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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**Investigating Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices in the
Supervision Process: The case of Master 2 Students in the
English Department, University of Algiers 2**

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate
LMD in Didactics of English**

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Declaration of Authorship and Originality

I hereby declare that the substance of this thesis entitled:

**Investigating Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices in the Supervision Process:
The case of Master 2 Students in the English Department, University of Algiers 2**

is entirely the result of my investigation and was composed as a result of my original research and has not been submitted to any other degree or qualification.

I also certify that full reference and/or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, for the sources I used or quoted in my work to the work of other researchers.

Date: March 6th, 2025

Signed: Chaima BEKKI

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my father who departed this world a few years ago. His unflinching commitment to my studies pursuit, unwavering support and wisdom and belief in my potential has been a source of strength and my guiding light throughout this journey. Although, he is no longer with us, his inspiration continues to shape my aspirations and accomplishments.

This work is also dedicated to my beloved mother for her selfless sacrifices which have never ceased and to my dear brothers Mohamed and Rachid and my precious sisters Amel and Soumia for their unending support and encouragement and my lovely nieces Rimel, Minane and Djennah and nephew Omar.

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Abstract

The Master Dissertation supervision process enables supervisees to successfully complete their research dissertations with the guidance of a supervisor. In this process, supervisees develop different perceptions which lead to varied experiences. This doctoral research investigates these variations by exploring the perceptions and practices of Didactic Master supervisees in the English Department at Algiers 2 University. It also sheds light on the relationship between the supervisees' identified perceptions about the supervision process and their practices. To attain these objectives, an exploratory concurrent-nested design was adopted using three data collection tools: questionnaires administered to 60 supervisees selected through convenience sampling, interviews conducted with 20 supervisees selected through purposive sampling and the analysis of four administrative supervision-related documents. Informed by the literature, an adapted eight-step framework which details supervision at the Master' level, from working with the assigned supervisor till the post-viva voce phase, was developed. The research tools were sectioned in alignment with this framework. The quantitative data underwent numerical analysis whereas the qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. The research findings showed that the supervisees formed positive, negative and mixed perceptions regarding the different steps of the supervision process. The type of perceptions depends strongly on the type of the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. Moreover, the quality of the assistance and feedback provided by the supervisors exceeds the importance of the type of the supervisory relationship. Furthermore, the results revealed that the supervisees who developed positive perceptions used multiple skills during all the stages making their practices effective and integrated whereas the supervisees who developed negative or mixed perceptions used fewer skills throughout the different stages making their practices less integrated and less effective. These findings indicate a strong correlation between the supervisees' perceptions and practices as the supervisees' perceptions informed and guided their practices.

Keywords: EFL, Master dissertation supervision process, perceptions, practices, supervisees, supervisors, University of Algiers 2

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

SCA: the supervision commitment agreement,

RP: the research proposal,

TD: the text of the dissertation,

R SUP: the right supervisor,

VV: Viva Voce

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

1- Background of the Study

Bruce and Stoodley (2013) and Franke and Arvidsson (2011) argue that the research supervision process is recognized as a nuanced and intricate part of the teaching-learning process, where the supervisor assumes a teaching role while the student engages in a learning process. Therefore, an appropriate dissertation supervision process enables the supervisees to manage completing their research dissertations successfully through the assistance of the supervisor. Students are awarded PhD/Master degree only when the dissertation as a written product, accompanied often with an oral defence/viva voce are assessed and accepted by a board of examiners.

Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) believe that research by its nature is a challenging task for students regardless of their level of study and it is even more challenging to the students who, most of the time, are first time researchers. According to Benmore (2016), it is the supervisee's duty to develop a set of ideas about the supervision process. Supervisees need to proactively think about the different elements involved in the supervision process such as their roles/responsibilities and communication styles. Eley and Murray (2009) assert that the supervisees' practices and the perceptions which inform them are key determinants of the supervision process. Therefore, Wellington (2010) notes that though the teachers' conceptions and the students' perceptions of the supervision are equally important, the latter is under-researched.

2- Statement of the Problem and the Research Questions

It has been noticed that supervisees perceive the supervision process differently despite the fact that they are introduced to the same content of the research methodology course and provided with the same institutional supervision-related documents. In fact, even the supervisees supervised by the same supervisor develop different perceptions about their supervisors and the supervision process

resulting in inconsistent experiences. Such variety stems from the different backgrounds, levels, and degrees of motivation among the supervisees.

To understand these inconsistencies, there is a need to explore supervisees' perceptions and practices of the supervision process. The motivation for this research stems from the paucity of literature on the Master supervision process, especially studies that consider the students' perspective despite its importance. Moreover, the lack of systematic research on how Master supervisees perceive the supervision process and what practices they employ within this process instigated our interest to explore the Master dissertation supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process. To achieve this aim, the following questions were generated:

RQ1: What are Master students' perceptions about the supervision process?

RQ2: What are Master students' practices in the supervision process?

Exploring Master supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process will certainly bring about alignment or misalignment between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices. Accordingly, the following question is posed:

RQ3: What is the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process?

3- The Research Rationale

This section is dedicated to the discussion of two important aspects. The first focuses on identifying the research gap and addressing the differences between the present study and prior research, the second is related to the way this research work contributes and adds value to the academic wider field of study.

a. The Research Gap and the Major Differences in Relation to the Previous Studies on the Topic

The literature on the supervision process often emphasizes the doctoral level (PhD) over the Master level. Cornelius and Nicol (2015), Anderson et al. (2006) and Ginn (2014) call for the need for a distinct supervisory approach for Master supervisees as they are generally first time researchers and their research skills are less advanced than those of PhD level. Despite its importance, the current situation in supervising master dissertations may lack evidence-based research. The existing research prioritizes the role of the supervisor over that of the supervisee, whether discussing Master's level (Anderson et al., 2006) or doctoral level (Zafar et al., 2021; Masek, 2017). Recently, researchers such as Macfadyen et al. (2019) and Davis (2020) have been calling for paying more attention to Master level supervision with special focus on supervisees.

The studies conducted to explore the perceptions and the practices of the Master's supervisees in the supervision process on an international scale remain scarce. There are only a few studies undertaken in contexts limited to the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the Netherlands. Precisely, the Master supervisees' perceptions were dealt with in one study undertaken by Anastasiadis and O'Brien (2019). This study explored Master's student perceptions of UK dissertation supervision. Master supervisees' practices are limited to three studies. The first is the research work of Semjin (2009) in the Open University of the Netherlands in which he strives for improved practices through the examination of the supervisees' evaluations of the different elements of the supervision process and the variables which affect the supervisees' evaluations. The second is the study of Milin et al. (2021) who conducted a benchmarking study of the best practices in the Master supervision process in a New Zealander university. The third study is the one undertaken by Grohnert et al. (2024) in which the researchers attempted to provide a summative framework of research and practice related to the Master supervision process. However, these studies did not explore perceptions and practices at the same time and did not address supervisees' perceptions of the of the supervision process as a whole. Remarkably, no study was undertaken in the Algerian context about the present research topic. In our research, we aim to address these identified gaps in the literature and mitigate the methodological weaknesses observed in the previous studies. The latter

(methodological weaknesses) are discussed under Section 2.5 below. The contribution of the present study is detailed in the following paragraphs.

To start with, there is an absence of academic inquiry which has specifically examined the Master supervisees' perceptions and practices within the Algerian context. Therefore, our research work is conducted in Algiers 2 University, at the English Department with Master's students majoring in didactics.

Despite its academic significance, no studies have established a standardized framework for the supervision process at the Master's level, and there is a notable absence of research on these standards within academic milieu. Rau (2005) contends that the supervisees' varied perceptions and practices of supervisees are important indicators of the supervision process. However, there is an absence of academic inquiry which has specifically examined Master supervisees' perceptions and practices. Prior research has not established a standardized framework for the supervision process in this context and has not comprehensively addressed the perceptions and the practices of Master supervisees within the context of the supervision process as a whole. Rather, they examined the perceptions and the practices separately. Our study focuses on establishing a detailed framework for Master level supervision to guide the process.

To the extent of our current understanding, no scholarly investigation has comprehensively addressed the perceptions and the practices of Master supervisees within the context of the supervision process as a whole. Rather, they examined the perceptions and the practices separately. Our study, therefore, intends to explore the perceptions and the practices and tries to extract the relationship between the two. Additionally, the prior studies explored the supervisees' perceptions about particular elements. Some researchers like Shahzed et al. (2019) focused on the perceptions of Master Supervisees of their supervisors' roles considering these two variables particularly important in the supervision process. The Master supervisees' perception of feedback is a topic for research of scholars like de Klejin et al. (2013) and Orsmond and Merry (2011), while Gedamu (2018) focused on the supervisees' perceptions of

their supervisors' supervisory styles. Our study tries to fill this gap by addressing the perceptions and the practices of the supervisees throughout the whole supervision process.

Finally, no previous study analysed the documents provided by the administration to check the supervisees' perceptions and practices during the supervision process with reference to the institutions' regulations and policies. Our study aims at filling this gap by analyzing four supervision-related documents provided by the administration of the department.

b. Significance of the Study

This study attempts to contribute to a deeper understanding of the supervision process from the supervisees' perspective. It is hoped that the findings inform policy and practice, potentially enhance the supervision quality and promote better academic outcomes for Master students. Additionally, this research aspires to serve as a foundation for future studies in similar educational contexts especially in the Algerian context.

4- Aim of the Study and Delimitations

To answer the research questions and fill the research gap, the study intends to achieve the following threefold aims:

- Investigating supervisees' perceptions about the supervision process
- Exploring supervisees' practices in the supervision process
- Exploring the relationship between supervisees' perceptions about supervision and their practices in real contexts.

To ensure that these objectives remain focused and effectively attainable, it is necessary to highlight the boundaries within which this research is conducted. The scope of this study is delimited to the perceptions and the practices of the Master dissertation supervisees, majoring in Didactics, in the English Department at Algiers 2 University. Additionally, the study explores the supervision process from the

supervisees' perspective only. Therefore, the findings, conclusions and implications are exclusively confined to this specific context and reflect its actual situation.

5- Definitions of Key Terms

It is noteworthy that researchers as de Kleijn et al. (2013) argue that the terminology for Master dissertation and thesis supervision has different meanings across different contexts. One instance of this is Komba (2015) who states that postgraduate supervision encompasses students who are enrolled for either a Master or PhD degree. To avoid this ambiguity, we have chosen to use the terms 'Master supervision' to refer to Master level and 'postgraduate supervision' to refer to PhD level consistently throughout this research work. Additionally, the key terms of this study, that is, the supervision process, perceptions and practices have been defined differently by scholars; however, the following definitions are particularly relevant as they align closely with the focus of our study:

- The Supervision Process: work alliance between the supervisor and the supervisees for a period of time to complete the research dissertation steps efficiently (Qureshi & Vazir, 2016; Baptista, 2015).
- Perceptions: the ideas developed as a result of a mental process through which learners understand knowledge, assign significance to it and translate it into an appropriate action (Nuzulia, 2016).
- Practices: a collection of skills which submit to the doer's knowledge and awareness of how to display and enact them effectively (Schatzki, 2002).

6- Structure of the Thesis

This doctoral thesis is structured into two parts which are further divided into six interrelated chapters preceded by a general introduction and followed by a general conclusion. Part one is theoretical; it contains two chapters while part two is the empirical part and it contains four chapters.

Following the general introduction, chapter one provides a theoretical background related to the present study by shedding light on the main concepts and discussing the relevant literature. This chapter is then divided into four sections. The first and the second sections deal with the supervision process in higher education and tackle definitions of key variables, i.e., supervision and process respectively. The third section deals with the various supervisory styles and evaluates them by analysing their strengths and weaknesses. The fourth section reviews the components of the supervision process, assesses their applicability to the Master level and details the supervisors' and the supervisees' roles.

Chapter two consists of six sections which examine the supervisees' perceptions and practices within the supervision process and provides a theoretical framework for the supervision process at Master level. Section one discusses the major factors influencing the supervision process, namely contingency factors, perceptions, and the supervisor-supervisee relationship. The second section reviews the definition of perceptions, students' perceptions and perception measurement. The third section includes a discussion of supervision-related practices including their definition and types. The current supervision process challenges are reviewed in section four. Section five identifies the research gaps by analyzing the previous studies findings especially discussing their insights and limitations. The review concludes with an eight-step adapted framework for research supervision at Master Level.

The methodological aspect of the present research is introduced in chapter three. The chapter begins with providing a detailed adapted theoretical framework for the supervision process at Master level. In subsequent sections, it explains the research paradigm employed and the research setting, the participants, and data collection methods. It also outlines the rationale behind the participants' selection and the choice of the research tools, as well as detailing the procedures used for piloting the research tools, data gathering, and analyzing. Finally, the last two sections of this chapter review the reliability and the validity of the research tools and findings and discuss ethical considerations.

Chapter four is devoted to presenting and analyzing the research findings obtained from the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire and interview, while chapter five presents and analyzes the findings obtained from the supervisees' practices questionnaire and interview and the document analysis of the administrative documents related Master's dissertation supervision process respectively.

Finally, chapter six is devoted to the interpretation of the research findings. It summarizes the main research findings and discusses them with reference to the literature and the research questions. It also sheds light on the pedagogical implications of the findings. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and recommendations for further research.

**CHAPTER ONE:
CONCEPTUAL
AND
STRUCTURAL
DIMENSIONS OF
RESEARCH
SUPERVISION**

Introduction

Supervision in higher education is a critical component for graduate and postgraduate research success. As a multifaceted process, research supervision requires a clear conceptual understanding. The current chapter provides an overview of the existing literature, theoretical and empirical, relevant to our research topic. It begins by situating our research topic within the broader context of higher education. The following section defines and stresses the importance of key concepts such as supervision, process, and supervision process. Subsequent sections analyze various supervision styles, encompassing their strengths and limitations. The review then delves into the components of the supervision process, evaluating their applicability and relevance to the Master-level supervision process. This leads to an exploration of the roles of the supervisors and the supervisees within this framework.

1.1 The Supervision Process in Higher Education

Universities serve a twofold objective, Graham (2002) contends that the institutions first transmit knowledge from the teachers to the learners to fulfil the first purpose, then both get into an extension journey in which that knowledge gets expanded through research activities to fulfil the second purpose. Drennan and Clarke (2009) further complement this idea stating that, at this level, the students are required to put their theoretical knowledge of research gained through their studies into practice by contributing to the wider field of the discipline they major in.

Alam et al. (2013) argue that quality in higher education depends on effective and efficient supervision. A research project does not influence the supervisees' final degree classification only; it also influences their grades as well as their sense of achievement. According to Qureshi and Vazir (2016) and Baptista (2015), research supervision entails work alliance between the supervisor and the supervisees for a period of time to complete the research dissertation steps efficiently. Grant (2003) attests that supervision results in teaching the student skills as well as in teaching them how to be a researcher or an academic. Briefly, supervision features the multifaceted

nature of academic research. It is not just about the ‘how’ of research, but also the ‘who’ – who the student becomes through the process. This perspective highlights the profound influence that effective supervision can have on shaping the future generation of academics and researchers.

Stiegele and Miķelsone (2022) argue, in their study which analyzed a set of academic research works, that the supervision in the context of higher education studies is a concept which is applied to the supervision of dissertations and thesis in bachelor (undergraduate), master (Master) and doctoral (postgraduate) studies, and the terms supervisees and supervisors are used at the three levels of higher education. Al-Muallem (2016) notes that research supervision (i.e., at the three levels) can be defined as a composition of pedagogical, facilitative and administrative processes. Therefore, the supervision process serves a threefold function. Furthermore, Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) argue that at the three educational levels, the dissertation supervision process is based on a key principle which is a close guiding relationship between the supervisors and their supervisees.

Wright (2007) argues that the supervision process at PhD level involves two parties who have mutual expectations and responsibilities and who share an intellectual, emotional, and a learning journey. This highlights the need for more focused experience for lower levels. According to Rietig (2024), in many cases, the students are not required to write an undergraduate dissertation. This is true within the context of our study, the English Department at Algiers 2 University, where the students first experience the dissertation supervision process at Master Level and do not write a dissertation at BA level. This implies that they need more guidance in the supervision process at Master level. Therefore, we narrow the scope to explore the supervision process at the Master level in depth in the upcoming sections.

Completing a Master dissertation is a requirement for attaining a Master degree (Anderson et al., 2008; de Kleijn et al., 2016). A Master’s degree goes through a whole process which final outcome is a research dissertation that enables obtaining the diploma (de Kleijn et al. 2012). The students are required to spend approximately a

semester in this process (Drennan and Clarke 2009). A Master degree consists of research as an important element which offers an opportunity for the students to develop and use main research skills including: the ability to position oneself within the wider field, make decisions about the topic and select and use appropriate research methodology, collect data from the literature and critically evaluate it which in return develops the analytical skills such as problem solving skills. The research dissertation writing process also enhances advanced academic writing skills through developing evidence-based argumentation skills and conveying the arguments in an academically sound narrative (Drennan & Clarke, 2009). Researchers like Filippou (2021) and de Kleijn et al. (2015) elaborated different labelling for the skills developed including information literacy, conceptual reasoning, research skills and academic writing capabilities. These skills were also directly linked to specific competences such as feedback seeking/receiving, project management and self-regulation.

The student are awarded their Master degree marking the end of the supervision process only when the dissertation as a written product; accompanied often with an oral defence (or *viva voce*) are assessed and accepted by a board of examiners. The Master dissertation therefore provides students with an indispensable learning experience affirmed by its prevalent importance in the curriculum. Higher education supervision requires a supervisor; in this regard, Deutcher (2008) confirms that supervision cannot occur without a supervisor's supervision in working on dissertations; students are directed and guided by a Master dissertation supervisor who is tasked with fostering the required skills and competences throughout the supervision process. This implies that the supervision process has a key teaching role for student development (Hu et al., 2016; Filippou, 2021).

Relating to the aforementioned universities' dual purpose in higher education, the purpose of supervision at Master Level is to transmit research related skills and knowledge from the supervisor to the supervisee (van Rensburg et al., 2016). As a result, the research supervision, in many scholars' opinion (Drennan and Clarke 2009; deKleijn et al. 2012), turns a student into an autonomous researcher. This transformation requires a supervisor who has already developed research discourse and

adequate skills through managing their own research journey (Spedding, 2020). These opinions are supported by Bruce and Stoodley (2013) and Franke and Arvidsson (2011) who argue that the research supervision process is recognized as a nuanced and intricate type of pedagogy, where the supervisor assumes a teaching role while the student engages in a learning process; therefore, the Master dissertation supervision process enables the supervisees to manage completing their research dissertations successfully through the assistance of the supervisor. Based on the present discussion of supervision in higher education, it is essential to understand the supervision process itself. In the following section, we will explore what defines a process and what makes the supervision a process.

1.2 Defining the Supervision Process

Master dissertation supervision process is an intricate process which aims at supporting learners in their research demeanours functions within various learning spaces at various academic levels. Lee and Green's (2009) 'Supervision as Metaphor', attempts to provide various descriptions of the characteristics of the supervision process. In doing so, they refer to the works of Jackson et al. (2009), and Heinze and Heinze (2009) which describe the supervision as a process and a 'journey' represented by a set of 'stages' and/or 'phases'.

1.2.1 Definition of Process

Harmon (2010) defines the construct process as the act of passing through a pre-defined conventional set of procedures to reach a particular end. Ferrie (1998) believes that a process is a definable set of activities which start from a known point constituting the input to reach the unknown and achieve a measurable output in order to satisfy an agreed upon need.

Upon analyzing the aforementioned definitions, it is found that a process:

- Unfolds over a period of time in a gradual manner through the systematic progression from one step to another.

- Yields measurable outcomes, the systematic passing from a step to another allows to quantify the effect of these steps using specific metrics.
- Has a definite beginning and an end, the process being a set of steps has a starting point (step) which initiates the sequence of these steps to mark its beginning and ending.
- Converts input into output, a process allows the transformation of the initial data through the specific steps into the results the process intends to achieve.

It can be concluded that a process requires the following elements:

- **Purpose:** it refers to the intended end to be achieved through the process steps
- **Structure:** it pertains to the commitment to the predefined steps for the purpose to be attained
- **Sequencing:** signifies the phasing/ordering that should be applied

In brief, a process is a succession of associated steps or actions made up of resources and activities that convert inputs into outputs and work together towards a particular joint purpose. Its components ensure that activities/tasks are carried out in a consistent, efficient and effective manner.

1.2.2 Definition of Supervision

Supervision in the academic literature is depicted through a spectrum of definitions and perspectives, each shedding light on its multifaceted nature and the diverse roles it assumes in guiding and supporting the supervisees. Lee (2008) characterizes supervision as the exercise of overall oversight, implying a broad responsibility for guiding and monitoring activities within a specified domain. She asserts that accepting to oversee a project indicated that the supervisor is committing to accompany the supervisee on a demanding process that may be challenging. Launer (2013) defines supervision as a coaching relationship which aims at unlocking someone's potential through direction, information and support to maximize their

performance. This view is supported by the view of Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) who argue that coaching is part of supervising.

Cambridge Dictionary defines supervision as the act of ascertaining that everything is being done correctly through carefully watching the doer (Cambridge University Press, 2021). The American Psychological Association (2020) also provides additional insights into the meaning of supervision arguing that it revolves around providing critical evaluation and guidance by an experienced and qualified individual, the supervisor; to another individual less experienced and qualified, the supervisee, during the execution of a particular task. These definitions collectively underscore supervision as a dynamic and multifunctional process within academia and highlight it as a dynamic process involving oversight, guidance, and evaluation to ensure the quality and progress of academic work. This dynamic nature reflects the pivotal role of supervision in ensuring the quality and advancement of scholarly endeavours, adapting its approach to suit the specific needs and goals of individual supervisees. Thus, supervision emerges not merely as a regulatory oversight but as a proactive engagement aimed at fostering academic excellence and professional development.

Maxwell and Smyth (2010) use supervising and advising synonymously, they argue that the difference lies in the context being used in, precisely; supervising is used in British universities contexts whereas advising is used in American universities contexts. Moreover, Price and Money (2002) perceive of research supervision as a form of mentoring. These eminent researchers define mentoring as offering the required educational and psychological support to someone less knowledgeable and experienced. In this regard, Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) believe that mentoring is part of supervising while Manathunga (2007) argues that supervision and mentoring align in providing guidance and knowledge in a supportive manner where the supervisor/mentor and the supervisee/mentee collaborate. In this context, she states:

Positioning supervision as mentoring removes the hierarchical, problematic aspects of traditional forms of postgraduate supervision ... They appear to suggest that being a student's research mentor removes the operations of power from the supervision

relationship... I suggest that paternalistic impulses remain part of supervision even when it is conceived of as mentoring. (pp. 207 - 208)

This implies that the power dynamics cannot be discarded due to nature of the traditional supervision and the recent mentorship which require offering direction, information and support from the supervisor/mentor to the supervisee/mentee to reach academic goals and personal development.

