who graduate from universities have not shown adequate research skills, a situation for which many factors have been attributed (Kerlinger, 2000).

Research students are faced with many responsibilities and challenges which include; attending to other academic activities, unavailability of research materials, poor departmental support and expectations, personalities in supervision and supervisors' insufficient knowledge of the research area and methodological difficulties. It is expected that the researcher will have a little knowledge of the subject, be willing to learn, proactive, inquisitive, motivated, and follow timelines. Learners' expectation of the institution includes the service of an experienced supervisor who is accessible, availability of resources, and standard postgraduate format of work plan guidance (chronogram).

The supervisors' attitude may have a lasting effect on the student's rate of thesis completion. Thus, if the supervisor display negative attitude the students may develop fears on how to approach the supervisor when confronted with challenges in the course of the research undertaking. This assertion is also supported by Latimer (2005) that 'the success of the research students is based almost entirely on the experience and attitude of supervisor.' The success of most students in research project is based on stimulating and challenging task of supervision, although there is diversity in the conception of supervision by both students and supervisor. Previous studies and the researcher's personal observations from the University of Calabar, Cross River State. Nigeria and Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Cross River State Nigeria shows that only thirty five percent (35%) of the graduate students who enrolled for Post Graduate Degree programme actually completed their theses while fifty five percent (55%) drop out of the program because of their inability to carry out and

completing their theses. It is on the basis of this that the present study sought to examine supervisor's variables and Post graduate students' thesis and dissertation performance within universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. There are several challenges that probably bring this problem to be. The choice of research topic, statement of the problem and writing the background of the study each constitutes an initial challenge to the beginner.

It is so alarming to know that these set of students heap blames on their supervisors for lack of attention, over demanding on the part of some supervisors and poor attitude to supervision. The supervisor on the other hand attributes poor grades to students' poor attitude to research, poor student-supervisor relationship and supervisor's high workload. It is the observed wide chasm between completion of graduate coursework and completion of thesis defence, as well as the outright student drop-out in the Post graduate degree programme that provoke the researcher's curiosity leading to this study on the supervisor's variables and Post graduate students' thesis and dissertation performance within universities in Cross River State, Nigeria connection and sought for a permanent solution in addressing them.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Supervisors' attitude to theses supervision and students' performance

The word attitude refers to an individual's predisposition to act toward something, and may be categorized into positive attitude and negative attitude. This study is concerned with the attitude of supervisors to theses supervision. A positive attitude like successful supervisor-student relationship encourages confidence in the student and fosters student's creation of excellent performance in thesis writing (Denicolo, 2004). The supervisors' attitude can have a lasting effect on the student's rate of theses completion. Thus, if the supervisor displays negative attitude student may develop fears or withdrawal toward the supervisor when confronted with challenges in the course of the research undertaking. This is also supported by Latimer (2005) who averred that the success of the research student is based almost entirely on his/her experience and attitude of the supervisor. The success of most students in research project is based on stimulating and challenging task set by the supervisor, although there is diversity in the conception of supervision by both students and supervisor

Positive student-supervisor relationships have benefits for both individuals. For example, providing thorough and effective feedback has been shown to benefit not only the student, but supervisors also, as they may achieve a sense of personal satisfaction through the facilitation of the development of research skills of another person (Clynes, 2004).

Positive interpersonal working relationships have been associated with student satisfaction with their supervisor and also effective progression through the thesis work and excellent performance among graduate students (Ives & Rowley, 2005).