Al-Muallem (2016) describes supervision as a multifaceted and intricate process to reveal its complexity and the diverse skills and considerations involved in effective supervision practices. Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) conceptualize research supervision as a supportive yet challenging process. Thus, they indicate the dual roles of providing assistance to dissuade the individuals from employing incorrect methods and to ensure adherence to proper procedures and standards while also pushing for academic rigor and growth. Furthermore, Matin and Khan (2017) posit that supervision encompasses all efforts and resources employed by a supervisor to encourage the supervisees in achieving educational objectives, underlining the supportive and motivational aspect of supervision and to generate scientific mindedness and facilitate the learning of how to do research. Cryer and Mertens (2003) believe that supervision involves a combination of complex academic and interpersonal skills. They emphasize the diverse competencies required to direct the supervisees effectively through their research journey, from proposal development till presentation.

Many researchers acknowledge that supervision represents a distinct and adaptable educational approach (Abiddin 2007a; Deuchar 2008). Academic studies often centre on supervision within the contexts of Master Dissertations (e.g., de Kleijn et al., 2015) or doctoral theses (e.g., Lee, 2008). Certain investigations have also explored under Master Dissertation supervision (e.g., Agricola et al., 2018). This scholarly acknowledgement highlights its importance in guiding academic research as well as in shaping the development of students. The versatility of supervision enables it to accommodate various learning preferences and research methodologies, which

reveals its crucial role in cultivating independent thought and scholarly competence among the students.

Moir (2011) offers nuanced perspectives on research supervision, positioning it as a specialized form of teaching deeply embedded in scholarly identities and characterized by rigorous academic standards. Moir's (2011) conceptualization expands the traditional view of supervision beyond simple instructional guidance to include also an emphasis on the role of the supervisor in teaching research methods as well as in mentoring and nurturing scholarly development. This view of research supervision as a dynamic pedagogical practice that goes beyond imparting knowledge is supported by the research of Maxwell and Smyth (2010) in which they argue that "supervision is centrally a teaching/learning process but never-the-less a practice that has parallel processes, namely, student development and the research itself" (p. 408). This perspective emphasizes also the dual role of the supervisor as both educator and facilitator, shaping both the content of research and the scholarly integrity and growth of the supervisee.

According to Pearson and Brew (2002), the increasing attention given to understanding and refining the supervision practices across various academic disciplines represents a movement and a collective initiative to improve educational outcomes and enhance the assistance provided to the students. Through the study and refinement of supervision techniques, educators aim to optimize the guidance and support provided to students, ensuring it is tailored to their educational and career goals. This emphasis on improving the supervision practices also demonstrates a commitment to advancing educational standards and promoting excellence in academic mentoring. Ultimately, these efforts are geared towards empowering the students to realize their full academic and professional potential within their fields of study. Bruce and Stoodley (2013) indicate that the goal of student supervision is a form of advanced learning that is acquired through research. However, despite its significance, supervision, compared to teaching, remains less defined and lacks standardization of approaches (Alam et al., 2013). Supervision at the Master's level is designed with dual educational objectives in mind, aimed at equipping students with

essential research skills while guiding them through the execution of rigorous academic inquiry (de Kleijn et al., 2013; Macfadyen et al., 2019). Supervision aims at combining research management with support systems tailored to a diverse group of supervisees (McCallin & Nayar, 2012). This dual emphasis highlights the supervision's critical role in fostering students' transition from passive recipients of knowledge to proactive contributors within their academic disciplines.

Lategan (2008) described supervision as the supervisor's active involvement for a designated period of time in helping the supervisees identify their research focus, define the scope of their project, and provide the necessary guidance for its successful completion. Master students are expected to progress from acquiring research knowledge to developing their abilities as researchers (Maunder et al., 2012), and the supervision process should target facilitating this educational objective (Van Rensburg et al., 2016). The supervision process provides the students with the ability to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding both the content of the dissertation and the demands of the process (Anderson et al., 2008; de Kleijn et al., 2012; Manathunga, 2007; Masek & Alias, 2020).

By focusing on the acquisition of the research skills, supervision enables students to develop the methodological expertise needed to design, conduct, and analyze research effectively. Simultaneously, the supervision process supports students in navigating the complexities of conducting high-quality research, including adhering to ethical standards, managing project timelines, and producing scholarly outputs of significance. Thus, supervision at the Master's level plays a pivotal role in preparing students for the demands of advanced research, cultivates their professional identities as emerging scholars capable of contributing to their fields of study and laying a solid foundation for their future academic and professional endeavours.

Examining the definitions of research supervision alongside the characteristics and criteria of a process affirms that research supervision is a process because it embodies all the standards of a process. Supervision is a process because:

- It is progressive taking a period of time as it takes at least five months

- It yields measurable results including improvements in academic and research performance and dissertation completion leading to the obtainment of Master Degree.
- It has a definite beginning and an end; it starts with the selection of supervisors and ends with an oral defence of the obtained results and findings.
- It transforms input into output through assessing the supervisees' initial competencies, providing targeted support and achieving improved outcomes.

Furthermore, it fulfils all the required process elements because it has:

- **Purpose:** the supervision process aims at equipping the supervisees with the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve the ultimate goal which is writing a dissertation and defending it orally.
- **Structure:** the supervision process follows a sequence of supervisory stages, sessions and periodic reviews and assessment.
- **Ordering:** dissertation supervision is a process that undergoes many sequential stages and steps to be well established and efficient.

Overall, research supervision is a process which involves teaching, mentoring, advising, and providing scholarly support, guidance, encouragement, critique, and motivation to a student by a supervisor over a period of time that culminates in the viva voce. With a clear understanding of the supervision process established, it is critical to know the way this process is implemented. The upcoming section explores different supervisory styles and approaches.

1.3 The Research Supervision Process Styles

Despite the bulk of literature available about the research supervision process, there is no clear definition of what a supervision model is. Since the supervision process is a long process, how do supervisors and supervisees interact with each other and how supervisors deal with the supervisee determines the direction of the process

which in return determines the roles of each and the way supervision gets carried out. Therefore, both parties need to clearly agree upon their expectations; Mainhard et al. (2009) define an expectation as an aspiration that is predisposed and followed by the supervisors and the supervisees. Masek (2017) posits that “a necessary step needs to be taken by the students or the supervisor to start talking about supervision expectation during the first formal meeting ... Failures in supervision are often the result of different expectations” (p. 1).

A number of scholars who have been concerned with research supervision, such as, Mainhard et al. (2009) and Gurr (2001) discussed the research supervision styles but did not proffer a conceptual clarification. Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) argue that there has been a deficiency in terms of a solid conceptual comprehension of what supervision process involves as there is are supervision models and frameworks which focus on some sections of processes that deal with supervision management such as the supervisory relationship (Ismail et al., 2011; Chiappetta-Swanson & Watt, 2011). Therefore, supervision styles, approaches, frameworks and models are employed as synonyms in this study.

The literature shows that the supervisory style is perceived as a crucial element (Lee, 2008; Mainhard et al., 2009; Gatfield, 2005), and is considered a determinant factor in the supervision process. Saleem and Rana (2019) define a supervisory style as a unique approach for each case of supervision, demonstrated while the supervisors and the supervisees interact throughout the supervision process. Gurr (2001) and Lee (2008) argue that the supervisory styles are less tangible and more abstract, nonetheless, crucial to the joint alignment between the supervisors and supervisees, and the way the supervisors support their supervisees to complete their research successfully (Gatfield, 2005). Armitage (2006), Malfroy and Webb (2000), Cullen et al. (2009), Glickman et al. (2013), Lee (2010), Deuchar (2008), and Gatfield (2005) presented broad conceptual overviews dealing with research supervision models which focus on the supervisory relationship. The frameworks and approaches as summarized in the following table:

Table 1.1*Prominent Studies about the Supervision Styles*

Approach / Style	Characteristics
Malfroy and Webb (2000): Supervision Process	Supervision process: 1) Structured 2) Semi-structured 3) Unstructured
Gatfield (2005): Supervisory Management Conceptual Model	Blake and Moulton's (1964) managerial grid was developed into four management styles: 1) Laissez-faire: low structure/ low support 2) Pastoral: low structure /high support 3) Directorial: high structure /low support 4) Contractual: high structure/ high support.
Armitage (2006): supervision process	Supervision goes through three stages: 1) relationship forming 2) relationship norming 3) relationship maturing
Deuchar (2008): Contradiction and congruence in doctoral supervision styles	Hand-on and hands off approaches to the supervision process
Cullen et al. (2009): three cyclic modes of the Supervision process	Supervision process has three stages: 1) Intensive 2) Less intensive 3) Intensive
Lee (2010): Supervision models Professional ↓ Personal	Five models to Supervision: 1) Functional: managing the project is the priority; 2) Enculturation: inciting the students to participate in the community of their discipline; 3) Critical thinking: motivating the students to evaluate work; 4) Emancipation: encouraging students to be autonomous 5) Relationship development: supervisor-supervisee
Glickman et al. (2013) Approaches to supervision	Three approaches developed based on three philosophies: essentialism, experimentalism and existentialism: 1) directive 2) collaborative 3) non-directive

It is worth mentioning that some of the mentioned studies are specifically relevant to PhD level supervision. Accordingly, the supervision of Master dissertations, despite the difference, has many commonalities in terms of the processes and techniques with those employed at PhD level. This is supported by Maunder et al. (2012) as they acknowledge that:

Both doctoral and Master's research typically involve some form of independent empirical work, engagement with relevant literature, planning and conducting an investigation, demonstrating and honing of research and analytical skills, and production of a written thesis – all under the guidance of an academic member of staff. As such, the supervision of Master's dissertations draws on many similar processes and techniques to those employed at PhD level. Thus we feel justified in adapting some of the theoretical models ... and applying them to the Master's context. (p. 32)

In the following sections, each of the aforementioned models will be discussed individually. The discussion follows a chronological order.

1.3.1 Malfroy and Webb's (2000) Research Supervision Styles

Malfroy and Webb (2000) describe a developmental research supervision process that transitions through three stages: unstructured in the beginning, semi-structured during the course of the process and structured by the end. Each stage reflects an increasing level of planning, guidance and formality. A high degree of flexibility and informality distinguishes the initial stages in order to identify the supervisees' needs and foster an adaptable relationship. However, this stage shows a potential lack of direction and consistency which creates gaps between the supervisees and their supervisors. The second stage is an intermediate phase that incorporates elements of structure and flexibility. It is characterized by a set of predefined goals and planning; yet, it leaves space for adaptation to offer a balanced approach that is flexible but maintains a certain degree of organization and direction. The final stage is a systematic approach marked by an advanced level of organization. It provides comprehensive, detailed and effective supervision. However, it is so rigid that it does not account for the supervisees' instant needs.

This model which transitions from unstructured to semi- structured to structured supervision offers a clear pathway for the supervision process maturation and its increasing complexity. While it is a developmental and balanced framework, it has also potential limitations. The rigidity of the final stage may constrain the creativity and adaptability among the supervisees. This idea is confirmed by Fan and Cai (2022) in their study about the inhibiting impact of structured environments. Also, different supervisees may need different degrees of structure at different stages. Taylor and Beasley (2010) argue that a one-size-fits-all approach does not exist when it comes to different needs; therefore, responsive supervision is more effective. This model assumes only a linear progression only while the supervision process may require moving back and forth on the continuum of structure.

1.3.2 Gatfield's (2005) Research Supervision Styles

Gatfield (2005) suggests that the supervisory style adopted by the supervisor may change during the various stages of research. His research concluded with the emergence of four distinct supervisory styles which he and other scholars identified as the 'laissez-faire, the pastoral, the contractual and the directorial' approaches to the supervision process.

The laissez-faire style, characterized by low degrees of structure and support, depends on the assertion of the students' self- management. Gatfield (2005, p. 317) provides the following characteristics for this style:

- The supervisee receives limited levels of motivation and management skills.
- The supervisor is non-directive and avoids high levels of personal interaction.
- The Supervisor may appear indifferent.

This style provides minimal guidance from the supervisor as it encourages the supervisees to work creatively and independently. But it also carries significant risks related to lack of guidance and support.

The pastoral style is characterized by low levels of structure and high levels of support. This style assumption lies in the supervisees' ability to manage the research process only when they receive effective personal support. It requires a highly supportive supervisor, but not necessarily a task-oriented one. Therefore, this style is holistic as it takes into consideration the supervisees' motivation and satisfaction. Gatfield (2005, p. 318) describes this style as follows:

- The supervisee has low management skills but exploits all the available support facilities.
- The supervisor provides considerable personal care and support but not necessarily focused on providing task-driven direction.

The main weakness of this style is the low assistance in terms of direction, what tasks to complete and how. Moreover, the pastoral style can sometimes neglect the limits between professional and personal relationships between the supervisor and the supervisee. It is also too demanding as it requires constant support from the supervisors which may cause the supervisees' dependence on them.

The directorial style, characterized by high structure and low support, assumes that the student requires support in navigating the process but not necessarily in the area of personal support. It offers clear guidance, efficient time management and high academic standards. Gatfield (2005, p. 318) describes this style as follows:

- The supervisee is highly motivated and sees the need for engaging in high structural activities such as setting objectives, independently and timely completing and submitting work without any institutional support.
- The supervisor has an interactive, positive and frequent relationship with the supervisee, but avoids non-task issues.

However, the structure of this approach hinders the students' autonomy and its lack of support may create feelings of stress and anxiety among the supervisees.

The contractual style, distinguished by high structure and support, requires both parties to collaborate and determine the level of research project management and

personal support needed. It balances guidance and support which makes it a comprehensive style that enhances the supervisees' overall performance. Saleem and Rana (2019) contend that this style is advocated as the best style by many researchers. Gatfield (2005, p. 318) provides the following characteristics for this style:

- The supervisees are highly motivated and able to autonomously take direction.
- The supervisor is able to direct and exercises good management skills and interpersonal relationships.
- Time-consuming for the supervisors.

Overall, Gatfield's (2005) categorization of the four styles seems effective depending on the students' needs and abilities. Each style has distinct strengths and weaknesses; ultimately, the supervisors and their supervisees need to adapt these styles by integrating various elements taken from the four approaches to go through a supportive and highly academic supervision process.

1.3.3 Armitage's (2006) Research Supervision Styles

Armitage (2006) defines the research supervision process through three key stages: relationship forming, relationship norming and relationship maturing. This model emphasizes the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee and highlights that supervision is a dynamic and evolving process in which each stage builds on the previous one. The first stage is a starting out phase, it is crucial for establishing a foundation for effective supervision. It includes building trust, contracting and setting expectations. The second stage is a 'keep it going' phase; it solidifies the relationship through setting goals, developing communication and feedback mechanisms and agreeing on how to deal with obstacles. In the final stage, the focus shifts towards deeper growth and development through enhanced collaboration.

This model provides a valuable framework for understanding the supervision process as it has a developmental structured approach characterized by clarity and organization. However, it lacks extensive empirical validation as there is limited

research specifically testing its effectiveness and applicability. Besides, it implies a linear progression which may not always reflect the dynamic nature of supervision. In practice, the stages may overlap or occur in a non linear manner. Additionally, the model is limited to the relationship between supervisors and supervisees and does not address context variability or individual differences.

1.3.4 Deuchar's (2008) Research Supervision Styles

Deuchar (2008) outlines a research supervision framework that consists of two approaches: hands-on and hands-off supervision. As its name denotes, hands-on type of supervision is a form of structured supervision that ensures the supervisees engagement through receiving regular and detailed guidance. However, this type of guidance is not only time and effort consuming, but it may make the supervisees feel limited too as the supervisors concentrate on all the steps/elements while the supervisees only apply. The hands-off approach, on the other hand, promotes the students' autonomy and motivation and allows them to develop their higher-order thinking skills as they take decisions and apply them in the way they see suitable. However, the lack of clear guidance heightens the possibility of lower-quality supervision. The optimal supervision approach likely involves a flexible approach combining elements from both approaches.

1.3.5 Cullen et al.'s (2009) Research Supervision Styles

Cullen et al. (2009) suggest a cyclic model starting by intensive to less intensive then getting back to intensive supervisory style. The initial intensive stage is characterized by a high level of support as it marks the foundation. The intensity mitigates early-stage uncertainties and sets a solid groundwork which may lead the supervisees to dependency. The second stage is less intensive because the supervisee is thought to have acquired some autonomy through experience from the first intensive stage. It promotes self reliance and higher order thinking skills; but it may make the supervisee feel unsupported if the transition is not well managed. The supervision intensity increases again when the supervision process approaches critical milestones

or completion. It is characterized by thoroughness as it is meant for finalizing the output and addressing the remaining issues/details.

This model is aligned with supervisees' evolving needs and their natural progress. It is inherently adaptive; Madan (2021) argues that flexibility ensures that the supervisees receive the appropriate support particularly during critical initial and final stages. Therefore, it promotes autonomy and ensures quality. Gonzalez (2011) highlights the importance of autonomy and quality for long-term development respectively. Despite the aforementioned advantages, this model creates discontent because of its shortcomings. Anderson et al. (2006) believe that intensive supervision is challenging as it requires an investment of time, effort and resources. Thus, it is too demanding for the supervisors and their supervisees. Moreover, the transition between the different stages may cause inconsistent support which confuses the supervisees. According to Komba (2015), Marhaban et al. (2021) and Librero (2012), the supervisees may struggle with sudden reduction or increase in intensity. Besides, the stages which require intensity may lead the supervisees to over-rely on their supervisors.

1.3.6 Lee's (2010) Research Supervision Styles

Lee (2010) outlines five distinct approaches to the supervision process: the functional approach, enculturation, critical thinking and emancipation. Each of which has its own characteristics and implications. Lee (2008) believes that effective supervision can be in the form of one of the following approaches. The functional approach focuses on the pragmatic aspect of the supervision process. It places emphasis on the role of the supervisor in ensuring that the supervisees meet the academic requirement and milestones. It is oriented towards the efficient completion of tasks and adherence to academic standards, therefore; it is structured. Gatfield (2005) contends that this approach provides practical guidance through detailed feedback and close monitoring. Delamont et al. (2004) indicate that this approach helps in scheduling meetings and reviewing drafts.

Enculturation emphasizes the integration of the supervisees into the academic community. It involves teaching the supervisees the norms, values and practices of their field. Manathunga (2005) states that this approach helps the supervisee to become familiar with the disciplinary conventions and the academic culture. The supervisees adopt the academic behaviours and skills when their supervisors model them. However, this approach may lead to an emphasis on conformity and ignores the supervisees' innovation and participation.

The critical thinking approach encourages the supervisees to develop problem-solving skills. Tinkler and Jackson (2004) confirm that this approach helps foster analytical skills. However, this approach raises the risk of neglecting the practical skills which the supervisees need to acquire due to the heavy emphasis on critical thinking. The Emancipation approach, on the other hand, focuses on the students' ability to self-direct and autonomy. Yet, it raises the risk of confusion as the supervisees may feel unsupported whereas the supervisors may find it challenging to balance providing support while allowing for autonomy. Relationship development approach depends on the supervisors' and the supervisees' emotional intelligence to develop a positive supervisory relationship and manage conflicts.

Overall, Lee's (2010) model is comprehensive and offers multifaceted perspective on supervision. However, its strength does not exclude its complexity and challenges in applying the styles included within it.

1.3.7 Glickman et al.'s (2013) Research Supervision Styles

Glickman et al. (2013) explore different supervisory styles arguing that a supervisory style can be directive, collaborative or non-directive. These three approaches are aligned with three educational philosophies: essentialism, experimentalism and existentialism respectively. Essentialism is a philosophy developed by Bagley (2000); it emphasizes teaching a core set of knowledge and skills deemed essential for all students. It is objectively standardized and advocates structured, authoritarian and teacher-centred instruction. Based on these principles, Glickman et al. (2013) developed the directive approach to supervision in which the

supervisor provides explicit direction and closely monitors the supervisees' progress. This approach ensures that the supervisees follow a set path to achieve specific goals. This style is clearly structured, consistent and efficient; therefore, it is deemed effective particularly in early stages. However, it reduces the supervisees' autonomy and leads to disengagement as the supervisees may feel that their own input is devalued which inhibits their reflective practice.

Dewey (1938) established experimentalism as an educational philosophy that views learning as an active process of inquiry and experimentation. It focuses on higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking and highlights joint problem-solving. With reference to these principles, Glickman et al. (2013) outlined collaborative supervision in which the supervisees are actively involved in reflective practices that are shared with the supervisor. This approach is adaptable and flexible through ongoing and responsive modification based on joint participation of the supervisee and the supervisor. The collaborative approach offers several benefits mainly: active engagement and autonomy of supervisees as well as partnership and responsiveness between the supervisors and their supervisees. But it is highly demanding as it consumes time and effort while the Master supervision process has a limited completion time. Besides, it heavily depends on joint collaboration which may create role confusion among the supervisees.

Existentialism was developed by Sartre (1970); it focuses on individuality and incites the learners to explore personal meaning and develop their self-directed awareness. It posits the importance of agency and constructing one's own meaning rather than conforming to external expectations and advocates autonomy and authenticity. Glickman et al. (2013) mirrored these principles in their non-directive style of supervision. This supervisory style/approach encourages the supervisees to take the responsibility in the supervision process. The supervisors' duty is to provide support and facilitate the process but refrain from controlling it. Therefore, it leads to creating a non-judgemental and supportive atmosphere that promotes autonomy and personal growth. Non-directive supervision has several strengths as it is a flexible style that promotes the supervisees' autonomy, responses to their needs and creates a

supportive facilitative environment for them. However, it lacks clear structure and guidance which may lead to ambiguity. It is tightly related to the supervisees' readiness for autonomy and self-direction.

Through a careful examination of Glickman et al.'s (2013) threefold approach to supervision, it is concluded that it offers a flexible and comprehensive framework that can effectively address the diverse needs of the supervisees. However, its applicability on the Master level supervisees faces many challenges including: potential supervisors' lack of proficiency and skills needed for this model, potential supervisees' need for clear guidance during certain stages and potential supervisees' confusion between the need for autonomy and the need for guidance.

1.3.8 Discussion of the Supervision Styles

After a thorough analysis of the aforementioned frameworks and approaches, it is concluded that they share similarities more than they differ. Although they hold different labels, they are developed by different scholars and are classified under different frameworks; they are rooted in core common foundational principles. Therefore, they can be classified under four categories.

The first category includes Lee's (2010) functional approach, Malfroy and Webb's (2000) structured approach, Gatfield's (2005) directional approach, Armitage's (2006) relationship norming, Deuchar's (2008) hands-on approach, Cullen et al.'s (2009) intensive approach and Glickman et al.'s (2013) directive approach. They all share a structured approach in which the supervisor provides intensive and substantial follows supervisor's instructions to learn research skills and complete the thesis according to the institutional requirements.