Rose (2003) in Nuri and Bıkmaz, (2014) carried out a study on expectation of students from their thesis supervisor to determine the required character of supervisors of graduate students. This by scaling study with pairwise comparison developed the scale using 270 graduate students. The dependent variable of this research is the score obtained from the scale. The independent variables are graduate student' sex, graduate level, and whether academician or not. According to the findings of this study, "required characteristics of supervisors of graduate student" is sorted from the most desired characteristic to the least desired characteristic, it is determined that the most desired is "Following the plan made with his or her student" and the least desired characteristic is determined as "being mastery on his or her field". The study found out that factors affecting the relationship between graduate students and thesis supervisors have a significant effect on graduate students integrity which is related to supervisors' virtue and principled acts, and being role models. Guiding research students is related to supervisor's belief in student's value. Seeing the student as colleague, communication, intimacy with personal problems, social events and world view do remain beyond the faculty relationship.

Nuri, Özge, and Hacettepe, (2015) maintained that theses supervisors largely affect the success of post graduate education process. Thesis supervisor is the person who provides time, expertise and support for graduate students to develop research skills during thesis preparation process; and who is a guide for supervisee to prepare a thesis of acceptable standard. Furthermore, Nuri, Özge, and Hacettepe, (2015) also recalled that Heath's condition of a supervisee throughout the history of post graduate education has an important role in effecting professional, cognitive and emotional developments and enhances of completion of studies. Consultancy affects students' completion of their thesis and their career choices in the future (Ellison & Dedrick, 2008). Nuri, Özge, and Hacettepe, (2015), ranked positive supervisor attitudes from students' perception as encouraging, informative, reliable and sharing. Heath's condition and positive attitude of a supervisor support discussions on the researched issue where appropriate and provide feedback and support, being caring, intimate and understanding.

Nuri, Özge, and Hacettepe, (2015) further observed that the most desirable characteristic of supervisors is abiding by plan made with students. This feature is followed respectively by not limiting student in his/her comments and opinions, encouraging academic studies of the student, giving feedback to the work of the student on time, ease of communication

having comprehensive knowledge of research methods and techniques, and problem solving ability. The least desired feature is having comprehensive knowledge of its field. It could be deduced from this work that a qualified supervisor should be in good health condition and positive attitude. A plan that is well-prepared before the study is used as a guide for the student to know what to do and when and how to carry out things (Gelbal & Keecioğlu, 2007). Besides this, features such as making it possible for students to think freely, encouraging their studies are also essential. Giving feedback concerning the studies of the students on time follows aforementioned features. It can be said that students' paying most attention to supervisors' being organized, giving feedbacks to students on time and easy to be communicated with show that students expect from their supervisors to make use of time efficiently. The underlying reason can help the supervisee education during post graduate education process. It may be considered that students at the master's degree level of education can reach knowledge themselves and possess research techniques and thus only want supervisors to assume the guiding role.

Murtonen (2005) study on the University student's research orientations: Do negative attitudes exist toward quantitative methods? Also add to the research needs a positive attitude, comprehensive knowledge on their fields, and research methods/techniques. The study uses an open-ended question directed to the final year students of 2005 academic year being the sample of the study during the determination of scale items to obtained data from the respondents. The data was analyzed using independent t-test. It was found out that students emphasised the importance of supervisors' enabling them to think freely and studying in compliance with the plans and include having comprehensive knowledge in the field. However, it was observed that when they sorted the three items which are positive attitude, comprehensive knowledge on their fields, and research methods/techniques, they did not write the feature of having comprehensive knowledge. Students' being in master or doctorate phase has changed the order of preferences of the features expected from the supervisors. It is found that supervisors' having comprehensive knowledge on their fields and research methods and techniques are placed at the front rows by doctorate students. This finding may be based on the fact that the students in this phase try to be specialized in certain fields, need to make fewer mistakes and need supervisors having comprehensive knowledge and being qualified in their fields. Hence, the mistakes made in doctorate thesis phase create more reactions than the mistakes made during the preparation of master thesis. It is observed that there are not any essential differences in the order of preferences of the students on features of supervisor by gender. And this is the expected result actually; it is thought that the individuals are assessed with their academic features independent from their gender in academic area. Another factor that creates

difference in the order is based on students' working in university or working outside.

They also ascertained that the first expectation of the ones working as academician is on freethinking, whereas the expectation of ones in other group is supervisors' abiding by the plan. This case can be based on the fact that the ones in other professions have lesser time for their education. Both groups have the same order regarding the features of having comprehensive knowledge on field and supporting academic studies. The reason for the ones that are not academicians' preferring being problem solving in the upper rows may be that they face more problematic cases.

Alys Wyn, Heather and Emma, (2015) conducted a study on academic performance of university students in research. They develop a model for performance of students of university of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan. To develop this model they consider the independent factors like home environment, study habits, hardworking, learning skills, and academic interaction. For the development of model using Structure equation modeling, first of all they use Confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the considered factors. For this study the population was all students of social sciences and now studying in 4th semester and who enrolled in 2007 and we select a sample of 300 students using stratified sampling with proportional allocation. The fitted model shows that academic performance depends on learning skills and learning skills depends on home environment. Also performance depends on academic interaction and academic interaction depends on study habits and home environment. It means academic performance can be estimated for any student by its home environment and learning skills and also by its academic interaction, study habits, and home environment. By examining the three possible paths of estimating academic performance, the strongest path is the home environment which affects the learning skills and ultimately learning skills lead to affect the academic performance. According to our model students can achieve high academic performance by focus on home environment and learning skills. The findings stress that maintaining an effective relationship with the supervisor is essential to successful doctoral training. They further argued that it's not necessarily a smooth ride from start to finish. While it is unlikely that students start their journey anticipating a change in supervisory team, this can happen, and for a variety of reason like oversee the entire research project, providing feedback and emotional support where necessary. Feedback is a fundamental component of learning. (Clynes & Raftery, 2008). Supervisors are required to provide time and support to ensure that the student's research skills are fostered to a level that results in a thesis of an acceptable standard be produced (Heath, 2002).

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) study on Management Research: An introduction (2nd Ed.)

suggested that the following are characteristics that should be present for a good graduates supervisor: technical expertise with a general knowledge of the research area and research methods that will be used, it should be an active researcher who is involved in publication in peer reviewed journals, attending conferences to help students enter into academic careers, sets regular and realistic deadlines, but avoids becoming too involved in the detail of the student's work, Responsive to the student, encouraging them to become independent researchers, and responding appropriately to problems and receive, read and return work in an acceptable amount of time.

2.2 Supervisors' academic workload and students' performance in theses

Workload allocations for supervision vary across universities and level of dissertation. Melrose (2002) a university wide workload policy for postgraduate supervisors study in University of Canberra examined supervisory workload allocation across a range of Australasian universities. Many universities did not have policy guidelines at the university level and those that did tended to specify upper limits for the number of students supervised.

Iqbal, Saeed and Abbas, (2012) in Tooba and Nasir (2017) study aimed to investigate the influence of some supervision related background variables on the supervisees' supervision experiences during their research at postgraduate level. They conducted a survey from (N=422) supervisees using supervisor-supervisee. Relationship questionnaire (SSRQ, 65 items) scored on six point scale. The items of SSRQ were developed on six supervision aspects to find the supervision related experiences in addition to the selected background variables. The subscale wise content validity and reliability of the SSRQ was ensured. Inferential statistics were applied to achieve the main objectives of the research. The findings of the research highlighted the importance of supervisors' expertise and research skills in the supervisees' area of research. The supervisees who were not given choice for the selection of the supervisor have reported negative supervision experiences. Giving choice to the selection of a supervisor can improve the supervision experiences of supervisees and can minimize the potential personality and research interest related anomalies. Supervisees from the social sciences disciplines reported the problem of workload management during the supervision process. On the basis of findings it is suggested that supervision allotment procedure, alignment between supervisors' area of specialization and supervisee research topic and discipline specific supervision trainings may be initiated.