The second category includes Lee's (2010) emancipation, Malfroy and Webb's (2000) unstructured approach, Gatfield's (2005) laissez-faire approach, Deuchar's (2008) hands-off approach and Glickman et al.'s (2013) non-directive approach. These approaches all share focus on the supervisees' autonomy. According to these approaches, the supervisor has a minor role in directing and guiding the supervisees while the supervisee is a decision-maker throughout supervision process.

The third category includes Gatfield's (2005) pastoral approach and Armitage's (2006) relationship forming approach. These approaches focus on the importance of developing a supportive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. Precisely, they focus on emotional and personal support and nurturing relationship more than they focus on academic support.

The fourth category includes Lee's (2010) critical thinking approach, Malfroy and Webb's (2000) semi-structured approach, Gatfield's (2005) contractual approach, Armitage's (2006) relationship maturing, Cullen et al.'s (2009) less intensive approach and Glickman et al.'s (2013) collaborative approach. This category included the approaches/ styles which are more balanced in terms of academic support and emotional support which makes them more holistic.

Each model discussed provides valuable insights into the way the supervision process proceeds and how it can be adapted and tailored to support the supervisees' development and the supervision requirements. However, they do not constitute an agreed upon reference or standard. In this regard, Saleem and Rana (2019) suggest adopting and adapting the balanced approaches to create a well-rounded supervision process. Gurr (2001) stated that "a dynamic alignment of supervisory style with the student's degree of development ... the supervisory style needs to be adjusted to a more hands-off approach in order to allow competent autonomy to be developed". (pp. 81, 86)

The discussion of the supervisory styles leads us to address the constituents of the supervision process as they form the ground on which the supervisory styles/approaches/frameworks are implemented.

1.4 The Components of the Supervision Process

Whilst the literature on teaching and learning has examined conceptual approaches (e.g., Trigwell & Prosser, 2020; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999), there is deficiency in research about the components of the supervision process. Rietig (2024) provides the following steps which she considers the components of the supervision process: developing the supervisor-supervisee relationship, identifying the research

questions, reviewing the literature, verifying data availability and analysing them and discussing the findings clearly. Rietig's (2024) study also provided insights about the challenges the students face and the structure of the dissertation. Berlach, R.G. (2010) developed a practical guide to supervision in which he introduced many stages. In stage one the supervisor and the supervisee meet and negotiate expectations. Stage two presents an overview of the research process while stage three deals with research ontology and paradigms. Stage four deals with organisational integrity whereas stage five deals with research methodology. Stage six deals with structuring the research and the final stage presents the final version of the research. Recently, Jassim et al. (2015) developed a framework for the research supervision process consisting of two layers, abstract and detail levels to research. The abstract level consists of six mandatory stages which are; basement stage (i.e., the stage in which the research direction is determined), review stage (i.e., the stage in which the literature is reviewed), data collection stage, data analysis stage, development stage, and testing and validation stage. To achieve the task of each stage, a number of steps are defined, which constitute the detail level. The appropriate suggested steps from the detail layer are selected depending on the complexity of the research. Although these frameworks may seem holistic and effective, they limit the supervision process only to research steps and overlook other essential aspects such as roles and supervisory meetings.

There is no clear definition of components and steps or how the entire process of supervision is enacted. Pearson et al. (2004) highlights a perceived need to develop a new theoretical approach drawn from traditional higher education pedagogy and has a reference to the wider literature. There is also a lack of reviews about the processes of research supervision proposed by researchers as confirmed by Egan et al. (2009). Therefore, we refer to Gatfield's (2005) components and Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) steps for PhD supervision. Although we are aware that these frameworks/steps/components are developed to address PhD level and they may not be effectively applicable to the Master level, their inclusion remains essential to establish a comprehensive and a foundational understanding of existing frameworks to situate potential areas for contextual adaptation. They are selected to be a reference because they were founded on a solid theoretical basis as the researchers reviewed and

synthesised a bulk of scholarly literature on supervision to develop a conceptual model specifically directed to the supervision process in the educational discipline. In the upcoming sections, both frameworks will be discussed.

1.4.1 Gatfield's Research Supervision Components

Gatfield (2005) introduced a three-dimensional conceptual framework that aimed to comprehensively categorize and understand how the supervision process in academic settings works and progresses. His suggested framework includes structure components, support components, and exogenous components. By considering these three elements and based on the balance and interaction between them, the practitioners and the researchers can gain insights into the components of the supervision process.

The structural component reflects the components which are supplied primarily by the supervisor(s) in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. These elements are further divided on three subcategories: organisational process, accountability and stages, and skills provision. Gatfield (2005) provided detailed steps of each category:

Table 1.2

The Constituents of the Structure Component in Gatfield's (2005) Framework

Organisational process	Selecting the supervisee, Assigning roles, Negotiating sessions, Setting the topic, Defining goals and stages, Planning group meetings, Recording meetings, Reporting progress, Supervisor availability, Consistent contact, Supervisor role shift, Maintaining focus, Supervisor input, Colloquiums and conferences, External reference, Group supervision, Informal structure, Time flexibility, Supervisory model
Accountability and stages	Contractual arrangements, Negotiated meeting evaluations, Milestones evaluations, Establishing time frames, Staged writing up, Supervisor turn-around time, Supervisor staged feedback, Reports evaluation, Oral defence, Colloquium evaluations, Conference evaluation, Publications

Skills provision	Methodologies, Writing, Statistics training, Computer Software, Oral presentations, Time management, Short training seminars

Note. Adapted from An Investigation into PhD Supervisory Management Styles: Development of a dynamic conceptual model and its managerial implications (p. 315)

Upon analyzing the table, the organizational process can be further classified into three groups depending on their focus. Gatfield's (2005) selecting candidate, setting the topic, setting goals and stages and identifying roles are grouped together as they concentrate on establishing the foundation for the supervision. Thus, they can be called planning components. Other components as scheduling group meetings, negotiating meetings, recording meetings, progressive reports, consistent contact and time flexibility focus on operational supervision. The remaining components, namely: supervisory input, conferences, external resources, group supervision, informal structure, supervisory model and changing supervisor role address the supervisory support that enhances the supervisees' development.

The second component of structure is accountability and stages. It can also be classified into two areas, each focusing on different aspects. The first relates to progress evaluation and feedback and includes negotiated meeting evaluations, milestones evaluations, supervisor stages feedback, reports evaluation, and colloquium and conferences evaluations. The second relates to the work presentation and it includes staged writing-up, oral defence and publications. Skills provision represents the final constituent of structure. It can be divided into three categories. The first one deals research skills such as: methodologies, statistics training and computer software. The second category deals with communication skills namely: writing and oral presentations while the third category deals with personal development reflected in time management.

Gatfield's (2005) support components constitute those optional elements provided by the administration/institution and the supervisor. This category is further divided onto 'pastoral care', 'material requirement', 'financial needs' and 'technical

support'. Gatfield ((2005) provided the following table to explain the steps of each category are:

Table 1.3

The Constituents of the Support Component in Gatfield's (2005) Framework

Pastoral care	Proactive supervisor, Responsiveness to candidate needs, Mentoring, Guiding, Moral awareness, Support, Confidence instilling, Stimulating persistence, Positive feedback, Problem- solving assistance, Group support, Bidirectional commitment, Complementary research sharing, Supervision sharing Exposure to academics discipline, Informal meetings
Material	Office space, Equipment, Email, Photocopying, Policy manual and PhD handbooks
Financial	Research funds, Conference funds, Industry funding, Scholarships
Technical	Statistics software support, Software, Network support, training programme

Note. Adapted from An Investigation into PhD Supervisory Management Styles: Development of a dynamic conceptual model and its managerial implications (p. 316)

Pastoral care refers to the support and guidance provided by supervisors beyond academic and research related advice. It focuses on the practices that foster the well-being and personal development of the supervisees and ensures they have the necessary support for a successful supervision process. Material requirement, as the second component, is essential to ensure that both the supervisors and the supervisees have the resources needed to effectively manage the supervision process. The financial needs are also part of the support components as they offer opportunities for the supervisees to expand their knowledge without worrying about the funding. Technical support, as the final element, is a crucial part of the support component. Providing the tools and training necessary for the supervision execution renders the process effectively achievable.

The final element provided by Gatfield's (2005) is the exogenous component which involves the fixed factors that are not included within the support and structure

categories. Gatfield (2005) outlined the following table which detailed the items included within each category:

Table 1.4

The Constituents of the Exogenous Component in Gatfield's (2005) Framework

Candidate Variables	Research skills, Organizational skills, Self directed agenda, Academic growth, Research autonomy, Interpersonal skills subordination on group/supervisor
Various Variables	Second supervisor contribution, Committee or referent's input Shared supervision intra-departmentally

Note. Adapted from An Investigation into PhD Supervisory Management Styles: Development of a dynamic conceptual model and its managerial implications (p. 315)

Gatfield (2005) did not discard two important aspects which are candidate (e.g., research and interpersonal skills) and other variables (e.g., committee input). He sees the candidate variables as the external factors that have an impact on supervision process. They are essential as they reflect the attributes and skills of the supervisee, which can influence their performance and the supervision process as a whole. For the various variables sub-category, it encompasses different forms of supervisory support structures to facilitate the process and enable the supervisees to experience an optimized supervision.

In short, Garfield's (2005) components provide a detailed understanding for the requirements of the supervision process. Still, they may result in confusion and redundancy. Through analysing the components, a confusing overlap between the different constituents within the same component and across the three components appears. This overlap is inevitable because all the components are interrelated but the absence of clear distinction between the components makes the supervisees/readers bewildered. An instance of this is the redundancy that get produced when a supervision training programme as part of support would yield the same results as short training seminars in structure components as both pertain to the supervision

process. Furthermore, there is a lack of clear ordering which can undermine the effectiveness of the supervision process. It is not clear for the supervisors and the supervisees if it is acceptable to change the order. For instance, the supervisor input goes hand in hand with setting goals and stages.

Seven years after Gatfield (2005) proposed his components; Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) suggested eight steps making up the supervision process. The steps are discussed in the subsequent section.

1.4.2 Wichmann-Hansen, Wogensen Bach, Eika, and Mulvany's (2012) Steps

Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012), on the other hand, put forward a structured framework comprising eight essential steps aimed at delineating comprehensive supervision process steps and optimizing it in academic settings. The steps are: 1) Find the right person, 2) Matching expectations and roles, 3) Project Planning, 4) Meeting activities, 5) Research environment, 6) Text production, 7) Advice and assistance, and 8) Student's counsellor. The researchers then provide a set of elements and questions addressed to supervisors and supervisees to assist them attain the goals of each step effectively.

Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) believe that the first step of the supervision process consists of finding the right person. For them, this is done through an initial meeting in which the supervisor and the supervisee assist one another to determine whether the compatible person for each has been found; both parties are able to agree on how they wish to work together and each understands the other's approach to the supervision process. The researchers refer to Philips and Paugh (2000), Delmont and Atkinson (2004) works which state that the supervisor's role is to inspect the academic level of his supervisee; whereas the supervisee typically assesses whether chemistry exists. To better explain this step, Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) suggest a set of criteria to be considered by the supervisors and another set to be considered by the supervisees. These criteria are detailed in the following table:

Table 1.5*Points to Be Taken into Consideration in Finding the Right Person*

Points to be considered by the supervisor	• Have you assessed the student's need for supervision? Can you and do you want to be contacted regularly, or are you very busy and do not have time for close collaboration? • Does the student have the necessary initiative? Do you need to be involved in all decisions regarding the project, or do you prefer that the student decides when your help is needed? • Do you expect to work with the student in a team, or are you looking for a student who is prepared to work independently? • Does the project involve activities beyond normal working hours, and is the student able and interested in participating in these?
Points to be considered by the supervisees	• How much guidance do you think you will need? Do you need a supervisor who is present a lot of the time? Have you considered whether the supervisor is sufficiently available? • Are there areas where you will need additional supervision because the area is new to you? • Will you need personal contact and informal exchange of ideas? Or do you prefer a little, but very specific advice? Will you need help with practical matters? • Are you good at working independently, or do you prefer teamwork? • Are you prepared to work overtime? Can you and are you interested in working nights and weekends? Are you worried about whether the project can be completed in the prescribed time?

Note. Adapted from *Successful PhD supervision: a two-way process* (p. 56)

Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) provided this set of questions to be raised by both the supervisor and the supervisee and to be considered before committing to working together. Their mentioned elements promote mutual responsibility and highlights important practical considerations, such as availability and independence. However, its open-ended format may limit its usefulness without a structured process for follow-up, and it overlooks key issues like power dynamics, conflict resolution, and inclusivity.

The second step, according to Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012), entails aligning the supervisors' and their supervisees' expectations and roles. They confirm that the whole process works better if both agents are well aware of each other's expectations about the nature of the supervisory relationship and the responsibilities distribution. They base their assumption on Hochey's (1996) argument that the supervision process is qualified as effective only compatibility of the expectations and the roles of the supervisor and the supervisee are established. To detail the functioning of this step, Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) generated the following elements:

- The supervisors and supervisees need to clearly communicate their views of resources, whether additional funds are needed, if the project entails significant operating costs or if there are any pending applications.
- Do the supervisee and the supervisor align on how the requirements of active participation in research events and gaining teaching experience should be practically implemented?
- PhD programs often feature a range of mandatory or optional activities such as summer schools and targeted courses. What does the program in question offer and what are the student's plans?
- Agreement on the responsibilities of the supervisor and the supervisee is a must. Who will be responsible for which task?
- A description of the PhD program should be available upon enrolment. Is there agreement on the project's relevance and validity; is it feasible within 03 years?
- Some PhD programs include a period abroad. What are the perspectives of the supervisee and the supervisor regarding these international study periods?

Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) third step encompasses planning since PhD programmes are structured around a research and a PhD research plan tailored to each supervisee. This plan which includes, but is not limited to, a timetable, agreements

regarding any relevant patent and copyrights besides the form of supervision, active participation in research and teaching activities plans for the project, courses, and a budget. For them, the PhD plan intends to ensure that the expectations of the supervisee and the supervisor are made clear. It is crucial for both parties to understand these expectations and to show readiness to adjustments and new ideas. Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) consider regular meetings with the supervisor a means to ensure progress and quality. These meetings should cover PhD programme details (such as: participation in conferences, courses, teaching, periods abroad, etc.), project status, and career planning. The researchers base these ideas on the works of Eley and Jennings' (2005) finding which indicates that the supervisors tend to discard process-related issues such as the supervisees' writing skills and their ability to manage time, to communicate verbally and to seek realistic goals. It is important to recognise that a PhD programme is not merely doing research and producing /publishing results; it also involves a learning process that requires supervisory support.

The fourth step deals with meeting activities which make up the supervisory sessions. Frequent supervision meetings are vital in the supervision process because they offer consistent opportunities for academic support and advice. Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) call for meetings regular and systematic scheduling, whether they focus on product-related issues as drafts, analysis and interpretation procedures or process issues as deadlines, relations and status. It is advisable to establish a detailed and clear meeting calendar early in the programme to ensure frequent and formal as well as structured and goal-directed dialogue. In doing so, expectations are communicated, progress is monitored and challenges are addressed in a timely manner. Meeting activities ensure continuity; reduce misunderstandings and enhance decision-making and the overall quality of outcomes. Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012: 59) elaborated more on these ideas through a set of criteria to be taken into consideration by supervisors and supervisees. Their suggested criteria are detailed in the following table:

Table 1.6

Points to Be Taken into Consideration in Meeting Activities, p.59

Points to be considered by the supervisor	• Encourage the student to take the Initiative regarding meeting activities. • Begin by asking the student what the objective of the meeting is. At the end, you can ask if the objective was met. • Familiarise yourself with the needs of the student for the meeting in question. Carefully check any forwarded material. • If you need further information, just ask the student. • Set aside sufficient time for the meeting, be on time and make sure you are not interrupted. • Follow up on what you decide and be as specific as possible in your recommendations.
Points to be considered by the supervisees	• It is your responsibility to take the Initiative for the meetings and to convene the participants. • Prepare an agenda and distribute it to the participants before the meeting. You can forward proposals for texts or protocols, research findings, etc. along with the agenda. • It is important that you clearly state the objective of the meeting. Instead of leaving your supervisor to guess, express yourself as clearly as possible and stick to your questions until you have received an answer. • If anything is on your mind, say so. You are entitled to set personal boundaries. • Agree on regular meetings. It is a good idea to agree on the date of the next meeting before you part. • Write minutes and distribute them to the participants immediately after the meeting. This prevents misunderstandings and serves as a starting point at the next meeting. • Attend agreed meetings, arrive on time, be prepared, and switch off your mobile.

Note. Adapted from *Successful PhD supervision: a two-way process* (p. 59)

These guidelines encourage students to take initiative and express their needs while also ensuring that supervisors are responsive, and well-prepared. However, these guidelines require a high level of organizational skill and confidence, which may not be realistic as students have different levels and abilities.

Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) include the research environment as a fifth step based on Delany's (2008) assumption that the research environment is essential for the programme to be successful. They affirm that, in this context, the size and the scientific excellence of the department and the institution are a key to fostering a positive outcome besides the number of the students enrolled. It is crucial to create a balance between ensuring that supervisees have an adequate interaction with their peers and preventing a situation where the number of the supervisees assigned to the same supervisor is so high that the supervision becomes insufficient to the individual supervisee. Effective supervision also requires the students to be actively engaged in the academic network. Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012: 60) develop these ideas into the following items:

Table 1.7

Points to Be Taken into Consideration in the Research Environment, p.60

Points to be considered by the supervisor	• Introduce the student to local and international research environments. • Introduce the student to other researchers in the field as well as relevant seminars, workshops and conferences. • Encourage the student to participate in journal clubs. • Support the student's teaching activities and inform the student about possibilities of teaching and communication activities. • Keep the student informed about the research group's relationship with other research groups and academic areas. • Talk to the student about future career opportunities (industry, research). • Take initiatives to secure the student's continued career as a researcher if the student displays particular talent.

Points to be considered by the supervisees	• You are expected to take an active part in the research group and the shared academic environment. • Contact other relevant academic networks and research environments. • Stay informed about project-relevant literature and academic developments in your field. • Participate in the procurement of research funds for the group. • Keep the supervisor informed about positive and negative developments. • Ask yourself if you would like to and have the ability to continue with research work beyond the PhD programme. • Discuss your plans for the future with your supervisor.

Note. Adapted from *Successful PhD supervision: a two-way process* (p. 60)

Paying careful attention to the ideas discussed in this step guarantees supervisees' effective involvement and growth as they highlight the importance of integrating students into the wider academic and research community. At the same time, it places responsibility on students to engage with their academic environment. However, these may be overwhelming for some students without adequate support, and the framework could better acknowledge structural barriers (e.g., funding, access to networks) that may limit participation.

Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) sixth step is text production following Dysthe's (2009) assertion that supervisees and supervisors should agree on their approach to manuscripts and presentations as the supervisees have varying writing styles and feedback needs. Some may produce multiple drafts and refine them progressively, while others might write complete sections. Ultimately, the needs for assistance for each group vary. The researchers agree with Jolliffe's (2007) premise which considers writing a skill that develops over time and that the supervisor's feedback should evolve according to that. Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) believe that the supervisee is ultimately responsible for the content and the structure of the dissertation, while the supervisor guides and supports the writing process ensuring that the dissertation is properly written and adheres to the formal requirements.

The seventh step involves advice and assistance from other faculty staff to gain an external perspective. Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) argue that small issues can escalate into major problems if not addressed promptly; thus, it is important to agree on conflict resolution and acknowledge that no problem is too small to be dealt with. Both parties should bring up any issues or uncertainties and attempt to resolve them through informal dialogue. No matter how trivial the problem may appear, it is better to initiate a discussion as soon as possible either privately or by seeking guidance from co-supervisors familiar with the supervisory group, experienced colleagues, and administrative leadership. In case conflicts occur, Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012) argue that the first measure to be taken is to determine whether the problem is related to the relationship between the parties. They corroborate with Basa's (2017) belief that such issues arise when the parties have not pre-discussed how to handle problems during supervision meetings. They suggest to discuss problems in a general, non-accusatory manner and to explore possible changes in the collaboration approach. The following general guidelines better clarify these insights:

- Decide upon what needs to be communicated and how to do so while fostering a constructive collaboration.
- Clearly outline the issue in a written format to better understand the problem and share it with participants to allow them to think about potential solutions.
- Avoid discussing significant topics before major events or holidays.
- Set up a conducive environment for the discussion ensuring ample time and minimizing interruptions.
- Avoid making accusations. Frame arguments depending on personal experience and describe how the other party's actions or words are perceived.
- Use specific examples to illustrate the situation when possible.
- Expect that establishing a new collaborative approach requires time.

Wichmann-Hansen et al. (2012:62) detailed the aforementioned guidelines to the following elements:

Table 1.8

Points to Be Taken into Consideration in Asking for Advice from other faculty staff, p.62

Points to be considered by the supervisor	• Encourage the student to write on an ongoing basis and check progress. • Make an appointment with the student when you are ready to provide feedback. If you are unable to get back to the student at the agreed time because of the amount of text involved, work pressure, etc., contact the student immediately to make a new appointment. • Carefully study the student's draft and base your feedback on the student's own considerations. • Explain the reasons for changes. Try to avoid just rewriting the whole text. • Give advice about patent legislation, copyright, good academic practice, dual publication and plagiarism.
Points to be considered by the supervisees	• The more you write, the better you get • You should begin writing at an early stage and set aside approximately three months for finalising the dissertation at the end of the period. • Keep your supervisor informed about progress and current issues. • Hand in well-prepared drafts - the text should not be finalised but coherent, and the objective must be clear. • Give your supervisor plenty of time to read • Agree on the type of feedback depending on your needs. When sending a text to your supervisor, explain how close it is to being finalised, what you would like feedback on, and what you are particularly satisfied or unsatisfied with. • Inform your supervisor if you discuss your work with others. • Be aware of relevant laws and regulations relating to publication

Note. Adapted from *Successful PhD supervision: a two-way process* (p. 62)

There is a noticeable mismatch between the title "*Points to Be Taken into Consideration in Asking for Advice from Other Faculty Staff*" and the content, which primarily focuses on writing, feedback, and the student-supervisor relationship. The title suggests guidance on how to seek advice from faculty members outside the supervisory team, but the content does not address this. To ensure clarity and relevance, either the content should be revised to include advice on engaging with other faculty, or the title should be adjusted to better reflect the actual focus on writing and feedback within the supervisory process.

Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) last element covers the supervisee's counsellor through whom the supervisee-supervisor relationship can be strengthened. This individual should not belong to the administrative leadership; instead, they should be able to confidentially assist both agents by offering personal conversations with the supervisees/supervisors experiencing difficulties or dissatisfaction. Additionally, they can help clarify situations and provide advice on personal motivation in the social environment, professional assistance, rights and duties and guidance on possible conciliatory measures. If the problems persist, considering a change in the supervisors' group may be necessary. Both parties are incumbent on addressing issues that hinder the completion of the project.

Overall, Wichmann-hansen et al.'s (2012) proposed steps are clear and well detailed as they address key aspects of the supervision process while accommodating unforeseen minutiae that may occur. Nonetheless, it presents several limitations that hinder its generalizability as it offers many details beyond what Master level necessitates (e.g., students' counsellor). Furthermore, it presents conceptual redundancy between the different steps. An instance of this is reflected in the overlap between the last two steps: advice and assistance and students' counsellor which are similar in essence. Both steps call for the intervention of an external individual to provide advice and guidance to overcome challenges for the supervisor and the supervisee. Moreover, they assume the availability of certain resources such as students' counsellor and funding which might not be present in all contexts and this potentially reduces their effectiveness in diverse contexts.

Through analyzing both proposed steps and components, it can be concluded that they provide valuable insights into the supervision process but may not fully accommodate the specific needs and scale of Master supervision process. Gatfield's (2005) components framework, with their intricate steps and extensive requirements, is primarily designed for PhD supervision and may be overly complex. Its detailed approach, including advanced skills provision, comprehensive financial needs, supervisory groups and extensive accountability measures, aligns with the demands of higher levels. For Master's supervision, many of these elements may be excessive or unnecessary due to the simpler and more focused nature of the supervision process at Master level.

Similarly, while Wichmann-hansen et al. (2012) provide a comprehensive set of steps that is pertinent to Master supervision such as finding the right person, assigning roles and project planning, elements as advice and assistance and students' counsellor may be less applicable. Gaining external perspectives can be valuable; however, the Master supervision generally involves a simpler supervisory structure with one supervisor. The need for additional support or a separate confidential counsellor might be less pronounced in Master supervision. The direct relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee often suffices when preceded by the other steps.

To sum up, these two suggested steps and components make a valuable contribution to a deeper understanding of the research supervision process at PhD level. However, they can be adapted to fit Master level because resources and policy documents may address both doctoral and Master's levels; many supervisors handle both types of students (Lee, 2012). While there is some overlap between PhD and Master's study processes, these components and steps may not be fully applicable to the Master supervision. Consequently, there is still relatively little knowledge about the processes of Master supervision (Pitcher, 2011; Bamber et al., 2017). Because there are no proposed steps of Master Supervision that are reliable, adjustments and adaptation are necessary to better fit the Master's supervision context as the latter requires a more tailored approach that addresses its specific needs and scale.

Despite the notable distinctions between Gatfield's (2005) components and Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) steps, both frameworks highlight the integral presence of both supervisors and supervisees at every stage of the supervision process. Gatfield (2005) with his emphasis on structural, support, and exogenous components, delineates the multifaceted responsibilities and interactions required from both parties, ensuring that the supervisors and their supervisees are actively engaged in each dimension of the supervisory relationship. Similarly, Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) framework, though more focused on relational and interactive dynamics, equally emphasizes the continuous involvement of both supervisors and supervisees in critical steps such as role alignment, project planning, and ongoing advisory support. This pervasive focus on the roles of both the supervisors and the supervisees reinforces the idea that their active participation is equally crucial across all phases of the supervisory process. Therefore, it has been decided to discuss the role of each of them in separate sections.

1.4.3 The Supervisor's Roles

The role of the supervisors in academic settings is multifaceted and widely studied, with a diverse body of research exploring their responsibilities and impact on the students' academic and professional development. The supervisors are recognized for guiding their students through the intricate research process (Vereijken et al., 2018), providing essential emotional support (Chikte & Chabilall, 2016), and ensuring scholarly rigor in thesis and dissertation projects (Heath, 2002; Abiddin et al., 2011). Through understanding the range of roles the supervisors fulfil and the strategies they employ, educators and institutions can enhance the quality of the education and support, the growth, and the development of future scholars (i.e., the supervisees).

The supervisors are tasked with directing the students towards their academic goals and leveraging their accumulated knowledge to facilitate learning rather than hindering their progress (Madan, 2021). Lee and Green (2009) argue that many supervisees enter their programs with a lack of expertise in the various aspects of research which makes them necessitate proactive mentorship from their supervisors.

Sidhu et al. (2014) highlight the necessity for the supervisors to assist the students in meticulous planning from the outset, ensuring a solid foundation for their research endeavours. Therefore, the role of the supervisor extends beyond mere oversight; it involves nurturing the supervisees through constructive feedback and guidance to help them navigate the challenges effectively.

Effective supervisors exhibit a range of personal and professional traits crucial for fostering productive supervisory relationships. They demonstrate empathy, respect, honesty, organization, non-authoritarianism, and preparedness to acknowledge error (Grant et al., 2014). The supervisors exemplify qualities such as calmness, patience, approachability, and enthusiasm, which are essential for maintaining supportive and encouraging interactions with the students (Chikte & Chabilall, 2016). Sidhu et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of possessing expertise in the subject matter, in methodology and in motivating the students. Kumar and Kaur (2019) highlight the role of constructive criticism in enhancing the students' intrinsic motivation; while Ali et al. (2016) highlight the significance of the supervisors' active engagement and timely feedback; it aids in identifying the students' strengths and weaknesses, managing time effectively, and promoting independence in research.

The supervisors play a crucial role in overseeing and guiding the organization of thesis/dissertation projects according to established standards (Heath, 2002). Their impact extends to the professional, emotional, and cognitive development of the supervisees (Doğan & Bıkmaz, 2015). Lessing and Lessing (2004) outline the supervisors' responsibilities in selecting research topics, developing methodologies, conducting literature reviews, and contextualizing studies within scholarly discourse, crucial for enhancing the students' competencies and developmental growth. Yet, the supervisors must strike balance between providing the necessary support and fostering the supervisees' independence. Similarly, Lessing and Lessing (2004) stress the importance of delivering criticism in a manner that encourages growth without stifling the supervisee's initiative. Agricola et al. (2018) and Vehviläinen & Löfström (2016) discuss the delicate balance supervisors must strike between providing guidance and allowing students' autonomy in their research processes and between supporting and

maintaining professional boundaries (Parker-Jenkins, 2016). The co-regulation between the supervisors and the students, as highlighted by Agricola et al. (2018), illustrates how the supervisors' feedback styles can either encourage the student initiative while maintaining professional boundaries or inadvertently stifle it. While some supervisors struggle to allocate sufficient time for effective supervision during critical periods, the supervisors' availability emerges as a critical factor (Pilcher, 2011; Ebadi & Pourahmadi, 2019). Ebadi and Pourahmadi (2019) call for clearer codes of practice to delineate mutual responsibilities and expectations.

Effective communication and feedback strategies are paramount in the supervisory relationship. The supervisors are expected to maintain open lines of communication with the students (Hung & Smith, 2008), fostering flexible and responsive interactions. When they provide constructive feedback that supports the students' research productivity (Neupane-Bastola & Hu, 2023; Talebloo & Baki, 2013), they should avoid overly critical remarks that fail to guide the students forward. The students emphasize the importance of regular meetings and timely feedback in aligning their research progress with academic standards (Ali et al., 2016; Talebloo & Baki, 2013; Abiddin & West, 2007b; Matin & Khan, 2017); this emphasis highlights the supervisors' roles in providing guidance and encouragement throughout the research process.

The supervisors play multifaceted roles in the supervision process; ongoing professional development and training are essential to enhance their effectiveness in this role (Lessing & Schulze, 2002). The dynamic nature of academic supervision demands that the supervisors continuously evolve their approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students and optimize research outcomes. Moreover, effective supervision entails roles that extend beyond mere instruction. Van and Anderson (2000) emphasize that the supervisors must strike a balance between the instructional aspects of guiding research and the personal aspects of supporting the students' holistic development. By participating in ongoing professional development and training, the supervisors can refine their skills in these diverse roles, thereby it provides the supervisors with updated methodologies and strategies to manage the

complexities of the supervisory relationship and ensures they can effectively adapt to the changing demands and challenges that arise during the research process. In this respect, Brown and Atkins (1988, p. 120) provided the following supervisors' roles:

- Director (determining topic and method, providing ideas)
- Facilitator (providing access to resources or expertise, arranging field-work)
- Adviser (helping to resolve technical problems, suggesting alternatives)
- Teacher (of research techniques)
- Guide (suggesting timetable for writing up, giving feedback on progress, identifying critical path for data collection)
- Critic (of design of enquiry, of draft chapters, of interpretations of data)
- Freedom giver (authorizes student to make decisions, supports student's decisions)
- Supporter (gives encouragement, shows interest, discusses student's ideas)
- Friend (extends interest and concern to non-academic aspects of student's life)
- Manager (checks progress regularly, monitors study, gives systematic feedback, plans work)
- Examiner (e.g., internal examiner, mock vivas, interim progress reports, supervisory board member)

In summary, the roles and responsibilities attributed to the supervisors in the dissertation supervision process are diverse and critical. From providing academic guidance and emotional support to fostering scholarly rigor and development, the supervisors play a pivotal role in shaping the educational journey of their supervisees. The research discussed above underscores the importance of supervisors to act as advisors, educators, and facilitators; each role contributes uniquely to the success and growth of the students. The evolving landscape of the supervision necessitates ongoing professional development, dialogue and exploration to refine practices, address challenges, and optimize the learning experience for the students globally.

1.4.4 The Supervisee's Roles

Research on the roles and responsibilities of the supervisors in guiding the Master students through their academic journeys is plentiful and well-documented in scholarly literature. However, little attention has been devoted to the roles and responsibilities of research supervisees which creates a noticeable gap. This gap is evidenced by the studies that predominantly focus on the supervisor's role in shaping the research process (Lessing & Lessing, 2004; Ali, et al., 2016), often overlooking the contributions and challenges faced by supervisees.

The research supervisees shoulder a diverse array of responsibilities throughout their research journey. Abiddin et al. (2011) outline many tasks and responsibilities the supervisees must perform. Obtaining approval for research proposals, making critical methodological decisions, engaging in rigorous research work writing, navigating the complex phases of submission and defence are among the key roles. This list highlights the multifaceted nature of the responsibilities that the supervisees must undertake to successfully complete their research projects.

Moreover, various researchers (e.g., Lessing & Lessing, 2004; Benmore, 2016; Phillips & Pugh, 2000) stress the importance of the students' responsibility in taking the initiative instead of solely relying on the supervisors. Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) call the supervisees to take ownership of their research and learning journey without discarding the fact that the supervisees submit to conformity at given times. This perspective stresses the supervisee's responsibility in driving their research forward, making informed decisions, and taking proactive steps to achieve their academic goals. Taylor and Beasley (2005) further elaborate this idea and argue that the supervisees depend intensely on their supervisors during the early stages; when the process advances, they need to gradually acquire the maturity to take the initiative to work independently.

Phillips and Pugh (2000) argue that it is the supervisees' responsibility to produce written work that is formal and polished, honestly report their progress, implement the supervisors' feedback and recommendations, and show enthusiasm

about their work. This list implies that the supervisees' role include facilitating the supervisors' duties and roles. When the supervisees produce a polished written version of the work, they show readiness and commitment to work and help their supervisors gain time and focus on the quality of the work rather than basic corrections; doing so fosters work alliance. The supervisees' honesty and transparency are key elements in the supervision process as they allow the students to receive tailored assistance by clearly stating the challenges they face or the questions they have. Furthermore, it is the supervisees' duty to respect the supervisors' expertise and knowledge; otherwise, conflicts may arise. Showing enthusiasm and surprising the supervisor with innovative ideas are essential roles for the supervisees as they reflect their commitment, academic development and motivation. Overall, Phillips and Pugh (2000) identified supervisees' roles gather the required roles from the supervisees to ensure their diligence which leads to a positive relationship and successful supervision process.

In essence, the roles of the research supervisees are intertwined with their developmental journey as scholars. They must navigate a spectrum of responsibilities under the guidance of their supervisors, while also demonstrating initiative, resilience, and professionalism in their research endeavours.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has detailed the foundation of the supervision process as provided the conceptual and structural underpinnings. It has provided clear definitions of supervision process, outlined various supervisory styles and specified the core components that frame the supervision process. However, the effectiveness of the supervision process is dependent on various factors which will be discussed in the following chapter.

**CHAPTER TWO:
PERCEPTIONS,
PRACTICES, AND
THEORETICAL
FRAMING OF THE
SUPERVISION
PROCESS**

Introduction

Given our focus on examining the supervisees' perceptions and practices within the supervision process, we organize this review into distinct sections related to the variables of the topic under investigation, alongside the development of an adapted theoretical framework for this study. The major factors influencing the supervision process, including contingency factors, the supervisees' perceptions, and the supervisor-supervisee relationship, are critically examined. In the next section, students' perceptions and their measurement are discussed. A section on the optimal supervisory practices follows; it divides practices into transferable skills, research skills, and ethical skills, all crucial for providing effective academic guidance. The current challenges facing Master supervision, ranging from supporting autonomy to managing diverse supervisees' needs, are addressed. The review also presents findings from the previous studies, highlighting their insights and limitations, thus identifying gaps that motivate our ongoing research in this area. Lastly, an eight-step adapted theoretical framework for research supervision at Master level is detailed.

2.1 Factors Affecting the Supervision Process

Talebloo and Baki (2013), Ali et al. (2016), and Aitken et al. (2022) contend that the supervision process in academic and research settings is influenced by a multitude of factors that can significantly impact both the process and the outcomes of the research projects. These factors include: the supervisors' expertise (Madan, 2021), timely, focused direction (Spedding, 2020; Madan, 2021), the supervisory meetings and the establishment of goals (Ali et al., 2016). These elements are perceived as important factors of the supervisory practices and the overall success of research endeavours. However, the dynamic and contingent nature of the supervision process (Wright et al., 2007), the supervisor-supervisee interaction (Ali et al., 2019; Petersen, 2007; Kiley, 2019) and perceptions are considered the most influential factors.

2.1.1 Contingency Factors

According to Collinson and Rugman (2011) the contingency theory prevailed when Lawrence and Lorsch examined how the organizational structure and environmental factors affect the supervisory practices. Later on, Fiedler (1978) focused on leadership styles and their contingent effectiveness in different situations. Despite these attempts, broader theoretical frameworks to examine these factors are still lacking. Lorsch (2010) argues that the contingency theory witnessed a renaissance as it started to gain attention again. Baker and Pifer (2015) conducted a conceptual study which aims at developing a contingency framework for the supervision process by examining how group dynamics and cultural differences impact the supervision process. Yet, this study is similarly deficient in terms of its theoretical basis as it does not provide operational definition of contingency theory and/or contingency variables.

Boehe (2016) attempted to bridge this gap by applying the organizational contingency theory to the academic research supervision at doctoral level. The author based his study on task uncertainty and organisational complexity (Lorsch 2010) as research process contingency factors besides the supervisors' strength and goals, and the supervisees' expectations and values (Lorsch 2010) as research product contingency factors. Lorsch (2010) states that the initial stages of research provide unstructured tasks which require a less directive approach. Conversely, a structured research approach which is directive in nature better suit tasks which require lower degrees of uncertainty because they develop in ulterior stages. Regarding the organizational complexity, Lorsch (2010) argues that it is related to context in which the supervision process occurs. It includes the timing, the place of the supervision and the atmosphere created. When the time and the place in which the supervision occurs are appropriate for all parties and the relationship between them is positive, it is likely that the supervision process becomes driving and productive. As far as the supervisors' power and goals, and the supervisees' expectations and values are concerned, there is a correlation between the two. The more the supervisors' and the supervisees' expectations, goals and interest align, the more successful the supervision process becomes and vice versa.

Accordingly, the contingency theory introduces a significant advantage to gain further insights about the effect of the extrinsic variables on the supervisory styles by applying the approach used by the organizations to assess and adapt their structures and strategies in response to the external factors and situational variability of the academic supervision. This is possible only because it is a flexible process that is responsive to the interplay between the peculiar elements of supervision such as the supervisees' different characteristics. Furthermore, Boehe (2016) discusses how the organizational complexity can affect the supervisory effectiveness. In particular, the effect of factors such as group size, hierarchical layers, and interpersonal relationships on a supervisor's ability to influence the research process. His finding which suggests that larger or more complex groups can reduce a supervisor's capacity to provide individualized guidance, align with Lorsch's (2010) findings. Additionally, Boehe (2016) argues that factors such as group dynamics and cultural differences contribute to the organizational complexity and can affect the supervisory outcomes. This assumption is based on the works of Baker and Pifer (2015) who believe that the organizational complexity stems from group dynamics and the variations in the cultural background.

Regarding the research product, Boehe (2016) examines the influence of the supervisor's power and expertise. Just like Lee (2008), Boehe (2016) attests that supervisors with extensive knowledge and scholarly networks can positively affect their supervisees' research outcomes. However, when the supervisees possess advanced knowledge or expertise that surpasses their supervisors', the supervisory relationship may become more with Ives and Rowley's (2005) conclusion. Boehe (2016) also emphasizes the importance of aligning goals and expectations between the supervisors and the supervisees. Baker and Pifer (2015) and Lorsch (2010) argue that divergent goals can lead to conflicts and reduced support; whereas shared goals enhance collaboration and mutual support.

To sum up, the work of Boehe (2016) broadened the comprehension regarding the transposition of the contingency theory from organizational studies into the academic research supervision field and deepened the impact of its application on the

outside factors that influence the supervision process. The discussion of the contingent factors unavoidably directs us to discuss the supervisor-supervisee relationship. In the following section, we discuss the supervisor-supervisee relationship which is both inherently determined by the contingent factors and one of the most influential factors on the supervision process.

2.1.2 The Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship

The supervisor-supervisee relationship is frequently highlighted as the most crucial factor in achieving successful supervision outcomes (Mainhard et al., 2009; Saleem & Mahmood, 2017; Basa, 2017; Madan, 2021; Masek, 2017). This emphasis reflects a broad consensus on its importance in shaping the supervision process. Saleem and Mahmood (2017) argue that the relationship between the supervisor and his supervisor is central to any research project; it is one of the most rewarding aspects of academic life for both parties. Chiappetta-Swanson and Watt (2011) highlight the pivotal role of the relationship between a Master student and an academic supervisor in fostering a successful learning experience, mutual satisfaction, the development of research skills, and shaping successful career paths for both parties. Waghid (2005) termed this relationship as a ‘critical friendship’ that is characterised by reciprocal trust. Many researchers including Masek (2017), Madan (2021) and Basa (2017) highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining a collaborative supervisor-supervisee relationship in having a positive supervisory experience. In this regard, Collins (2015) argues that the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee lasts for a long period and has a multi-dimensional and a progressive nature. Due to the nature of this relationship, conflicts arise inevitably and they are further worsened when it is poorly established.

On the same line of thoughts, Baptista (2015) posits that the supervision relationship consists of a supervisor and a supervisor who need to show equal levels of responsible, active and thoughtful contribution. If there is no mutual respect, safety, and trust, the supervisory relationship weakens. Additionally, Lessing and Lessing (2004) assert that the supervision process necessarily includes a continuous dialogue

that yields extensive guidance. These perspectives highlight the necessity of engagement, trust, guidance and ongoing communication; however, they do not consider the way the quality and frequency of this dialogue nor the influence of other important relational dynamics such as the supervisor's expertise and style on the supervision outcomes.

To provide a clear and structured analysis of the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, we divide the discussion into the supervisor-supervisee dialogue, its frameworks and the nature and the dimensions of this relationship. We believe that the categorization discussed in the following sub-sections offers a deeper exploration and understanding of the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee.

2.1.2.1 The Supervisor-Supervisee Dialogue. According to Dysthe et al. (2006) most of the literature tackling the supervision process at Master level focuses on the importance of good communication between the supervisor and the student. This perspective highlights the importance of communication in fostering collaboration which is considered a key element which determines the effectiveness of the supervision process. Wisker (2001) argues that communication between the two parties is essential and it can be seen as an exploratory process in which the exchange between the supervisor and the supervisee provides explicit and implicit information. In this regard, he states that:

There is a need for constant adjustment to what each participant is saying and the balance between giving and taking, listening and talking is crucial ... the dialogue is not simply a friendly conversation ... There is a more active, searching process involved whereby you become clearer about what the other is saying but also about the hidden assumptions and misconceptions. It is essentially an exploratory process ... (Wisker, 2001, p. 143)

Moreover, Baltzersen (2013) highlights the importance of meta-communication which he defines as the discussions held between the student and supervisor about the communication during the supervision process. He describes it as “talk about talk”

(Baltzersen, 2013, p.131). His view advocates for a detailed ongoing dialogue which extends to communicate about communication in terms of the time, the roles played and the means.

2.1.2.2 The Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship Frameworks. Many researchers attempted to develop solid frameworks which explore the dynamics and the interactions between the supervisors and the supervisees within Master level. These frameworks took analytical standpoints to reveal whether the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee contributes into shaping the supervision process and effect the Master students' overall academic success and well being. The most prominent supervisor-supervisee relationship alignment models, namely: Bartlett and Mercer's (2000), Dysthe's (2002) and Gurr's (2001) frameworks are going to be discussed in the upcoming paragraphs.

Bartlett and Mercer (2000) conceptualized the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee through three metaphors: 'creating in the kitchen,' where the supervisor and the student have a cook/candidate relationship; 'digging in the garden,' where the supervisor acts as a gardener offering advice to a student who is a new neighbour; and 'bushwalking,' where the supervisor and student are seen as companions with equal power. Their study highlighted that hierarchical models and often adversarial dynamics, rooted in power imbalances, are more common. This finding emphasizes the frequent presence of power dynamics but might overlook variations in the supervisory relationships that could be less hierarchical or more collaborative.

In due course, Gurr (2001) expanded on Grant's (1999) 'rackety bridge' metaphor, which describes the challenging and unpredictable nature of the supervisory relationship, by developing a dynamic model designed to align the supervisory relationship with the evolving needs of research students who are developing competent autonomy. Gurr's (2001) model features two main dimensions: 'direct' versus 'indirect' and 'active' versus 'passive'. His categorization creates a matrix with four categories of supervisory behaviour:

- Direct active: involves initiating, criticizing, and directing the student.
- Indirect active: this relationship dictates on the supervisor to ask for opinions, accept and build on the student's ideas, or request explanations and justifications from the student.
- Indirect passive: this type of relationships involves listening to and allowing the student to independently process ideas and solve problems.
- Passive: passive relationships are characterized by an obvious lack of input and non-responsiveness of the supervisor to the student's input.