Moreover, the increasing teaching workload sometimes also hinders the supervisors from taking up research issues related to their expertise or supervising directly within their own area of specialization or some supervisors are being allocated students whose research interests are peripheral to their own (Ives & Rowley, 2005). However, supervision workload at times results in compromising the quality of research while maintaining the creativity and relevance of knowledge needed to accommodate a larger number of supervisees, which has led to insipid and repetitive researches, and publication of theses on such topics which are outdated or not related to the current social problems (Javed 2014; Tooba & Nasir, 2017).

In addition, supervisors with substantial workload are unable to give proper time to their supervisees (Abiddin, Ismail & Ismail, 2011; Eley & Jennings, 2004; Spear, 2000; Tooba & Nasir, 2017).

Similar findings were revealed in the Indian research (Nevada, 2009; Tooba & Nasir, 2017) in Virk, (2003), that supervisors are very busy with other works. While performing other institutional administrative and teaching responsibilities, it becomes a difficult task for supervisors to spend appropriate time in supervision by arranging regular meetings with supervisees, to check their work timely and giving specific feedback related to the weaknesses and flaws in their work. To monitor the working progress of their supervisees in the right direction becomes difficult. Hence, in managing the workload, sometimes the one important element of "quality" in supervising the research is being compromised which is an area of concern in the higher education institutions of Pakistan. Furthermore, the increase in enrollment has been compounded with broadening of the disciplines and simultaneously the research areas in which supervisors are expected to provide supervision support and expertise. This has doubled the responsibility of supervisors in case when they have to supervise a supervisee other than their specialized field of research that definitely consumes more time of supervisors as compared to time that needs to supervise the supervisees from the same discipline and research area.

On the other hand, candidates at postgraduate level have limited choices for the selection of supervisors in their specific field of research or area of interest. Sometimes students feel themselves bound to compromise to work on an area of research other than their field or interest. Otherwise during research, they may have to face issues specifically related to the intellectual support from their supervisors (Ives & Rowley, 2005). Lee (2012) study on Successful research supervision: Advising students doing research noted that the large number of students requiring supervision at Master's level may result in reduced hours of supervision in comparison to PhD students. The study also found out that Workload allocation for PhD student's dissertations varies across Australian universities and disciplines. At undergraduate level, the numbers of students requiring supervision has seen the introduction of group projects which is not encouraging and helpful in thesis supervision. Some universities do not allocate workload

for PhD student's, viewing students as contributing to the school's research output: the "'plug and socket' model" This is despite the perception of many supervisors that the constrained time frame for PhD student's combined with the need for intensive training and lower likelihood of resultant publications made PhD student's supervision more difficult.

The use of PhD as unpaid research assistants is not a new phenomenon. It is as the result of workload on the thesis supervisors that encourages that. PhD student's more than 40 years ago Witton (1973) noted the ethically dubious practice of using dissertation students as "cheap labour for academics own research projects. There is no reason why the work carried out should not contribute positively to the research output of a supervisor or School as long as supervisors do not lose sight of the fact that honours projects primarily represent a teaching and learning exercise, established for the benefit of students and not for the gratification of staff.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. This design is chosen because at the time of data collection, the independent (causal) variable namely supervisor variables had already happened and there is nothing the researcher could do to control them. It is an "after-the-fact" study.

Population of the study: The population of the study consists of all the 3912 Post graduate degree students who completed their theses defence between 2019 to 2021 academic year among Universities in Cross River State, with specific reference to the University of Calabar, University of Cross River State and the Calabar center of the National Open University of Nigeria. Using Taro Yamane (1967 formula to justify the sample size, Hence a sample size of 406 used is adequate, having exceeded the 363 minimum required by this formula.

The sample and Sampling procedures: For each University, about 10.37 percent of the population of students in a Faculty was selected by simple random sampling. The theses and dissertations were numbered serially from one to three thousand nine hundred and twelve (1-3,912). Each number was written on a slip of paper folded and placed in a box. After shaking it, one slip of paper was selected each time with replacement. This was done until the 406 sample theses and dissertations were selected. This is shown in Table 3. The sample of this study consist of forty nine (49) students alongside Supervisor(s) from Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, one hundred and ninety five (195) students alongside Supervisor(s) from the University of Calabar and one hundred and sixty two (162) students alongside Supervisor(s) from National Open University of Nigeria, Calabar study center. This gives a supposed sample of four hundred and twenty (420) students alongside Supervisor(s) drawn from three (3) Universities in the study area from 2019 – 2021.

However, fourteen supervisors (3.3%) provided incomplete data leaving the real sample size at 406 students, with the fourteen as mortality figure.

Instrument of data collection: The study made use of both primary and secondary data sources. The secondary data is the set of scores (grades) of theses and dissertations students obtained from the respective universities in the Post Graduate School as was obtained from the assessment report of the external examiner(s) of the candidates examined. The major instrument used in the study was the researcher – designed Theses and Dissertations supervisor variables scale (TADSVS); comprising sections A and B. Section A elicited information on the supervisor's personal data, including name of respondent, name of the university, faculty, department and sex. While section B comprised twenty (20) items measuring supervisor's attitude to thesis supervision using a five point agreement Likert scale; Very Strongly Agree (VSA), Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Typical items include; I discuss research problems with my supervisees, I help my students to choose research topics, I provide critical feedback on my students written work time and I guide the students to present their work at seminars/conferences. The supervisor is expected to check the extent to which he/she exhibits the listed attitudes.

Procedure for data collection: The researcher solicited permission from the post graduate school authorities of the three universities used in the study which include Cross River University of Technology, (CRUTECH), Calabar, University of Calabar and National Open University, Calabar Study center. In each of the sampled schools, the researcher met the Dean and Secretary to Graduate School and sought for permission to obtain theses and dissertation supervision data for research purpose. Consequently, theses and dissertation scores were obtained with the supervisor's name written on each copy of the instrument. The instrument was then administered through the Dean's office. At the end of the exercise, copies of the instrument were retrieved from the Dean's office after some days.

Method of data analysis: The Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses raised in the study since both dependents and independent variables are continuous or metric.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSSIONS

Hypothesis one: There is no significant influence of supervisors' attitude towards supervision on students' performance in post graduate thesis and dissertations.

To test this hypothesis, since the dependent variable (performance) was continuous and the independent variable (attitude) also continuous, the simple linear regression statistic was used with results as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple linear regression of students' performance on supervisor's attitude towards thesis and dissertation

R-value = .043 R-squared = .002		Adj. R-Squared = - .001 Standard. Error = 8.036			
Source of variation	**Sum of squares**	**Df**	**Mean square**	**F-value**	**p-value**
Regression	49.829	1	49.829	.756	.385
Residual	26095.149	404	64.592		
Total	26143.979	405			
Predictor variable	Unstandardized coefficient	Std. coefficient		t-value	p-value
	B Std. Error				
Constant	73.683	3.782		19.481*	.000
Attitude towards thesis supervision	-.042	.048	-.043	-.869	.385

Not significant at .05 level (P>.05)

The result in Table 1 show that an R-value of .043 was obtained, giving an R-squared value of .0018. This means that about .018% of the total variations in students' performance in post graduate thesis is accounted for by the variation in supervisor's attitude towards thesis supervision. The P-value (.385) associated with the computed F-value (.756) is greater than .05. As such, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that supervisor's attitude towards thesis supervision has no significant influence (is a non-significant inverse predictor) on students' performance in post graduate thesis. Attitude is an inverse predictor because of the negative unstandardized beta coefficient -.042. The regression constant (73.683) makes significant contribution in the regression model (t=19.481, p=.000).