Gurr (2001) believes that an effective supervisor should flexibly move between these modes, particularly as the student progresses from dependence to competent autonomy. This adaptability can even occur within a single supervisory meeting. While this model demonstrates the importance of flexible supervisory approaches, it may be challenging to be implemented effectively, especially if the supervisor and his supervisee (s) have differing expectations or communication styles. Gurr tested this Supervisor/Student Alignment Model at the University of Sydney by interviewing pairs of students and supervisors. They were asked to position their perceptions of the supervisory relationship on a graph, and the results were compared in joint meetings. The study found that when there were significant discrepancies between the student and their supervisors' perceptions. Particularly, they perceive performance, autonomy and supervisory style differently. He used the graphical approach which facilitated open discussions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of the current supervisory practices. This tool has proven useful for refining the supervisory relationships, though its effectiveness in diverse contexts or with varied student needs still warrants further exploration.

Later on, Dysthe (2002) proposed a threefold model to characterize the supervisory relationships: the teaching model, the apprenticeship model and the partnership model. The first, the teaching model emphasizes traditional asymmetric roles, where the supervisor's perspectives dominate and the supervisee is highly dependent on him. This model focuses on transferring knowledge from the expert supervisor to the novice supervisee. According to Dysthe (2002), in this model, the

supervisor corrects texts, provides directive feedback, and advises the student. Despite the effectiveness of this approach in providing adequate direction, it potentially limits the supervisees' autonomy.

The apprenticeship model as the second model has a collaborative quality in which the supervisor is responsible for leading the research dissertation while the supervisee thoroughly observes and participates to learn. Dysthe (2002) states that:

The apprenticeship model ... is characterized by the student's learning by observing and performing tasks in the company of the supervisor..... It is distinguished from the teaching model by its cooperative nature, often as part of a larger research team. (Dysthe, 2002, p. 519, 523)

This model is more common in project-based, team-oriented, or laboratory settings, where the supervisees work alongside their supervisors and engage in group discussions. As such, the students in this model are less dependent on their supervisor compared to the teaching model. However, this model might still limit the student's autonomy as the supervisor maintains a leading role.

The partnership model, as the last model, represents a more symmetrical supervisory relationship that fosters the supervisees' independence through collaboration. Both the supervisee and the supervisor share the responsibility and engage in dialogue, which is central to this model. According to Dysthe (2002), while there is still some asymmetry in power and knowledge, the partnership model emphasizes mutual respect, frequent meetings, and clearly defined expectations. Dysthe (2002) argues that this model aims at fostering independent thinking as it is more symmetrical and views the student's thesis as a joint project in which feedback is presented in dialogue, and exploratory texts form a basis for discussion.

This approach encourages constructive criticism, independent thinking, and student control of their process. Despite its benefits, such as promoting autonomy and mutual respect, the partnership model may be challenging to be implemented consistently and effectively, especially if the balance of power is not well managed. Overall, Dysthe (2002) argues that the teaching and partnership models represent

competing paradigms of supervision. The apprenticeship model differs from the partnership model primarily in the degree of authority held by the supervisor, with the former involving a clearer authority role. This distinction highlights the varying impacts of supervisory models on student independence and the overall supervisory dynamic.

In conclusion, the different frameworks discussed demonstrate the dynamicity of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. These views lead us to further explore the nature and dimensions of this relationship.

2.1.2.3 The Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship-Nature and Dimensions.

Most research on the supervisor–student relationship has been conducted through small-scale interview studies, leading to various views for understanding the different forms of this relationship (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; Dysthe 2002; Grant 2003). A common finding across these studies is that the relationship can be characterized using two primary dimensions, which are labelled differently in the literature. For instance, Anderson et al. (2006) describe them using the terms supporting and structuring. Mainhard et al. (2009) use proximity and influence; whereas Lee (2008) identifies them as professional role–personal self and dependence–independence.

While these varied terminologies reflect the multidimensional nature of the supervisor–supervisee relationship, they also highlight that the lack of a standardized framework might complicate comparisons and generalizations across different studies. Each set of dimensions offers valuable insights but may focus on different aspects of the relationship, suggesting that no single model fully captures the complexity of the supervisory dynamics. This suggests that the relationship between a supervisor and their candidate is dynamic and evolving as each step of the research process has distinct requirements and challenges. There is not a ready-made typical method for supervising students. Rather, the supervision process submits to the specific needs of the supervisees during each phase and its effectiveness is contingent on this adaptability, flexibility and readiness to change.

Exhibiting flexibility is a challenging task, as it depends on the supervisors' effective assessment and responsiveness to the evolving needs and the varying levels of academic ability, personality traits, and motivation (Anderson et al., 2006). As students develop their research skills and take more ownership of their projects, the role of the supervisor evolves, reinforcing the need for a flexible supervisory relationship (de Kleijn et al., 2015; Grant, 2003).

To sum up, the relationship between the supervisees and their supervisors is an essential factor which significantly influences the supervision process. However, the supervision process is not influenced solely by this relationship and the contingent factors. Rather, the effectiveness of the process is dependent on perceptions too. Supervisees' perceptions formed through experience and interpretation have an impact on how the supervision process unfolds. As such, the following sections provide a discussion of the supervisees' perceptions related to the research supervision process.

2.1.3 Perceptions as a Factor

According to Prosser and Trigwell (1999), different students engage differently with the same learning situations/contexts which yield different perceptions. These perceptions are shaped by the interaction between the students' previous experiences and the specific context in which they are in. Rather than processing sensory data externally, the students internally construct meaning from the objective aspects of the course, such as goals or assessments, in a way that connects them to their unique situations. Consequently, altering the context can influence the prior experiences it evokes, leading to diverse approaches and practices because of the coherence between the two.

Briefly put, students develop two different types of perceptions once they get into a learning situation; the first type relates to the context itself while the second relates to their own situation within the context. Given that Bruce and Stoodley (2013) and Franke and Arvidsson (2011) believe that the supervision process is an intricate type of pedagogy, where the supervisor assumes a teaching role while the student engages in a learning process, Prosser and Trigwell's (1999) approach applies to it. In light of this, the supervisees develop different ideas about the supervision process and

engage with it in varied ways. Their perceptions are shaped through interactions between their prior experiences in the learning process and the specific context, emphasizing the relational nature of the supervision process. The supervisees internally make sense of the aspects of the supervision process, such as steps, roles, and feedback, in a way that connects them to their unique supervision situations. As a result, any contextual changes may impact the previous experience it evokes leading to changes in the perceptions which in return results in changes in the supervision process and the practices employed in it. Further details about the construct ‘perceptions’ are provided in the upcoming section.

2.2 Perception(s)

Perception has been defined by many scholars as a multidisciplinary concept with intricate layers. Perception is part of tacit knowledge. According to Dampney et al. (2002), tacit knowledge is that component of knowledge that is widely held in the minds of individuals but not able to be readily expressed. It is expertise, skill, and ‘know how’, as opposed to codified knowledge. This implies that perceptions are subjective and flexible as they submit to the interpretation of the perceiver.

According to Nuzulia (2016), perception is an intricate process in which the individuals select, organize, and interpret sensory input to form a coherent and personal understanding of the reality or to do appropriate action or intelligent activity in the environment. Due to the fact that the individuals constantly collect and interpret data from the environment, saying that perception is a process that leads to actions and is not an action is justified. This definition shows perception as a dynamic process containing a three-step process with each step requiring a deliberate action. Similarly, Nurohman (2018) contends that perceptions are any simple disposition, conscious or unconscious, directly communicated or inferred from what a person, in our context supervisee, says or does and are in accordance with the opinions and views of someone. Schat (2014) attests that the human behaviour is a symptom of perception. This implies that all behaviour makes sense to the one doing it in the moment of occurring. Moreover, Pintrich (2004) categorized perception into positive and negative

forms. A positive perception signifies a favourable evaluation and acceptance of the known or unknown objects or situations perceived. Conversely, a negative perception involves a critical or unfavourable evaluation of things in one's environment and considering it unsuitable for the perceived object.

Overall, perceptions are the product of the perception process; accordingly, they are relative, selective, and orderly (Slameto, 2003). They are personal and subjective, influenced by both internal cognitive processes and external stimuli. Perceptions can be characterized by various dimensions such as strength, intensity, importance, salience, centrality, complexity, and adaptability. These cognitive processes are heavily influenced by the context, leading to variability in responses from the same individuals at different times and in different settings. Perceptions are conceptual constructs and as such, they cannot be measured with precision. To capture the depth and variation of how individuals perceive and assign meaning to their surroundings, including people, concepts, symbols, or situations that evoke positive or negative responses, the researchers use an inferential approach in which they examine the actions that are logically associated with these perceptions to infer and quantify the perceptual differences. To support this inference, relevant information must be collected through various methods. The data can be obtained by directly asking the respondents about their feelings on the subject of the study or assigning the participants specific tasks with clear instructions. Alternatively, data can be generated by presenting the respondents with semi-structured stimuli for interpretation.

In the context of education, the students' perceptions shape the way they approach teaching and learning. The following section delves into the students' perception to better understand their perceptions of the supervision process being a learning process.

2.2.1 Students' Perceptions and the Learning Process

Perceptions in education are profoundly influential. Hamann et al. (2012) believe that the students' perceptions of the educational processes significantly influence their decisions and practice. In an educational setting, learners encounter

several stimuli, including the teaching method, teachers' roles and educational material to name a few. They organize this information within their cognitive frameworks by categorizing and relating new information to existing knowledge. Subsequently, they interpret the organized information and assign meaning to it based on their personal experience. In this regard, Schat (2014) states that:

The students' behaviours are significantly impacted by their perceptions, which are in turn being constantly shaped and impacted by their experiences and emotions... It is the student's perceptions that are foundational for actions. For example, if they think something is "hard" or "impossible," this perception will shape their actions. (p. 14)

Martens et al. (2007) further elaborate that educators have limited control over the students' perceptions; therefore, it is challenging to align educational delivery with varied student perspectives. This opinion acknowledges the inherent diversity in the students' perceptions as the students have different backgrounds, experiences and cognitive styles which shape the way they interpret and engage with the educational content. Hence, within the same educational setting, the students construct subjective and unique reality on which the educators can have an influence through thoughtful delivery, but cannot fully control the responses the students produce based on their perceptions.

Wesely (2012) notes that the students' perceptions are shaped by their ideas about language acquisition and the strategies they use for learning a second language; he calls it synchronization. These ideas are formed through the students' experiences and significantly impact their engagement and progress in language learning. Könings et al. (2014) discuss how the past relationships and experiences with significant people can subconsciously influence how we interact with others in the present. In the supervision process, both the supervisor and the supervisee might unconsciously be reminded of important figures from their past. When the supervisees perceive of their supervisor as resembling a parental figure or a past mentor, their interactions might be influenced by emotions such as gratitude or frustration tied to those earlier relationships. These perceptions, rooted in the mental representations, can subtly influence the emotional dynamics and behaviours within the supervisory relationship,

making the interaction not just about the present but also about how each person's history shapes their view of the other.

Wesely (2012) extends the discussion to language learners arguing that the learners develop two interrelated types of perceptions: perceptions of themselves, and perceptions of the learning situation. The former relates to the way the students understand and make sense of themselves and their own learning. Brown (2009) states that the latter relates to the way the students experience and understand aspects of the learning context. Recently, Dulosa et al. (2019) identified perceptions about subject matter, self-concept, teacher/students, tasks, and general perceptual frames as key perceptions that are developed within educational contexts. Understanding these key perceptions helps the teachers and the students navigate the academic environment more effectively. Perceptions about the subject matter involve how the content is seen while self-concept perceptions tackle how the individuals within the teaching-learning context perceive their own roles and identity. Perceptions about teacher/students encompass how the students view their teachers and vice versa. These views affect the way each of them sees the whole learning process. Perceptions about the tasks include how the teachers and students view the tasks assigned in the educational setting while general perceptual framework refers to overarching ways in which the individuals interpret their educational experiences. This includes broader perceptions about education and its value and purposes as well as perceptions about the habitual ways of reacting.

Tudor et al. (2010) found out that the context surrounding the learning process which includes the students' motivation, their relationship with the staff and their peers, the characteristics of the institution and the quality of assessment and feedback received besides the demands of the subject and the value placed on problem solving all contribute to the formation of the students' perceptions. The formation of these ideas results in the adoption of a particular approach to learning. This implies that perceptions guide the students' approach to learning and that perception has a much wider role that influences the complex nature of the student experience.

According to Ellis et al. (2008), learning activities are affected by the students' formulated ideas and expectations and their perceptions about what is possible to learn in a given context. Effective learning depends on the understanding and ideas that the students developed. On the same line of thoughts, researchers like Tudor et al. (2010) and Jones and Carter (2019) reached a common conclusion about the effect of perceptions on learning. They state that the students' perceptions of the teaching-learning process provide indications on the way they approach the teaching-learning process. This implies that the way the students interpret and experience a learning situation is more influential than the learning situation's underlying pedagogical intentions. In more details, the students' approaches to learning are not stable; they change when the perceptions change. In this regard, Prosser and Trigwell (1999) argue that the perceptions guide the way the students approach learning and the students' prior educational experiences influence their approaches to learning which leads to establishing regular habits of studying. According to Prosser and Trigwell (1999), Trigwell and Prosser (2020) and Entwistle (2009), these formed perceptions result in adopting two qualitatively different approaches to learning either a deep or surface approach. Deep approaches to learning stem from intrinsic motivation where the students are aware of their learning situation and seek understanding. They do so through implementing strategies that help them satisfy their curiosity. Hence, this approach results in higher quality learning outcomes. Surface approaches to learning, on the other hand, stem from extrinsic motivation where the students are less aware of their learning situation (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell and Prosser, 2020). They are pragmatically motivated to meet the requirements of a task with the minimum effort which results in lower quality learning outcomes.

Perceptions play an important role in the supervision process, understanding how these perceptions are formed and their influence is crucial. Stimuli take the form of the different steps and components involved in the supervisory process. After receiving these stimuli, the supervisees organize and categorize them according to their previous knowledge. In the final stage, the supervisees interpret the organized data and determine how to enact them in the supervision process. However, it is also

important to draw a distinction between perceptions and associated terminologies such as beliefs and attitudes which often create confusion.

2.2.2 Perceptions-Related Terminology

The discussion above leads to the discussion of beliefs and attitudes, and distinguish them from perceptions as each of them has role in shaping the behaviour and experiences of learners. Within research traditions that view these terms from varying theoretical perspectives, drawing a distinction between them is a necessity.

According to Khader (2012), a belief represents a subjective and experientially-based form of knowledge and evaluations which stem from observation or reason and shape one's views about them, others, and the world. Beliefs are convictions perceived as true about reality (Peacock, 2001) and reflections of confidence despite incomplete knowledge (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Khader, 2012). According to Wesely (2012), the beliefs that learners hold about themselves are often referred to as self-efficacy; for Mills et al. (2007) they are the students' "judgments about their capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to master academic tasks" (p. 417). Mills et al. (2007) continue to explain that the learners develop self-beliefs or self-concepts which entail the way they feel about themselves as language learners. Kalaja and Barcelos (2003) suggest that beliefs can be used interchangeably with opinions and views as they comprise students' "opinions and ideas about the task of learning a second/ foreign language" (p. 231). Khader (2012) emphasizes that beliefs emerge from the personal experiences during the learning processes.

Alternatively, Albarracin et al. (2005) define attitudes as a psychological, latent disposition which evaluates certain entities as being positive or negative based on conspicuous responses or previous experience. In essence, an attitude is a reflection of an individual's preference to produce a certain emotional reaction based on their temper and experience. There is a tendency to use attitudes and opinions interchangeably as they are both subjective. However, Dennison (2024) draws a distinction between them stating that attitudes are based on emotions and are long lasting. Chowdhury and Salam (2015) analyzed attitudes and revealed that three basic

elements namely: cognitive, affective, and conative constitute an attitude. The cognitive element as a set of information extracted from the previous experience with the attitude object the affective component includes the feelings and the emotions of an individual which inform his partial stance while the conative component is the behavioural intentions of the individual which ensures consistency between the attitudes formed and the attitudes former's reaction (Chowdhury and Salam, 2015). From an educational standpoint, Wesely (2012) argues that the learner develop attitudes toward the learning situation and attitudes toward the target community. According to Gardner et al. (2005), attitudes toward the learning situation include the teachers well as the instructional techniques used.

Briefly put, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes are interconnected constructs which have a direct role in shaping individuals' responses and behaviours. Beliefs form the foundation which guides the individuals to interpret information and develop their worldview. These beliefs contribute to the formation of attitudes, which are evaluative judgments that determine whether the individuals view something positively or negatively. A belief is defined as the probability dimension of a concept, is its existence probable or improbable? While an attitude is defined as the evaluative dimension of a concept, is it good or bad? Perceptions, on the other hand, act as immediate filters through which the individuals interpret their surroundings. Essentially, beliefs provide the cognitive framework, perceptions offer contextual interpretation, and attitudes represent the evaluative judgments that direct decision-making and behaviour. Accordingly, it essential to explore the practices to bridge the gap between perceptions and the actual practice as well as to examine the impact of practices in forming perceptions so as to fully understand the process.

2.3 Effective Practices in the Supervision Process

The effectiveness of the supervision process differs significantly depending on the needs, experiences, and preferences of both the supervisees and their supervisors which characterizes the supervision process as a complex and ever-changing task (Aitken et al., 2022; de Kleijn et al., 2015; Harwood & Petrić, 2020). Efforts have

been made to enhance the consistency of the supervisory practices within and between institutions (Halse, 2011; Jasman, 2012; Guerin et al., 2015; Lee, 2012). However, this focus has not generally extended to the Master level supervision despite recognizing the need for it (Bamber, 2015) due to its individualized nature and the absence of a one-size-fits-all approach to successful supervision. To gain a deeper understanding of effective research supervision practices, it is essential to first delineate the concept of practices itself.

2.3.1 Definition of Practice (s)

There is no consistent conceptualization that guides the way practice is defined. Thus, the term ‘practice’ has multiple meanings. In early research, scholars believed that practice can denote ‘prescription,’ as in the rules or guidelines for conduct. For example, Reckwitz (2002) views practice as encompassing individual behavioural rules and moral duties. In this context, practice represents what one ought to do emphasizing that practice involves adhering to established behavioural rules and moral duties. This view situates practice within a framework of perceptions and norms, illustrating how practices are often shaped by them. However, Antonacopoulou (2015) argues that practices extend beyond being simply a set of routines only governed by rules to include routines that are flexible and dynamic.

Schatzki (1996) defined practice from two different angles. On one hand, practice is a set of active verbs which includes physical (e.g., walking and eating) and expression forms (e.g., writing and speaking). This interpretation expands the scope of practice to include both a series of specific activities and a broader, integrative concept. On the other hand, the second view defines practice as a continuous performing realization. This interpretation points out that practice is a dynamic and engaging process, emphasizing the continuous nature of ‘doing’ in real time. This dual perspective facilitates a deeper appreciation of how practices are structured and enacted, bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical applications.

Reckwitz (2002), a leading scholar in this line of research, explains practice as an entity which contains various components. He contends that it cannot be narrowed

to one element only because the existence of practice in the first place is conditional upon the association and relationships among those constituent elements to form a cohesive whole. This perspective best illustrates the holism and complexity of practice. Applying this to the practice of speaking, as an example, reveals that this practice is embedded in a broader context and requires a complementary interplay between multiple components namely: articulating skills, speaking mechanics such as pronunciation and intonation, material resources such as the topic of speaking or prompts and emotions such as enthusiasm or anxiety reflected in the body language or facial expressions to contribute to the execution of this practice.

According to Aillerie (2011), a practice is a set of physical and symbolic gestures displayed regularly to interact with worldviews to achieve effectiveness. This definition is multi-dimensional; first it points to the importance of frequency to show that practices are action-oriented and repetitive. It also extends practices beyond concrete and tangible actions to include abstract and intangible symbolic perceptions and interpretations. Besides, it highlights the importance of broader contextual and cultural factors which inform the practice as the practice performer has a unique view of the world and belongs to a society that sets its norms too. Finally, Aillerie (2011) posits that practices are objective-driven, that is, they are enacted to reach a specific end; thereby, ascribing the practice a tangible result.

Some scholars relate the definition of practice to knowledge. Nicolini et al. (2016) define practice as knowing-how while Hindmarsh and Pilnick (2007) see practice as knowing-in-situation. These knowledge-based definitions imply that there is a connection between knowing and the abilities to do and to adapt to situations. In other words, the knowing-how aspect refers to the practical knowledge which is the means to execute specific actions. Knowing –in-situation focuses on applying the know-how abilities appropriately within given contexts, therefore, it is dependent on the doer's abilities of adaptation.

The multi-faceted definitions provided show how the scholars' accord on the fact that practice is a significant, yet a challenging construct. Schatzki (2002) describes practice

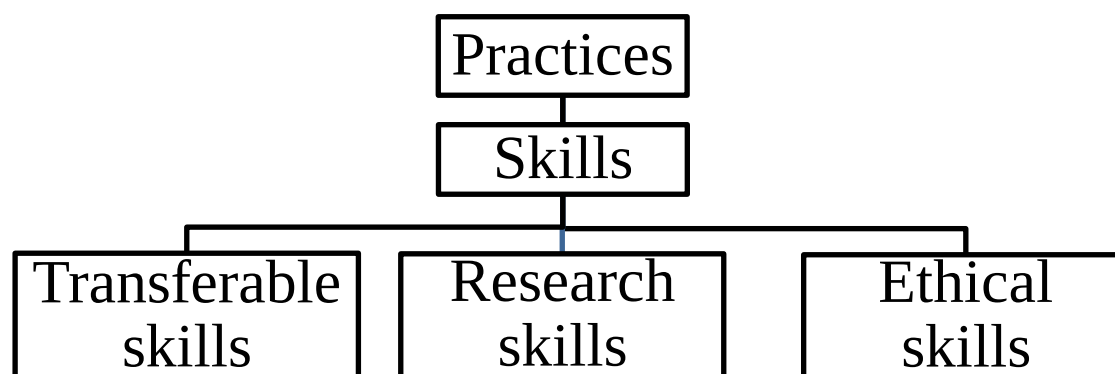
as a collection of skills which submit to the doer's knowledge and awareness of how to display and enact them effectively. Furthermore, Ball (2009) argues that understanding practice requires breaking it down into specific skills. Alexander et al. (2008) have categorized these skills, with a common focus on similar competencies but varying in terminology and classification. In the upcoming sections, we delve in to the different skills needed for performing the practices of the supervision process.