The foregoing finding showed that there is no significant influence of supervisor's attitude to thesis supervision on students' performance in theses and dissertations among students in Cross River State, Nigeria. This means that students' performance in their final year research work is the same (equal) for those supervised by those with positive or negative attitudes to supervision. This may be true because the students eventually adjust to the attitude of the supervisor with time. Alternative ways of survival are devised like consultation of available expert and non-expert sources. Furthermore, the examiner evaluates the report and oral defence before him and not the attitude of the supervisor.

The finding is contrary to the study of Nuri, Özge, and Hacettepe, (2015), which maintained that theses supervisors largely affect the success of post graduate students. The supervisor provides time, expertise and support for graduate students to develop research skills during thesis preparation process: He is also the guide for leading the supervisee to conduct a thesis of acceptable standard. Their study ranked positive supervisor attitudes from students' perception as encouraging, informative, reliable and sharing. Positive attitude of a supervisor support discussions on the researched issue where appropriate and provide feedback and support, being caring, intimate and understanding.

This is contrary to the work of Rose (2003) in Nuri and Bıkmaz, (2014) who carried out a study on

Expectation of Students from their Thesis Supervisor to determine the required character of supervisors of graduate students. The dependent variable of this research is the score obtained from the scale. The independent variables was graduate student' sex, graduate level and whether academician or not. According to the findings of the study, "required character of supervisors of graduate student" is sorted from the most desired characteristic to the least desired characteristic, it is determined that the most desired is "Following the plan made with his/her student" and the least desired characteristic is determined as "being mastery on her/is field". The study found out that factors affecting the relationship between graduate students and thesis supervisors have a significant effect on graduate students integrity which is related to supervisors' virtue and principled acts, and being role models. Guiding research students is related to supervisor's belief in student's value. Seeing the student as colleague, communication, intimacy with personal problems, social events and world view do remain beyond the faculty relationship.

Furthermore, the finding of this study is contrary to the study of Murtonen (2005), who conducted a study on the University Students' Research Orientations: Do negative attitudes exist toward quantitative methods? The study also added to the fact that research needs a positive attitude, comprehensive knowledge on their fields, and research methods/techniques. It was found that students emphasized the importance of supervisors' enabling them to think freely and studying in compliance with the plans and include having comprehensive knowledge in the field. However, it was observed that when they sorted the three items which are positive attitude, comprehensive knowledge on their fields, and research methods/techniques, they did not write the feature of having comprehensive knowledge. Students being in master or doctorate phase have changed the order of preferences of the features expected from the supervisors. It is found that supervisors' having comprehensive knowledge on their fields and research methods and techniques are placed at the front rows by doctorate students. This finding may be based on the fact that the students in this phase try to be specialized in

certain fields, need to make fewer mistakes and need supervisors having comprehensive knowledge and being qualified in their fields. Hence, the mistakes made in doctorate thesis phase create more reactions than the mistakes made during the preparation of master thesis.

The reason why this findings is opposite to popular literature reviewed may be due to the rapid global wave of change, social and technological innovation in Information Technology. Beliefs, perception and thoughts are changing. For instance, many now believe that the attitude of a supervisor alone may not determine the student grade, as grading is now a team phenomenon under external leadership. Moreover, the student confronted with negative supervisor attitude

has the choice of using others, including the departmental head to forge ahead. Furthermore, geographical distinction may explain why the present findings differ from most in literature.

Hypothesis two: Supervisors' academic work load does not significantly influence students' performance in post graduate theses and dissertations.

To test this hypothesis, since the dependent variable (performance) is continuous variable and the independent variable, academic work load also continuous. The procedures used in testing hypothesis three were adopted with results as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Simple linear regression of students' thesis performance on supervisor's workload

R-value = .021 R-squared = .0004			Adj. R-Squared = - .002 Standard. Error = 8.043		
Source of variation	**Sum of squares**	**df**	**Mean square**	**F-value**	**p-value**
Regression	11.061	1	11.061	.171	.679
Residual	26132.917	404	64.685		
Total	26143.979	405			
Predictor variable	Unstandardized coefficient		Std. coefficient	t-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error			
Constant	69.935	1.225		57.112*	.000
Supervisor's workload	.032	.078	.021	.414	.679