2.3.2 Types of Skills Involved in the Supervision Process

Despite the extensive literature addressing various types of skills, there is no universally agreed-upon list of skills that define effective supervisory practice. Consequently, for organizational and relevance purposes, we synthesized the different types found in the literature in the following chart:

Figure 2.1

Types of Skills Needed for Performing Research Supervision Practices



2.3.2.1 Transferable Skills. Transferable skills encompass varied competencies that can be applied across various contexts and environments. Nägele and Stalder (2017) define these skills as those acquired through individual learning experiences, which can subsequently be utilized and adapted in different settings. According to Rosenberg et al. (2012), transferable skills are foundational abilities that include core competencies as literacy and numeracy, critical thinking, management and leadership, interpersonal interactions, information technology proficiency, and a strong work

ethic. Ramos et al. (2013) identify these skills as encompassing numeracy, emotional labour, leadership, problem-solving, physical capabilities, influence, collaboration, and planning. Moreover, Keneley and Jackling (2014) emphasize lifelong learning, technical training, oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills, and the ability to manage vast amounts of information resulting from modern information technologies, while Teo et al. (2012) add communication and time management to this list. González and Wagenaar (2005) categorized transferable skills into systemic skills (encompassing holistic understanding, sensitivity, and knowledge), interpersonal skills (focusing on social interaction and collaboration), and instrumental skills (encompassing cognitive, methodological, technological, and linguistic abilities).

This review of taxonomies and definitions reveals that transferable skills are not universally standardized across all situations. To fulfil the aims of this educational research, transferable skills are synthesized to include literacy, managerial, interpersonal, ICT, analytical, and adaptability/flexibility skills.

2.3.2.1.1 Literacy Skills. Hidayani (2021) states that literacy skills encompass the fundamental abilities to read and write. Nurohman (2018) characterizes reading as a multifaceted activity in which meaning is derived from a written text. Consequently, the generation of meaning arises from the interplay between reading and writing. Horning and Kraemer (2013) assert that meaning is effectively conveyed when the readers engage in analyzing the text components, comparing different documents on related topics, evaluating the content, and relating it to their personal experiences. In the context of supervision, reading is crucial as the supervisees are expected to consult sources and references to inform their research. Reading does not only offer insights into theoretical frameworks and research methodologies but also serves as a foundation for evidence collection.

Writing skills are indispensable in the supervisory process which demand a period of time and a high level of academic proficiency to articulate ideas coherently, clearly, and precisely (Jolliffe, 2007). Writing poses significant challenges for most EFL learners as it does not involve only selecting and producing language but also generating and developing coherent ideas using appropriate written language

(Benbellal, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2019; Komba, 2015). To address these challenges in academic writing, the learners must engage extensively in reading, which serves as a foundational skill for mastering other language competencies, particularly writing (Hidayani, 2021). Moreover, writing strategies have been extensively employed over millennia.

According to Sulistyo and Heriyawati (2017), proficient writers employ more suitable strategies compared to less effective ones. There are various writing strategies; among the most important ones are cognitive and meta-cognitive writing strategies and note taking. Cognitive strategies reflect variations in the individuals' preferred methods of perceiving, organizing, or recalling information and experiences (Olson & Land, 2007). Notably, cognitive strategies encompass activities such as receiving information and structuring input. Meta-cognitive strategies are integral to successful writing tasks as they facilitate understanding and control of cognitive performance through activities like planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Arar, 2016). Research indicates that note-taking enhances performance by serving both as a process (e.g., facilitating comprehension during reading) and a product (e.g., aiding in review and improving writing quality through organized ideas and clearer structure). Rahmani (2011) finds that frequent and high-quality note-taking contributes significantly to academic success. The efficacy of note-taking in enhancing comprehension is supported by Jansen and IJsselsteijn (2017) who note that the quality of notes correlates positively with comprehension levels. Effective note-taking requires the students to engage in the challenging tasks of extracting, organizing, and evaluating information. For the Master supervisees, producing a dissertation of over 60 pages that adheres to academic standards necessitates diligent note-taking during supervisory meetings and research.

2.3.2.1.2 Managerial/Management Skills. Managerial skills encompass a range of abilities essential for effective performance in the research and supervisory process, including decision-making, self-management, and time management. The development of management skills enables the individuals to perform planning, organizing, directing, leading, coordinating, and controlling tasks effectively.

Decision-making skills are essential for the supervisees as they navigate complex tasks and challenges during the supervision process. The supervisees often encounter situations where they must make decisions regarding their research methodologies, data analysis approaches, or professional development pathways. Effective decision-making allows the supervisees to assess options, weigh evidence, and make informed choices that contribute to their academic or professional goals. Vaidya and Acharya's (2023) study revealed that Master students need decision-making skills in order to manage their research projects and develop their careers effectively. In the supervision process, the supervisees set goals, plan, accomplish tasks, organize, select and manage various dimensions of the process; therefore, time management is a key skill. In this regard, Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) and Matin and Khan (2017) contend that poor time management leads to academic underachievement. The supervisees need to strike a balance between academic demands, research commitments, and personal responsibilities. If they manage time well, they meet deadlines, eliminate stress and enhance their overall productivity and satisfaction with their academic experience.

Besides time management, the supervisees must control their thoughts, actions, and emotions too. Given the fact that the supervision process is a complex, enduring and demanding process, self-management becomes an essential skill in the academic supervision process. Stracke and Kumar (2010) confirm the role of self-management skills in coping with tension triggers and stressors and in maintaining productivity throughout the supervision process. This implies that self management helps in fostering perseverance, maintaining focus, managing time and regulating the emotional responses of the supervisees. This view is also consistent with the finding of the study carried out by Maher et al. (2008) who argue that the supervisees who effectively manage themselves have the readiness and the necessary abilities to meet deadlines, manage competing priorities, and maintain momentum in their research projects. Maher et al. (2008) also focus on how self-management contributes to the development of the supervisees' autonomy and sense of responsibility. This perspective is congruent with the demands of the higher education where the

supervisees are required to exhibit increased self-direction in their learning and supervisory experiences.

2.3.2.1.3 Interpersonal Skills. These skills are communicative in nature as they foster productive interaction between individuals. In the supervision process, interpersonal skills facilitate relationship building between the supervisee and the supervisor and/or other staff members. These skills have been a ground of research in academic supervision domain for many scholars. Stracke and Kumar (2010) further confirm the significance of these abilities (collaborative and communicative skills) in improving the supervision process. Moreover, Maher et al.'s (2008) research on the effect of interpersonal skills on research productivity and career development concluded that the Master students who develop and display interpersonal skills are able to establish an open, respectful and solution-focused dialogue which results in a productive supervisory relationship.

With respect to the communicative relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, Dysthe et al. (2006) and Lessing and Lessing (2004) posit that the dynamics of the supervision process depend on this relationship and renders the supervisory process an interactive process. Empirical evidence (Saleem & Mahmood, 2017; Collins, 2015; Masek, 2017; Chiappetta-Swanson and Watt, 2011; Basa, 2017; Madan, 2021; Mainhard et al., 2009) corroborates that effective communication and synergistic collaboration between the supervisor and the supervisee can determine the effectiveness of the supervision. The effectiveness of communication and collaboration between the supervisor and the supervisee is contingent on the mutual understanding and adaptation to the each one's communication preferences and styles.

Furthermore, it is evident that the supervisor is the most important participant with whom the supervisees interact. However, the supervisees need also to develop a positive relationship with their partners in research when the research is done in pairs. Moreover, there are other participants in this process whose importance might be minor compared to the supervisor, but their presence is inevitable. The supervisee has to engage with the research participants to convince them to take part in the research and has also to interact with administrative staff for diverse supervision-related

administrative matters. In this matter, Ghadirian et al. (2014) suggest that these relationships may cause many obstacles when the supervisees overlook them. Therefore, these interpersonal skills must be tailored to the different contexts and sensitive to the disparate backgrounds and cultures. Bennett (2009) further elaborates on the importance of intercultural communicative competence in research settings and indicates that it can be developed by managing the interpersonal dynamics. This management includes: developing cultural awareness, adept problem-solving and active listening and the feeling of empathy.

Alongside the previous considerations, interpersonal skills are mostly needed during the oral presentation and defence of the dissertation. Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) highlight that, at this stage, effective communication becomes as important as the mastery of the dissertation content. This importance stems from its ability to facilitate the presentation dynamic tasks including: engaging the audience, conveying complex ideas and research findings and managing stress and the examiners' feedback.

2.3.2.1.4 ICT Skills. ICT skills are also called technological literacy skills. Technologies and digital tools have revolutionized how information is accessed, distributed and exploited within educational contexts. According to Nwabueze et al. (2022), ICT witnessed rapid development that imposed its integration into educational systems worldwide. They argue that ICTs transformative role in education transcend traditional boundaries. ICTs enable the supervisees to access and organize literature, analyze data, and collaborate efficiently; thereby, enhance scholarly productivity and academic success.

2.3.2.1.5 Analytical and Cognitive Skills. Analytical skills are a set of cognitive abilities including: critical thinking, numeracy, and reflection which are indispensable for the research supervision process. Their importance is related to the facilities they provide in facing the complexities and challenge of research effectively.

To start with, critical thinking is a fundamental element of analytical skills which means to evaluate information critically. Facione (2011) defines it as a type of manipulating information in the brain as it includes presenting data, analysing it and

providing a rationale for supportive and opposing perspectives. The supervisees make use of critical thinking in assessing related literature, analysing and interpreting data, besides drawing logical conclusions and producing persuasive arguments in their dissertations.

Moreover, numeracy, also called statistical proficiency is a crucial analytical skill in research. Nygaard and Hughes-Hallett (2001) refer to numeracy as quantitative literacy because it involves the application of mathematical reasoning to ascribe numbers to data. The supervisees need this skill in the method chapters, particularly in presenting and analyzing data. This proficiency enables them to analyse data in the form of numbers and draw meaningful conclusions from it.

Reflection is a mental activity which enables the individuals to continuously improve their scholarly practices through careful self-analysis. Wain (2017) defines reflection as an “in-depth view of events, whereby the reflector reviews a situation and attempts to work out what happened, what they felt or thought about it, who or what influenced particular actions and how they would respond if it happened again” (p. 662). To ensure a high-quality research, displaying this skill throughout the research supervision process is a necessity. Vilkinas (2008) define reflective practice in supervision as the critical assessment the supervisees apply on their performance in order to spot the weaknesses and mitigate them, identify the strengths and reinforce them and improve the overall performance. Johns (2009) argues that reflection in research stems from experience. In the supervision process, these experiences can be either in the form of one-to-one interactions with the research participants specially when administering the research tools and collecting data, or can originate from receiving guidance, direction, and feedback either from the supervisors or from fellow peers.

Discussing analytical skills is inherently incomplete without reference to meta-cognitive strategies. Meta-cognition, as Livingston (2003) puts it, is the awareness of and controlling one’s mental processes which are crucial for enhancing learning and academic success. Arar (2016) equates meta-cognition/meta-cognitive strategies with self-awareness, self-regulation and self-reflection. In a research supervision context,

the meta-cognitive strategies enable the supervisees to regulate their work on the research, evaluate their understanding and assess their development during the different stages of the supervision process.

2.3.2.1.6 Flexibility. Also called adaptability; flexibility is defined by Ross et al. (2008) as proactive readiness and responsiveness to varying conditions and demands through adjustment and refinement. In the context of research supervision, the adeptness to respond effectively to unforeseen developments is crucial for both the supervisors and their supervisees. Bernardes and Hannah (2009) confirm that adaptability enables the supervisees to manage, cope with and overcome the appearing challenges and/or apply refinement as needed, thereby enhancing the overall productivity and achievement of objectives within the educational and professional settings.

2.3.2.2 Research Skills. Besides the transferrable skills discussed above, Research skills are the cornerstones of rigorous academic inquiry. Machi and McEvoy (2016) state that research skills do not include only locating and gathering pertinent data but also systematically identifying, extracting, organizing and exploiting information that is relevant to a specific research topic. Machi and McEvoy (2016) further elaborate on this idea and affirm that effective research skills imply evaluating the validity and reliability of the data gathered. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) notes that the research skills include proficiency in information management that enables the researchers to synthesize diverse perspectives, construct their own perspective, generate coherent arguments and contribute meaningfully to their fields of study. Thus, managing the amount of theoretical and empirical evidence and the complexities of academic research cannot be achieved without the research skills. In the context of the academic research supervision, many skills are required; the most pertinent ones are organized and discussed in the following four categories:

2.3.2.2.1 Testing Ideas and Validating Evidence. Laidlaw et al. (2012) note that the ability to test ideas and validate evidence fosters critical thinking abilities; which is an objective that higher education aspires to attain. In the supervision process, this proficiency has become increasingly important due to the huge amount of research

findings and material encountered. Nowadays, there is an abundance of recent information sources which obliges the supervisees to be skilled in accessing and dealing with this amount of information. For Schraw et al. (2006), the supervisees who are objective, critical thinkers and honest in reporting data are better prepared to assess and interpret evidence-based knowledge and ideas.

2.3.2.2.2 Reviewing and Evaluating the Literature. A literature review consists of the critical evaluation and synthesis of the sum of existing research relevant to a particular research topic. Shah et al. (2018) states that the literature review is a two-steps stage, the first consist of collecting and identifying relevant literature while the second involves analysing the data to assess its academic merit then synthesize the findings. This skill is pivotal in research, thereby, crucial to the supervision process. Many scholars (e.g., Kumar, 2011; Librero, 2012; Neuman, 2014; Benbellal, 2022) assert that reviewing the literature helps the supervisees to develop different analytical abilities and rigor required for the academic research. Kumar (2011) argues that, through the literature review, the gaps are identified which fosters originality and unlocks new perspectives to overcome the pitfalls identified in prior research and prevent their duplication. Reviewing the literature helps familiarise the supervisees with the prevailing landmarks and theories and develop the analytical skill to extract common and differing areas in the existing research. Lastly, it assists the students in analyzing and interpreting their data, while also outlining practical implications derived from their research findings (Librero, 2012).

2.3.2.2.3 Gathering and Interpreting Data. Data collection and interpretation are two distinct yet interconnected processes. Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering data via the administration of the research tools. This process is systematic because it ensures the consistency and accuracy of the data gathered (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Data interpretation, on the other hand, is the meticulous analysis and examination of the collected data to derive meaningful insights about the relationships or differences among the variables. According to Silverman (2021), this process requires submitting data to thorough organization, coding and categorization using appropriate qualitative techniques. Research confirms that the systematic data

collection and interpretation processes enhance the validity and the reliability of research findings which contributes to the advancement of knowledge in their respective fields (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016)

2.3.2.2.4 Dissertation Writing. Maher et al. (2008) and Paré (2017) indicate that writing allows the supervisees to demonstrate deep understanding of the research area and ensure academic rigour and structure. Writing the dissertation is a required yet challenging task, given its demanding requirements as a high-academic-performance genre in sophisticated research projects based on a thorough literature review, particularly when conducted in English. Komba (2015), Çetinkaya and Yılmaz (2017) and Benbellal (2022) discussed extensively the challenges students in EFL contexts face in dissertation writing. The main challenges include the students' unfamiliarity with the content of all the parts making the dissertation especially the literature review, their lack of essential research and writing skills such as paraphrasing and analysing. Besides, their poor language proficiency hinders their ability to write coherent and cohesive texts.

Marhaban et al. (2021) divide the dissertation writing process into three primary stages: preparing for writing, conducting the research and composing the final dissertation document. The preparation stage consists of developing a research proposal that clearly outlines the significance of the research topic and the initial adopted methodology. This phase is important as it enables the supervisees to meet the criteria of feasibility, relevance, and originality required for research. While executing the research, the supervisees display writing skills beyond the initial proposal and drafting stages. The last phase consists of steps which require advanced writing competencies. Particularly, it involves writing detailed descriptions of how data are gathered, including any modifications made during the process to maintain accuracy. Creswell (2014) calls for clear and systematic documentation by adhering to academic writing conventions and mechanics to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. Moreover, Peel (2020) argues that the data analysis should involve in-depth clarification of the methods used and a detailed explanation of how the findings address the research questions. Yin (2009) confirms that interpreting the results

requires synthesizing findings into coherent narratives with reference to the theoretical frameworks from the literature and aligning with the dissertation's research aims. Producing the final dissertation text represents the last stage. Emilia (2012) argues that the supervisees write the final version as the culmination of their scholarly endeavour which gets evaluated latter.

2.3.2.3 Ethical Skills/Considerations. Ethical skills in educational research imply the adherence to the ethical considerations, the academic integrity and respect for all involved parties into account. To start with, it is a prerequisite to obtain an informed consent from the participants (Tauginienė et al., 2021), in which the participants confirm they understand and agree on the participation terms and the researcher assures confidentiality (Bryman, 2016). Cohen et al. (2007) see that ethical research and supervision expands beyond this to include reflection, caring, responsibility thoughtfulness, dignity, virtue and commitment. Additionally, integrity is an important tenet of research ethics; it involves the researchers' honesty with regard to the research itself, avoiding commercial and AI assisted writing. Tauginienė et al. (2021) asserts that the researcher needs to commit to honesty, truthfulness and transparency towards themselves and others throughout all the research stages without the intention to mislead. Moreover, Keck (2014) relates ethical skills to the academic malpractice, namely, academic theft which is termed plagiarism. In this regard, Keck (2014) advocates the importance of paraphrasing and referencing as forms of ethical commitment and obligation to preclude plagiarism.

Overall, transferable, research and ethical skills are equally necessary for the supervisees throughout all the stages of research and the supervision process. The interrelationship between them imposes their acquisition and integration to ensure a holistic development and meaningful contributions to the advancement of knowledge and scholarly practice.

After discussing the effective practices and necessary skills in the supervision process, it is important to identify and understand the current challenges facing it. The upcoming section delves into these challenges.

2.4 Challenges in the Supervision Process

The supervision process in academic settings presents a myriad of challenges that significantly impact the experiences and outcomes of the supervisees. Effective supervision demands a nuanced understanding of roles, communication, and support strategies. The key challenges of supervision process which have been discussed in the literature are articulated in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1 Supervisors-Related Challenges

Many researchers assert that one of the most prominent challenges is striking a balance between providing sufficient directive guidance and inciting the supervisees to be autonomous (Anderson et al., 2006; Lee, 2008; Pearson & Brew, 2002; Mupa, 2023). This challenge originates from the difficulty of maintaining academic rigor while fostering the supervisees' independent work. Besides, Lee (2008) further indicates that the supervisors face this challenge because they often approach the supervision process with reference to their personal experience. This implies that the supervisors face difficulty in maintaining equilibrium between providing the necessary assistance and support and fostering autonomy because they project their experience as Master students, both in positive and/or negative senses, on their supervisees without taking into consideration the context variables (e.g., the supervisees' level, motivation and mastery of research).

Moreover, Mapasela and Wilkinson (2005) discovered that many supervisors lack the adequate institutional support to effectively cultivate their relationships with the supervisees. They contend that many supervisors receive insufficient training in the nuances of the supervision process. Chiappetta-Swanson and Watt (2011) characterize this prevalent scenario as “muddling through,” (p. 4) which unfortunately hampers the advancement of the students. To mitigate these challenges, clear and structured training programs can be implemented to enhance the supervisors' awareness of their biases and provide them with tools to adopt more objective approaches (Lessing & Schulze, 2002; Mupa, 2023). Additionally, inciting the supervisors to reflect about their practice during the supervision process allows them to critically assess their

supervisory styles and flexibly tailor them to the planned goals and the supervisees' specific needs. This reflective practice helps promoting a more conducive and enriching academic environment in which guidance is delivered sufficiently and balanced with autonomy.

Furthermore, Mupa (2023) revealed that the supervisors' workload represents a challenge for them as well as for their supervisees. Their study found that the supervisors struggle with time insufficiency to effectively fulfil their supervisory roles. The supervisors face difficulty is balancing the two demanding tasks of teaching and supervising when supervising requires allocating sufficient time for guiding, offering feedback and supporting the supervisees. Consequently, the supervisees do not receive adequate guidance, support and timely feedback (de Kleijin et al., 2013; Neupane and Bastola, 2020), which leads to delays in research completion and dissatisfaction.

2.4.2 Supervision Process Related Challenges

The literature highlights an apparent conceptual ambiguity regarding research supervision due to the deficiency of theoretical foundation. Accordingly, Mupa (2023) promotes more academic discussion about the nature of the supervision process. This perspective implies an exploration of the different conceptualizations of the supervision process, how these different approaches affect supervisees' outcomes, and how they influence institutional policies related to research.

Another challenge which has been discussed extensively in the literature is role ambiguity between the supervisors and the supervisees. According to Guerin et al. (2015), role ambiguity is the primary challenge which leads to delays in the research completion. In this regard, Dysthe and Samara (2006) highlight the direct influence role confusion has on fostering constructive supervisory relationships and effective communication. For example, if a supervisor views their role strictly as a research director while the student expects mentoring on academic writing, the mismatch can lead to frustration and unmet needs. Similarly, if a student is unclear whether they should take initiative or wait for the supervisor's instructions, they may hesitate to communicate openly, leading to delays or misunderstandings. Such confusion can

erode trust and reduce the effectiveness of meetings, feedback, and overall progress. To overcome these challenges, Al-Muallem (2016) and Abiddin (2007) further recommend clearly defining roles through detailed and open communication.

Vos and Armstrong (2019) argue that the gap between the supervisors' expertise in research methods and the supervisees' learning presents another challenge in the supervision process. In this regard, Grant (2001) asserts that the Master dissertation supervision process offers significant and innovative contributions to the wider field if no disparity arises. This perspective indicates that the supervisor's experience and mastery of knowledge in their research fields does not ensure that he has the necessary pedagogical training or awareness of the diverse learning needs among the Master students. Additionally, Trafford and Leshem (2009) believe that it is indispensable for the supervisors to display rigor in research although it is often challenging to be exhibited. Universities can effectively bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge and the practical application at the Master level research by fostering a supportive institutional environment that promotes continuous professional development for supervisors and provides reliable resources for the supervisees.

Despite the importance of aligning perceptions and practices in the supervision process, discrepancies often arise. Haman et al. (2012) believe that the practices and the behaviours of the students are informed by their perceptions. That is, based on the perceptions the students form, they act. However, perceptions and practices in the supervision process do not always follow this relationship which leads to misunderstandings that can detrimentally impact the students' supervisory experience. An illustrative example of this disconnect is when a student perceives their supervisor's limited feedback as a sign of approval or satisfaction with their work. Acting on this perception, the student continues developing their project without making major changes. However, in reality, the supervisor expected the student to seek clarification and initiate deeper engagement. As the project progresses, the supervisor becomes concerned about the lack of progress or rigor, while the student is surprised by sudden critical feedback.

2.4.3 Supervisees-Related Challenges

Bamber et al. (2017) argue that the challenges faced by the supervisees are distinct from the challenges faced by the supervisors. At Master level, Harwood and Petrić (2020), and Filippou et al. (2019) have proved that the challenges escalate due to diverse student needs which require tailored guidance strategies to be adequately fulfilled. These views indicate that the heterogeneous nature of the supervisees' backgrounds and goals fuel the challenges. According to Matin and Khan (2017), the supervisees are required to assess existing scholarly knowledge and search it from genuine perspectives. These are demanding tasks for the Master students who engage with research for the first time. Matin and Khan (2017) further elaborate on this idea stating that the students' had positive perceptions about their knowledge which did not reflect their real level and especially that they are less experience with research. Moreover, Matin and Khan (ibid) concluded that these challenges contributed to other challenges related to the supervisees' poor time management.

According to Madan (2021), the supervisors' expertise in guiding and managing the research supervision is what makes the difference in overcoming these challenges. In light of this, it is evident that further exploration of the specific strategies that effectively address the diverse levels and needs of the Master supervisees and balance the supervisors' role as a supervisor and their primary role as teachers.

In conclusion, the multifaceted nature of the supervision process causes many challenges for the supervisees and their supervisors. To optimize the students' experiences and outcomes, it is necessary to double the focus to address roles ambiguity, adapt the supervisory practices to diverse student needs and support the supervisors to perform better. This holistic approach ensures that both the supervisees and supervisors are equipped with the necessary tools and support to excel in research methods education and ultimately enhance the overall quality of Master education and research supervision.

After the review of the variables underpinning the supervision process, it is important to examine how these key elements have been addressed in the literature.

The following section provides a critical review of prior research on Master Dissertation supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process.

2.5 Studies on the Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices

It has been noticed that the literature on the supervision process often emphasizes the role of the supervisor over that of the supervisee, whether discussing Master's level (Anderson et al., 2006) or doctoral level (Halse, 2011; Zafar et al., 2021; Masek, 2017; Halse and Malfroy, 2010). This emphasis is potentially rooted in the traditional hierarchical structure of academia. This approach is characterized by a strong adherence to authority levels in which the supervision process was taken from supervisors- centred perspective. Therefore, the supervisors were conceived as established academics with an extensive research experience that allows them to be well-positioned to be responsible for guiding the students through the complex process of supervision. The major drawback in the literature is the limited understanding of the students' perspective to ensure equitable and effective supervision.

Many researchers (e.g., Drennan & Clarke, 2009; Halse, 2011; McCallin & Nayar, 2012) provide notable emphasis on the supervision process at doctoral level. In parallel, another group of researchers including Macfadyen et al. (2019), Davis (2020), Harwood and Petrić, (2017), and Cornelius and Nicol (2015) highlight the apparent scarcity of research about the supervision process at Master level. In this regard, Drennan and Clarke (2009) argue that the Master's degree is "one of the least understood or researched academic levels in higher education" (p. 483). On the same line of thoughts, Cornelius and Nicol (2015), Anderson et al. (2006) and Ginn (2014) call for the need for a distinct supervisory approach for Master supervisees as they are generally first time researchers and their research skills are less advanced than those of PhD level. Accordingly, the exploration of the dissertation supervision process at Master level started to attract the researchers' interest and curiosity. Some studies (e.g., Dysthe et al., 2006; Filippou, 2019; Cornelius & Nicol, 2015; Macfadyen et al., 2020) were carried out to explore the Master supervision process approaches. These studies focused on examining the 'how' aspect of Master-level supervision process which details the way/steps supervision occurs, including the way supervisors and

students interact, feedback mechanisms and structuring meetings. Furthermore, Drennan and Clarke (2009) committed their study to analyse the factors causing discrepancies in the quality of the supervision at Master level.

The existing research does not address the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision as a whole process; instead there exist some studies which investigate specific elements of the supervision process. Some researchers like Shahzed et al. (2019) and Doğan and Bıkmez (2015) have focused on the perceptions of Master Supervisees of their supervisors' roles considering these two variables particularly important in the supervision process. The Master supervisees' perceptions of feedback is a topic for research of many scholars including: Klejin et al. (2013) and Orsmond and Merry (2011); while Gedamu (2018) focused on the supervisees' perceptions of their supervisors' supervisory styles. To the extent of our current understanding, no scholarly investigation has comprehensively addressed the perceptions and the practices of Master's supervisees within the context of the supervision process as a whole. Despite its academic significance, no studies have established a standardized framework for supervision in this context, and there is a notable absence of research on these standards within academic milieu. Consequently, our approach involves discussing studies that tackle perceptions and practices separately.

In this section, we examine the limited literature available on Master students' perspectives and perceptions in the supervision process. In fact, we could find only one study that tackles Master supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process. We outline its main findings and analyze its respective strengths and weaknesses.

Anastasiadis and O'Brien (2019) carried out a study entitled: *An Exploration of Taught Master's Student Perceptions of UK Dissertation Supervision*. This study dealt with the perceptions of Master's students regarding dissertation supervision in a UK institution. The study drew, from the literature, five distinct elements which facilitate the supervision tasks. The supervisors need to communicate well, offer thorough and appropriate feedback, provide competent guidance on research methods, show mastery of the research topic theory, and strike a balance between being poorly and overly involved. Their research was exploratory in nature and adopted a mixed-methods

approach to answer two main research questions. The study aimed at enhancing this process in order to improve the educational outcomes. To answer the research questions and attain the study's aims, data was gathered from the participants using two instruments. 199 international participants were handed a questionnaire and nine international participants took three focus-group interviews with each group containing 3 students. The study reached conclusions on the diversity of the students' perceptions depending on their varied backgrounds. It found that the supervisees perceive the supervision process differently as their backgrounds influence them. Yet, they believed that their supervisors maintained the required balance in their involvement. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of tailored communication and feedback, and the supervisor's expertise in shaping the students' perceptions and reaching the learning outcomes, particularly for the international students who had been adjusting to unfamiliar academic norms. The researchers concluded by acknowledging the study's limitations and suggested practical recommendations. Their mentioned limitations included the small sample size, the representativeness of the focus-group interviews participants and validity and reliability related issues. They incited the future researchers to explore perceptions pre, during and post the dissertation experience. They also highlighted the importance of exploring alternative supervision models to further understand and improve the Master's level educational experience. Overall, Anastasiadis and O'Brien's (2019) study provides valuable insights into Master students' perceptions of the dissertation supervision process. Their study serves as a foundation for future research and practical interventions which aim is to improve the Master level students' experience to better meet their needs and enhance educational outcomes.

The study conducted by Anastasiadis and O'Brien (2019) presents several notable strengths. To start with, the research questions were clearly defined and articulated; the first research question was related to the ways taught master's students at a given institution perceived being supervised in their final projects in terms of the five elements outlined while the second question was related to the meaning of such experience for universities. Furthermore, the researchers integrated qualitative insights from focus-group and open-ended questions with quantitative data collected through

the closed-ended questions included in the questionnaire. Besides, the relationship between the questions included within the questionnaire was well established. This methodological choice was beneficial for exploring complex phenomena such as the students' perceptions of the dissertation supervision. It enhanced the study's depth by triangulating the findings and capturing both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Additionally, the inclusion of the interviews excerpts to support the reported results further strengthened the study's trustworthiness. Another element which made this study commendable was the discussion of the findings in relation to prior studies, answering the research questions, and the comprehensive exploration of implications for the supervision practices. The authors acknowledged the limitations and offered recommendations for future research explicitly. Finally, the adherence to ethical guidelines reflected in the consultation with educational development units, contributed to the methodological rigor of their approach.

However, alongside its strengths, the study also exhibits several limitations that deserve consideration. The researchers did not identify the significant gaps in the existing literature and did not clearly explain how their study would add to the existing literature or how it would fill these gaps. Moreover, the researchers did not explicitly specify the type of the research design employed, particularly the mixed-methods approach, which may have affected the clarity and interpretation of their findings. Furthermore, the study did not provide detailed information on the characteristics and representativeness of the participants included within the sample, as well as the specific sampling procedures, and potential sample biases which may have impacted the external validity and generalizability of the findings. The authors did not mention the name of the institution where the study was conducted which further limited the study's applicability to broader contexts. Finally, the study did not report on the validation procedures of the research instruments used, which raises concerns about the reliability and the validity of the measurement tools.

In these upcoming paragraphs, we explore the few existing studies that focus on Master Supervisees' practices in the supervision process. We summarize the primary outcomes of these studies and evaluate their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Millin et al. (2022) undertook a study about the Master supervisees' practices in the supervision process. It is entitled *Master's Research Supervision and Academic Support: A Benchmarking of Best Practice at a New Zealand Research-intensive University*. This study presented findings from a small-scale investigation employing a comprehensive benchmarking framework. This study adopted a mixed data approach in which a survey was handed to the participants. The participating sample was composed of 23 academics and 17 students through implementing key performance indicators (KPIs) with regard to student support, candidature development, supervision, and assessment and examination support. The findings of the study revealed that both the academics and the students expressed satisfaction with the orientation and the induction processes, i.e., both groups felt that the initial support provided—such as introducing students to the academic environment, explaining expectations, procedures, and available resources—was sufficient and effective. Additionally, the students indicated a need for expanding the knowledge regarding potential research modifications. In other words, they wanted more information and guidance on how and when they could make changes to their research projects. Furthermore, the students and the academics demonstrated confidence in the level of the academic research guidance provided. However, discrepancies and concerns emerged regarding the clarity of assessment policies and procedures in which the academics confirmed their clarity while the students reported ambiguity regarding the policies and procedures of assessment. Additionally, the students advocated for more frequent collection of evaluative feedback on their experiences. Overall, the study suggests that the university is largely meeting benchmarking principles and associated KPIs. Nonetheless, both academics and students identified areas where the university could enhance practices to better support Master's research students' experiences.

This study demonstrates numerous strengths across various dimensions. Firstly, the research aims and objectives were clearly stated and the gap was identified. In the methodology section, it provided a comprehensive description of the research site by providing details related to the university's characteristics, the number of Master's students, and the program specifics. Furthermore, the qualitative and the quantitative data gathered through the survey reflected the practices of two different categories of

participants (i.e., the academics and the students). The researchers provided clear guidelines and the rationale for sample selection procedures which enhanced the methodological rigor. Additionally, it explicitly explained data analysis procedures. Moreover, the discussion of the results was contextualized with reference to the previous studies, which enriched the interpretation and situated the findings within a broader academic framework. The authors also acknowledged the limitations of their study and offered practical implications in order to enhance the supervision practices based on empirical evidence; these implications were highly relevant to the educational practitioners and policymakers.

Despite these strengths, the study is not without limitations. The researchers did not mention the research questions. Furthermore, they did not explicitly highlight the significance of their study or the way it would address the literature gaps. Therefore, the study lacks grounding within current scholarly discourse. Moreover, the limited information provided on the sample characteristics and representativeness hindered a comprehensive understanding of the demographic and contextual factors that may have influenced the outcomes of the study. Additionally, the study used only one data collection instrument (the survey) and it did not provide detailed reporting on the instrument validation and reliability checks, which raises concerns about the validity and the reliability of the data gathered and the instrument used. These weaknesses reveal the complexity and potential biases inherent in interpreting the findings, despite the efforts spared to incorporate diverse perspectives from both the students and their supervisors.

In a different context, Grohnert et al. (2024) carried out a study entitled *Effective master's thesis supervision: A summative framework for research and practice*. The study reviewed the existing literature in order to construct a comprehensive framework for effective Master's dissertation supervision with strong focus on the dynamics between students and supervisors. The framework aimed at guiding the supervisor's training and improving the supervision practices globally. The findings emphasized collaborative and supportive interactions essential for successful thesis completion. It identified practices, processes, and inputs critical to successful

supervision based on an analysis of 36 studies. Furthermore, the researchers highlighted the impact of the supervisor's attitudes and actions on the student-supervisor relationship. They suggested that future research should be carried out regarding the student behaviours and contextual influences.

This study presents numerous strengths that accentuate its contributions to the field of Master's dissertation supervision. Drawing from a systematic review of literature, the study synthesized a broad array of research findings, offering a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge globally. The researchers' approach was to include studies from diverse settings and contexts in order to ensure a dependable synthesis that captures the varied perspectives of the Master dissertation supervision process. Additionally, the study sought to answer three research questions which were clearly articulated. Grohnert et al. (2024) highlighted the gap in the literature, explained the way their research would address those gaps and provided convincing arguments for the significance of the problem. Furthermore, the researchers detailed the data gathering process from multiple studies involving the students and supervisors across different disciplines and institutions. The study also explicitly explained the coding procedures. Rigorous search and selection criteria enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the synthesized framework and qualified it as a reliable source of evidence-based practices for dissertation supervision. The systematic review effectively captured a wide range of relevant studies and reinforced the study's methodological strength in aggregating empirical evidence.

However, alongside its strengths, the study also presents notable weaknesses that need to be addressed. The study did not provide a detailed exploration of specific literature gaps and their implications which may reduce its scholarly impact. The researchers could have provided clearer and more explicit recommendations for future research directions. Moreover, while the study synthesized findings globally, the researchers may have not fully explored the contextual specificity of the results across the different educational systems and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, while systematic reviews typically involve quality assessment criteria, the specific validation

checks of the synthesized findings and the methodological rigor of the included studies were not mentioned.

Another exploratory research was undertaken by Semjin et al. (2009) to identify the various factors influencing the outcomes of the Master dissertation supervision in Science programs. The study is entitled *Master Thesis Supervision: Towards Good Practice*. The study clearly identified the literature gap and explicitly explained the research significance and role in filling these gaps. The research design included 139 business Masters of the Open University of the Netherlands. The data was elicited from the participants through an evaluation form completed by each of them. This document provided detailed information on the supervisees' obtained grade, their evaluation of the supervision received, the supervisors characteristics, and the use of circles (groups working collaboratively on theses, incorporating blended learning elements), and various other supervision-related aspects. The data was analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression analyses. The study considered different aspects of the dissertation supervision and closely examined the additional benefits of thesis circles in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Master dissertation supervision process. The findings revealed that no statistically significant positive or negative effects were observed for the use of thesis circles in facilitating the overall process. Moreover, the factors related to the supervision methodology and processes, rather than the content, were strongly linked to overall student evaluations and final thesis outcomes. The research suggested that the supervisors' experience in research correlated with their responsiveness. Precisely, the supervisors who had a publication record demonstrated higher responsiveness compared to non-publishing counterparts. The study highlighted a need for further theoretical development to better comprehend the critical factors underpinning effective thesis supervision. Semjin (2009) argued that enhancing the methodological skills emerged as a promising avenue to support the supervisors in refining their supervision practices. This empirical exploration of Master dissertation supervision contributed substantively to academic discourse on supervision practices.

This study presents several strengths that assert its contributions to the field of the dissertation supervision process. A key positive point of this study was the detailed information provided about the research setting; this information enhanced the trustworthiness of the study. Additionally, the author ensured the identification of the literature gaps and the explicit explanation of the way his study would fill those gaps. Methodologically, the researcher used a substantial sample size of 139 business Masters. Furthermore, he detailed the content of the data gathering tool besides the data collecting and analysis procedures. Moreover, the researcher used Pearson correlation and regression analyses. These statistical methods validated the findings effectively, enhanced the study's validity and reliability and provided empirical insights into the relationships among variables. The study also provided the implications of the findings. These findings signalled the significance of methodological and process-oriented supervision for improving thesis quality and offered valuable insights for future supervisory practices within academic settings. The researcher also provided some inferences and suggestions for a better supervisory experience for the supervisees, the supervisors and the academic departments. Finally, Semjin acknowledged the limitations of the study and offered recommendations for future research.

This study, like others, is constrained by some limitations. To start with, the researcher did not explicitly specify the research questions. Similarly, he exclusively included business Masters as participants; this may have restricted the applicability of findings to other disciplines or academic levels. Furthermore, the study used only one research instrument which was subject to the participants' views. Therefore, the findings raised concerns about the objectivity of the results. Moreover, the study analyzed the data using statistical methods like Pearson correlation and regression analyses and did not rely on qualitative approaches to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of student-supervisor interactions. Consequently, the reliability and the validity of data were in question as it was not triangulated and cross-verified.

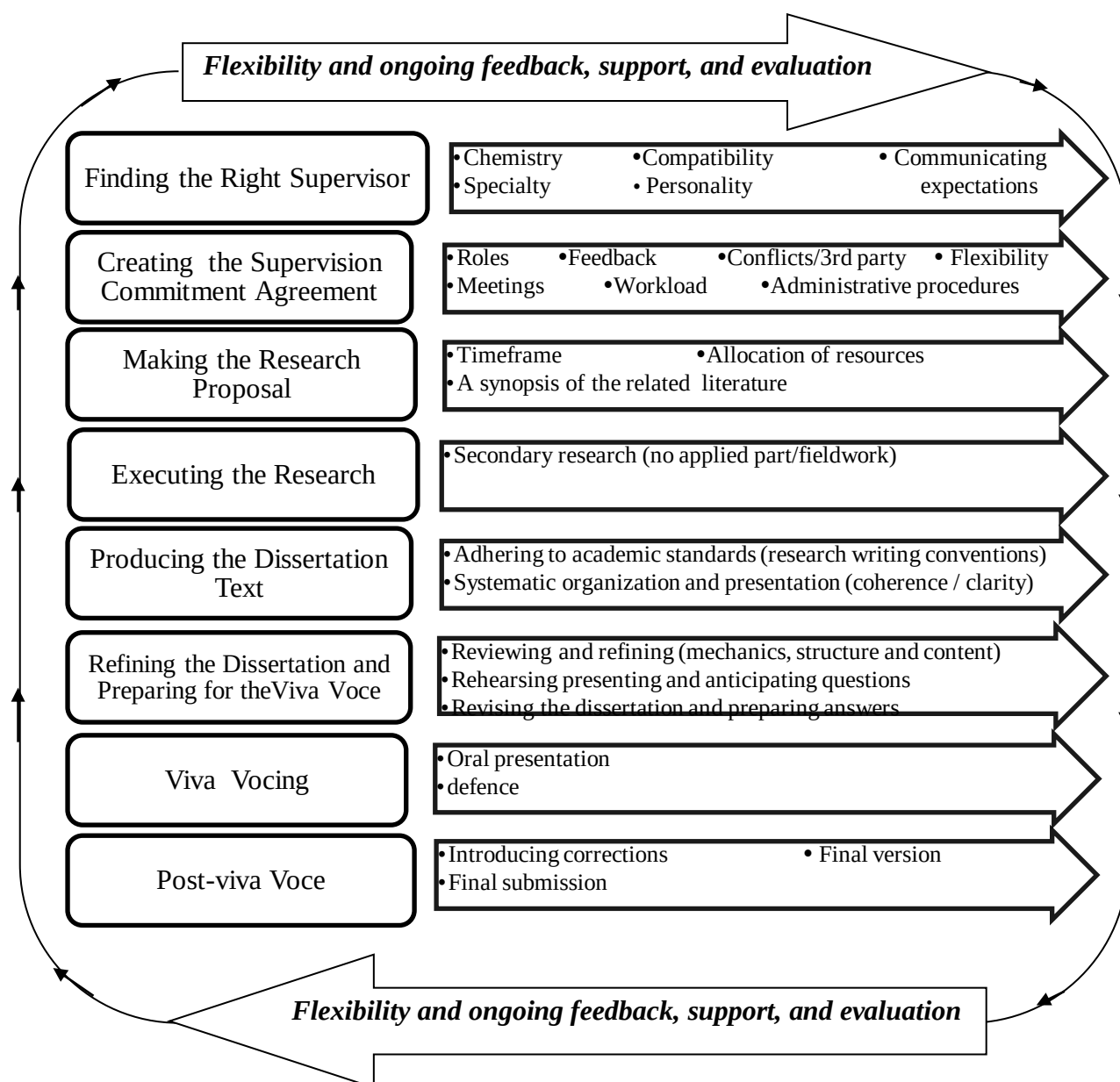
2.6 Theoretical Framework

Based on this literature review, a notable paucity of research focusing on the supervision process at Master level is prevalent on an international scale. Despite its global importance, there is currently no established standardized framework for the supervision process as a whole. Gatfield's (2005) and Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) proposed components and steps for PhD supervision. The supervision processes for PhD and Master students share several commonalities, despite their differences in scope and depth. While the intensity and duration of supervision varies between PhD and Master Levels, the fundamental principle of a supervisor providing guidance and support to a supervisee throughout the research process remains consistent across both educational levels. Hence, depending on these two frameworks, we developed our own Master supervision process steps/framework to fit the context of the study. In the study's context, the English Department at Algiers 2 university, Master 2 supervisees are required to undertake a secondary research instead of a primary research. This decision stemmed from the outbreak of COVID19 pandemic when it was exceptionally challenging to do fieldwork/empirical study. However, even after the reduction of the pandemic, this decision kept to be applicable even this year (2024/2025) because of the ascending number of Master 2 students.

In our framework, we relied on some of Gatfield's (2005) and Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) proposed elements for PhD research supervision process and adapted them to fit research supervision at Master level. This process of adaptation included changing the labelling of some elements, detailing the elements according to our context and reorganizing them when appropriate. The adaptation process resulted in an eight-step framework; each step has its composing elements. Figure 2.2 provides a detailed illustration to better understand this framework.

Figure 2.2

The Theoretical Framework



From Gatfield's (2005) framework, we adapted first some elements related to the organizational process category of the structural factor elements, The elements selected relate to identifying roles, negotiating meetings, managing time flexibly and providing/receiving the supervisors' input. For the accountability category, we relied on staged write-up, staged feedback, timeframes and oral defence. As for the support factors, we adapted some elements related to pastoral care namely: the supervisors' feedback, assistance, and support. As for the exogenous factors we adapted the

variable elements related to the supervisees' research skills, interpersonal skills and the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. On the other hand, from Wichmann-Hansen et al.'s (2012) steps, we relied on finding the right person, matching expectations and roles, meeting activities and text production. The steps relied on were also subject to modification, detailing and reorganization to fit our contexts.

Each of the elements included within the framework is discussed in the following section:

2.6.1 Finding the Right Supervisor

Finding the right research supervisor is the first foundational step in the supervision process. In the English Department at Algiers 2 University, the supervisors are assigned to supervisees through draw system which makes little room for change. Because the supervision journey is a long process which involves many steps full of stress and challenges, it is a must for the supervisor and the supervisee to find a common ground between them in order to avoid challenges. This is supported by Armstrong et al. (2004) who argue that the process of supervision has to start with establishing compatibility between the supervisor and the supervisee. The two agents have concordant and discordant views, when they fail to match, misunderstandings and disagreements emerge leading to delay in the dissertation's timely completion. Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) assert that reaching a good outcome depends on adjusting their interests in a way that aligns with each other and heads in the same trajectory. Central to this endeavour is taking into consideration chemistry, specialty, personality, and clear communication of expectations.