Not significant at .05 level (P > .05)

The result in Table 2 shows that the R-value of .021 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of .004. This means that only about, .04% of the total variation in students' performance in post graduate thesis is explained by the variation in supervisors' academic workload. The p-value (.679) associated with the computed F-value (.171) is greater than .05. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that supervisor's academic workload does not significantly influence (is a non-significant positive predictor of) students' performance in post graduate theses and dissertation. However, the regression constant (69.935) makes significant contribution in the model (t = 57.112, p = .000).

The results of hypothesis showed that the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that supervisor's academic workload does not significantly influence students' performance in post graduate theses and dissertation. The finding is at variance with study by Iqbal, Saeed and Abbas, (2012) in Tooba and Nasir (2017) who conducted a study on the influence of some Supervision Related Background Variables on the Supervisees' Supervision Experiences during their Research at Postgraduate Level. They conducted a survey from (N=422) supervisees using supervisor-supervisee relationship questionnaire (SSRQ, 65 items) scored on six point scale. The findings of the research highlighted the importance of supervisors' expertise and research skills in the supervisees' area of research. The supervisees who were not given choice for the selection

of the supervisor have reported negative supervision experiences. Giving choice to the selection of a supervisor can improve the supervision experiences of supervisees and can minimize the potential personality and research interest related anomalies. Supervisees from the social sciences disciplines reported the problem of workload management during the supervision process. On the basis of findings it is suggested that supervision allotment procedure, alignment between supervisors' area of specialization and supervisee research topic and discipline specific supervision trainings may be initiated.

Similar findings were revealed in the Indian research (Nevada, 2009; Tooba & Nasir, 2017) in Virk, (2003), that supervisors are always very busy with other works while performing other institutional administrative and teaching responsibilities, it becomes a difficult task for supervisors to spend appropriate time in supervision by arranging regular meetings with supervisees, to check their work timely and giving specific feedback related to the weaknesses and flaws in their work. To monitor the working progress of their supervisees in the right direction becomes difficult. Hence, in managing the workload, sometimes the one important element of "quality" in supervising the research is being compromised which is an area of concern in the higher education institutions of Pakistan. Furthermore, the increase in enrollment has been compounded with broadening of the disciplines and simultaneously the research areas in which supervisors are expected to provide supervision support and

expertise. This has doubled the responsibility of supervisors in case when they have to supervise a supervisee other than their specialized field of research that definitely consumes more time of supervisors as compared to time that needs to supervise the supervisees from the same discipline and research area.

The use of PhD as unpaid research assistants is not a new phenomenon. It is as the result of workload on the thesis supervisors that encourages that. PhD student's more than 40 years ago Witton (1973) noted the ethically dubious practice of using dissertation students as "cheap labour for academics own research projects. There is no reason why the work carried out should not contribute positively to the research output of a supervisor or School as long as supervisors do not lose sight of the fact that honours projects primarily represent a teaching and learning exercise, established for the benefit of students and not for the gratification of staff. Observed difference between the present finding and those in popular literature may again be due to geographical and social difference. Most of the studies were done outside Cross River State of Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implication of these findings to education and measurement is that though workload may not matter in this study, a breaking point may exist beyond which the supervisor may not cope. Minimal workload may be tolerable. However, with the introduction of excess workload allowance in Nigerian Universities, some supervisors may opt for more work. This should be done with caution.

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

i.   The dean of Post Graduate School should ensure that different department and faculty assign a supervisor with positive attitude to supervise their post graduate student since supervisors' attitude to theses and dissertations supervision significantly influence students' performance in post graduate research theses.

ii. The dean of Post Graduate School should ensure that different department and faculty assign more than one supervisor to supervise their post graduate student since supervisors' academic workload significantly influences students' performance in post graduate research theses and dissertations.

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