Chemistry encompasses shared work styles, and approaches to research. Such alignment fosters a harmonious and productive working relationship, minimizes conflicts and enhances focus on the research goals. Secondly, specialty compatibility is essential; it ensures that the supervisor possesses relevant expertise and knowledge aligned with the student's research area. Insufficient knowledge of supervisors in the relevant field is a major hindrance (Mupa, 2023). Furthermore, personality

compatibility also factors into effective supervision; it influences the communication dynamics, trust-building, and the openness necessary for constructive feedback, support and collaboration (Baker and Pifer 2015). Lastly, clear communication of expectations is crucial. It involves discussing academic goals from the outset, providing a structured framework that manages expectations, ensures accountability, and facilitates ongoing evaluation of progress (Pearson & Brew, 2002).

Together, these elements form the foundation for a supportive and effective supervisory relationship in the Master's supervision process. Once compatibility between the two is established, it gets translated into a code of conduct in the form of supervision commitment agreement.

2.6.2 Creating the Supervision Commitment Agreement

In the context of Master supervision, establishing a comprehensive code of conduct as a working contract is crucial for setting the stage for a productive supervisory relationship. In this regard Berlach (2010) suggest that an educational contract between the supervisor and the supervisee, referred to frequently, is a must. The English Department at Algiers 2 University developed a document entitled 'Supervision Commitment Agreement (see Appendix A). This document contains some of the supervisors' and the supervisees' duties, an affidavit in which the supervisees confirm that they know their respective rights and obligations regarding the supervision process, and Master's dissertation work plan which can be considered as a guide.

According to de Kleijn et al., (2012) and Halse and Malfroy (2010), the supervisees consider the supervisor-supervisee relationship one of the most significant factors influencing their academic self-concept and satisfaction with their Master program. It is also an indicator of Master student success (Peterson, 2007) as it reduces attrition and minimizes the supervisees' discontent (Parker-Jenkins, 2016). Accordingly, it is logical that the first step in making the supervision commitment agreement is to raise awareness about the importance of establishing and maintaining a positive rapport between the two. Deuchar (2008) maintains that each of the supervisor

and the supervisee has an indispensable function in maintaining successful supervision. Phillips and Pugh (2000) posit that it is essential that the supervisors and supervisees clearly define the nature of the relationship and communicating roles, expectations and the supervisory style the assigned duties and the way of working of each of them from the very beginning.

Furthermore, Abiddin and West (2007b) argue that the supervisory meetings have an influence on the supervisory relationship while Matin and Khan (2017) argue that these sessions influence the quality of research. Therefore, both agents need to set the rules about the frequency (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly, as required) and formats (e.g., in-person, virtual, formal, or informal) of their supervisory meetings as part of their working plan. Deuchar (2008) argues that effective supervision requires both the supervisor and the supervisee to show an active, intelligent, and responsible involvement in order to maintain interest of all parties. These are essential for the effective management as they ensure that the supervisees receive the necessary contact with the supervisor and trace the supervisees' development.

Moreover, establishing feedback mechanisms is essential. These refer to the processes and systems put in place to facilitate the exchange of constructive feedback between the supervisor and the supervisee. De Kleijn et al. (2012) argue that the students expect from their supervisors to tell them how to provide constructive and goal oriented feedback. De Kleijn et al. (2013) and Neupane-Bastola and Hu (2020) argue that feedback is an indispensable foundational element as it bridges the gap between the supervisees' current performance and their intended goals. Hence, it is crucial to stipulate the frequency (immediate, at the end of each chapter) and define feedback communication protocols (oral or written, written on an electronic or a paper version) to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

Besides, Baker et al. (2014) believe that managing workload distribution and expectations is pivotal in the supervision contract, as it clarifies the anticipated levels of effort and time commitments from the pairs of supervisees and the supervisor and helps to establish realistic goals and equitably distribute responsibilities throughout the research process. Additionally, clear definition of the required administrative

procedures (e.g., final submission) and paperwork is essential. Belarch (2010) argues that this clarity ensures that all parties are aware of their respective administrative obligations and can navigate bureaucratic processes efficiently, thereby minimizing administrative hurdles that impede research progress.

Ismail et al. (2011) indicate that the strains that arise between the supervisees and their supervisors during the different stages of their journey stem from power conflict, the lack of positive communication and the deficiency of the necessary expertise to give support. Therefore addressing conflicts within this structured framework is paramount. Additionally, the supervisees may seek advice from external sources, such as colleagues or other supervisors sometimes, without obtaining the consent of their supervisor intentionally or unintentionally. This can lead to increased conflicts and misunderstandings within the supervisory relationship due to the inconsistencies in guidance and misalignment in expectations. Subsequently, it is essential to determine in advance whether the involvement of third parties beyond the supervisor and supervisee is permissible under the agreed terms of the supervision contract.

Flexibility and openness to adaptation are integral aspects of a successful supervision contract. Recognizing the influence of external and unforeseen factors enables the development of adaptive strategies that support the evolving needs of the research project and the individuals involved. Acknowledging that both the supervisors and the supervisees have other obligations beyond the supervision process is crucial for fostering mutual understanding and empathy because this relationship is initially a human relationship shaped by interpersonal and relational processes. Furthermore, Phillips and Pugh (2000) emphasize the importance of developing and maintaining a healthy psychological contract, which is essential for fostering a supportive and productive relationship.

By addressing the relationship dynamics, conflict resolution strategies, administrative clarity, feedback mechanisms, communication protocols, workload management and flexibility, within a well-defined code of conduct and working contract, the supervisors and the supervisees can cultivate a collaborative and

supportive environment. The creation of a detailed supervision commitment agreement is followed by the development of the research proposal. This step marks the culmination of the mutual understanding and compatibility between the supervisor and the supervisee and the point at which the research supervision begins.

2.6.3 Making the Research Proposal

In the context of Master's supervision, making a research proposal encompasses several crucial elements that lay the groundwork for a structured and successful research endeavour. In this regard, Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) and Kumar (2011) highlight the significance of a well-structured proposal in guiding the research journey. Krathwohl (2005) suggests that the research proposal starts with an introduction followed by background and significance of the study, a synopsis of literature, research design and methods, preliminary hypotheses and implications, references and a conclusion. As already mentioned, in this study's context the supervisees are required to conduct a secondary research. The research proposal for secondary research includes the research objectives, the timeframe which establishes realistic milestones and deadlines for completing the various stages of the research, allocation of resources which ensures that necessary materials and support are accessible. Furthermore, a synopsis of the literature review serves as the foundation for the research proposal. This summary ensures that the research is situated within the broader academic context, the availability of sufficient prior research and provides a theoretical framework to guide the investigation. The exclusion of the research design and methodology part is justified due to the fact that English Language supervisees in Algiers 2 University undertake secondary research. This suggested research proposal naturally evolves into the research execution to continue the research supervision process.

2.6.4 Executing the Research

This phase in the Master supervision process involves the research proposal as a guide in implementing and realizing the research plan. According to Fleming and Kowalsky (2021), this is the most extensive research undertaking of the

supervisees' academic program and perhaps their professional career. According to Matin and Khan (2017), research consists of identifying the research problem, formulating the research questions and objectives, designing and implementing a research tool, managing and interpreting data and reporting the results. This phase marks the active collaboration between the supervisor and the supervisee in the pursuit of the research objectives. The Pedagogical Committee of Supervisors in the English Department, Algiers 2 University, developed a document entitled 'General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines' addressed to students majoring in didactics (see Appendix B). Vartanian (2010) defines secondary research as the analysis of data gathered previously to be reused in another context. Simply put, it is the study which examines data gathered in a specific context to attain specific objectives, answer specific queries, and reuse the data in a different context to attain different objectives. Accordingly, the administrative document General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines provides a detailed format of Master 2 dissertation which has to be strictly followed and respected by all the supervisees. The elements mentioned in the document include the format and the sections of the dissertation. The insights gained during this phase become the core content of a written version of the research.

2.6.5 Producing the Dissertation Text

Also known as the writing phase, it is a critical stage for earning a Master or doctoral degree. It involves producing the final written outcome of a structured study (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021) the culmination of research efforts is translated into a coherent and scholarly document. Matin and Khan (2017) argue that the written product demonstrates originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format and thorough documentation. For secondary research, this phase involves documenting the comparison and contrast of the gathered data and presenting them in a structured format that adheres to academic conventions and the guidelines. According to Delamont et al. (2004), writing the dissertation requires a systematic approach to organizing and presenting information, often incorporating theoretical frameworks and literature review insights to support arguments and

conclusions and emphasize the importance of clarity, coherence, and adherence to scholarly standards during this phase. The supervisees' attempt to adhere to the dissertation writing conventions is accompanied by the supervisors' guidance and feedback to ensure the dissertation meets the academic standards and effectively addresses the research objectives and makes a meaningful contribution to the field of study. Furthermore, revising and refining the dissertation serves as a preparatory phase for the viva voce.

2.6.6 Refining the Dissertation and Preparing for the Viva Voce

Refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva (oral defence) represent crucial final stages in the Master supervision process. This phase involves polishing the dissertation into its final version, meticulously reviewing content, structure, and adherence to the academic conventions and guidelines (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021). The supervisors' constructive feedback and guidance help refine arguments, strengthen conclusions, and ensure the overall quality of the dissertation. The process of refining the dissertation requires careful attention to details, including thorough proofreading and editing to enhance clarity, coherence, and the scholarly rigor. It also provides the supervisees with the opportunity to prepare for the viva voce. Simultaneously, preparing for the viva involves rehearsing the presentation and the oral defence before the real viva voce. This preparation includes anticipating and responding to potential questions and critiques, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, findings, and implications (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021). Practice sessions with the supervisors and peers contribute to enhancing the supervisees' presentation skills and building confidence ahead of the viva examination (Taylor and Beasley, 2010). The iterative revisions and the continuous refinement of the presentation materials contribute to demonstrating the supervisees' readiness during the viva. As the candidates have limited experience of this form of examination, supervisors normally have a responsibility to assist them to prepare for it (Taylor and Beasley, 2010).

2.6.7 The Viva Voce

During the viva voce, the candidate defends their dissertation before a panel of examiners. According to Fleming and Kowalsky (2021), the examiners and the supervisor meet to evaluate the submitted dissertation through asking questions and receiving answers from the candidate. A final assessment is made and grade and corrections are assigned. During the viva voce, the candidate presents a concise summary of their dissertation. The English Department at Algiers 2 University provides the supervisees with the Oral Presentation Outline (see Appendix C) which contains the details of the oral defence process. The presentation is followed by a questioning session by the examiners who test and assess the candidate's knowledge, critical thinking abilities, besides the validity of their research findings and the ability to defend their research outcomes (Taylor & Beasley, 2010). Knight et al. (2018) argue that this process inherently causes stress to the candidates. In this study's context, the administration provides the Viva Voce Examination Guidelines in the form of a document handed to the supervisors and communicated to the supervisees. This document ensures the smooth running of the presentation and the process of examination (see Appendix D). The successful completion of the viva voce validates the candidate's research efforts, topic mastery and scholarly contribution and achievements within the academic community. However, the viva voce does not mark the end of the supervision process; instead it is followed by another step which involves the final administrative submission of dissertation.

2.6.8 Post- Viva Voce

Following the viva voce (the oral defence), the post-defence phase focuses on addressing any identified corrections or revisions to the dissertation before its final submission. This stage is indispensable as it ensures that the dissertation meets the standards and expectations outlined by the examining panel. Upon the completion of the viva voce, the examiners typically provide feedback and suggestions for corrections or revisions to the dissertation (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021). These may include clarifications, additional analysis of findings, or adjustments to theoretical

frameworks. The supervisors play an instrumental role during this phase by guiding their supervisees through the revision process and offering expertise and support to address the panel's feedback effectively (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021). The supervisors and their candidates collaborate closely to ensure that all the corrections are addressed comprehensively and in line with academic standards. Once the revision is completed, the final version of the dissertation is prepared for submission to the academic institution.

It is undeniable that flexibility, regular feedback and support, and ongoing evaluation are indispensable elements across all the stages/steps (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021, de Kleijn et al., 2013) of the Master supervision framework. These components ensure that the supervision process remains responsive to the evolving needs of both the supervisee and the research project. Overall, this eight-step theoretical framework of the supervision process at Master Level (as already illustrated in figure 2.1) provides an overview about the necessary steps to be followed during the supervisory experience to ensure a structured successful process. These steps are logically interrelated and each step is detailed in terms of the elements it encompasses to ensure a rigorous and comprehensive framework to guide the supervisees and their supervisors throughout the entire process.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter reviewed and discussed, in the first section, the major factors that affect the supervision process, namely contingency factors, perceptions and supervisor-supervisee relationship. Within the following section, students' perceptions and practices were focused on. The chapter also highlighted key challenges that often hinder the supervision process and examined studies related to the research problem. This review highlighted the need for a theoretically sound framework for supervision at Master level; therefore, the final section introduced the theoretical framework. The latter is an eight-step model adapted from existing literature on PhD supervision to fit Master level supervision which serves as a foundation on which the current research is built.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we reviewed the existing literature relevant to our study. As noted, there is a notable scarcity of research on the supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process at an international level. Particularly in the Algerian context, we found no studies addressing this issue. This gap in the literature sparked our interest and guided our focus towards exploring the perceptions and practices of Algerian Master's students, specifically at the English Department of Algiers 2 University, during their supervision process. This chapter aims at providing an overview of the research paradigm employed, the research setting, participants, and data collection methods. It also outlines the rationale behind the participants' selection and the choice of the research tools and details the data gathering and analysis procedures. Finally, the last two sections of this chapter will discuss the reliability and the validity of our research findings and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Objectives and Questions

The main purpose of reviewing the relevant literature was to explore Master supervisees' perceptions and practices during the dissertation supervision process in the different frameworks. We focused specifically on illustrating how these frameworks were not initially targeting Master level, yet served as the foundation upon which we developed our adapted framework used in our study. We believe that this framework provides an approach to the Master supervision. The framework informed the choice of the research questions and objectives directly addressing key aspects of the research process. Each component of the framework, from finding the right supervisor to the post-viva voce phase, aligns with the need to understand the supervisees' perceptions, practices, and the relationship between them in real contexts.

In our exploration of previous studies (Chapter 1, section 2.5), our goal was to highlight significant limitations, thereby identify the research gaps and emphasize the necessity for further investigation into the areas which were overlooked in those studies. We also pointed out that while the previous studies primarily focused on

practices, variables as perceptions and the supervision process were largely ignored despite their importance. Accordingly, the following objectives are established.

Our initial aim is to explore the Master supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process, employing diverse data collection instruments detailed in section 2.4. Our focus will be strictly on investigating perceptions pertaining specifically to the steps involved in the supervision process. Any other perceptions outside of this scope such as: their academic performance, personal motivations and the influence of gender or age will not be addressed in this study.

Our second objective is to examine the practices the supervisees enact during the dissertation supervision process. In the theoretical chapter, we highlighted the scarcity of studies (only three have been conducted) which investigate the skills and roles the supervisees demonstrate in this context. Yet, no study detailed the actionable part of practices.

In the theoretical chapters, we highlighted the dearth of research addressing the dichotomy perceptions- practices in the supervision process at Master level. To attain this objective, the following three research questions are generated:

- **Research question 01:** What are Master supervisees' perceptions about the supervision process?
- **Research question 02:** What are Master supervisees' practices in the supervision process?
- **Research question 03:** What is the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions about supervision and their practices in real contexts?

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts an interpretive paradigm based on the belief that reality is context-sensitive. Ontologically, it assumes a relativist stance shaped by the supervisees' unique experience within the supervision process. Epistemologically, it aligns with constructivism as data is gained through the interaction between the

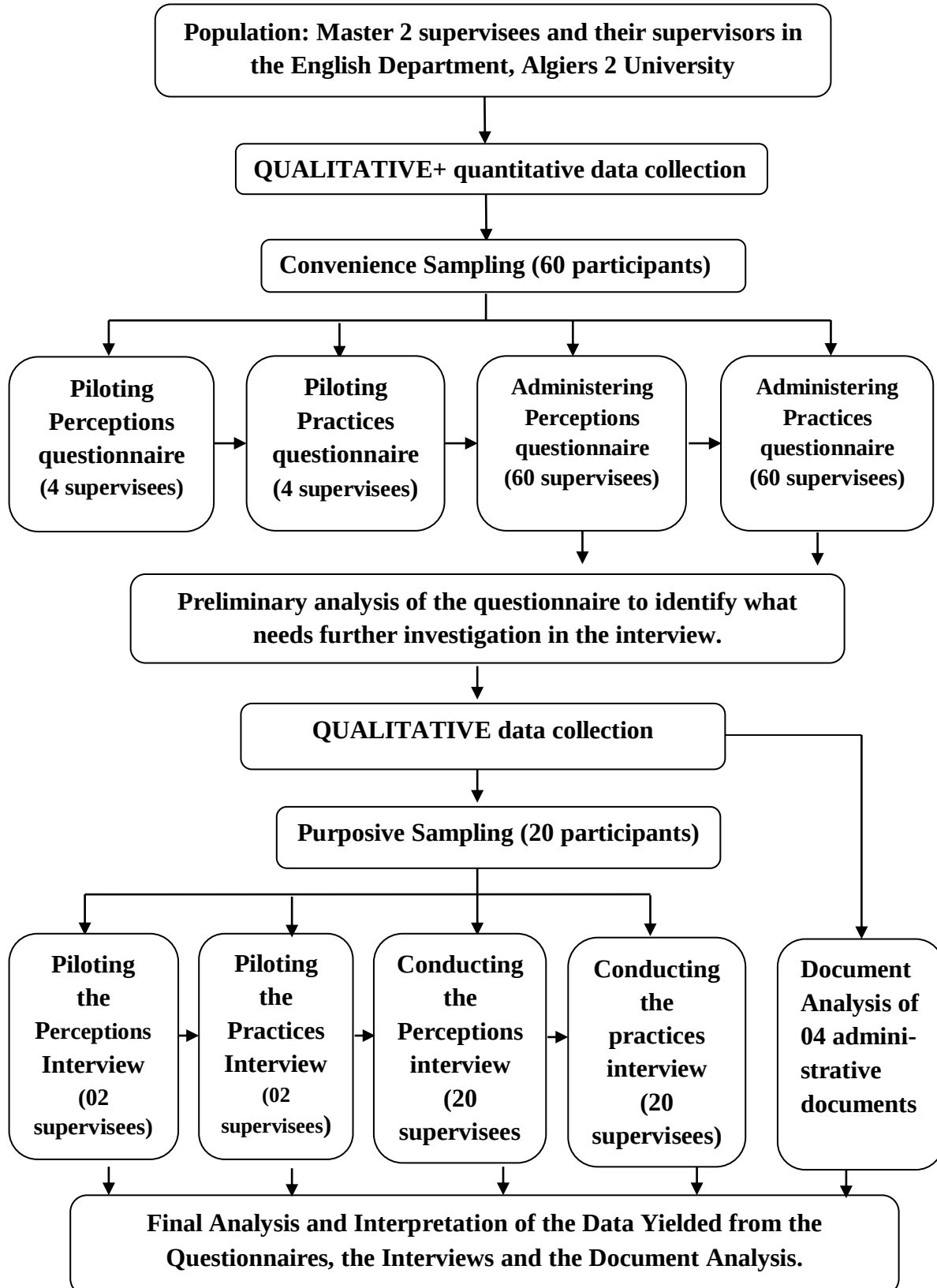
researcher and the participants. The research design for this study is crafted in alignment with the Master supervision framework (Figure 2.2) which provided a structured approach to understanding and enhancing the supervision process. Informed by this framework, the choice was made to employ a case study alongside an exploratory concurrent nested design, integrating questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. This methodological framework was selected to systematically explore and analyze the Master supervisees' perceptions and practices throughout their academic journey.

The primary objective of this study is to examine how the Master students perceive and engage in the dissertation supervision process, particularly focusing on the interplay between these perceptions and their actual practices. By employing a case study methodology, the research aims to offer a detailed portrait of this phenomenon within a specific educational context (Cohen et al., 2007; Yin, 2009; Taherdoost, 2021). Case studies in education typically delve into the experiences of teachers, students, or small groups such as classes to explore the individuals' dynamics within distinct linguistic, social, or educational frameworks (Yin, 2009). Ultimately, this approach will provide insights into the nuanced interactions and outcomes of the dissertation supervision process among Master students. Furthermore, the research employs an exploratory concurrent-nested, also called embedded design. This concurrent design is characterized by an emphasis on qualitative inquiry as the primary approach over quantitative methods. It involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, facilitating the comparison, contrast, and triangulation of the findings. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) referred to this qualitatively-driven mixed methods approach as "QUAL + quan". According to them, a key advantage of this design is that it enables the researchers to leverage their familiarity with a dominant research method, minimizing the need to extensively develop expertise in less familiar methods. Benbellal (2022) generated a schematic figure to illustrate the exploratory concurrent nested design in her study; we adapted it to our study (Figure 2.2). Accordingly, the present study employs qualitatively-driven research tools which are: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

Figure 3.1

The Research Design

Exploratory Concurrent-nested Design



The quantitative dimension was employed as a “supplementary component” (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017, p. 119), exclusively encompassing the supervisees’ perceptions and practices questionnaires. Four types of closed-ended questions namely: dichotomous, multiple choice, Likert-scale and semantic differential were employed to collect quantitative data. These inquiries were designed to excel the general perceptions of supervisees and their practices in the supervision process and to compare them. Regarding the qualitative (predominant) data, it was gathered through the semi-structured interviews, the document analysis and the incorporation of open-ended questions in the questionnaires. The purpose of including open-ended questions in the questionnaires is to elicit detailed and nuanced responses from the participants to gain a profound exploration of their experiences and insights. The questions of the semi-structured interviews aim to delve into the participants’ responses to the closed-ended items from the questionnaires, providing detailed exploration and elaboration on the themes derived from the close-ended responses.

Moreover, the study investigates the perceptions and practices of the Master supervisees building upon the foundational insights derived from the literature review. Concurrently, the assessment of supervisees’ practices aligns with the theoretical underpinnings discussed in section 2.3.2 which elucidates the essential supervision skills expected from supervisees during each of the supervision process steps. Hence, the study aims to discern the extent to which the supervisees’ perceptions inform their practices and whether the practices mirror the supervisees’ perceptions. This approach thereby may contribute to an understanding of the dynamics inherent in the supervisory process within Master’s programs.

3.3 Research Setting and Participants

This research took place within the English Department at Algiers 2 University, where the researchers are affiliated. The target population consists of 371 supervisees majoring in Didactics within the same department at the end of the academic year 2023-2024. Kumar (2011) define a sample as a subset of a population, a representative portion which measurement allows drawing conclusions about the whole population as it is impractical to include all the participants who fit a particular research design,

rather it allows the researchers to gather data from a manageable subset. The sampling methods play a crucial role in enhancing the representativeness and generalizability of research findings. It is imperative to employ methods that minimize the margin of error and subjectivity, thereby improving the representativeness of the entire population (Kumar, 2011).

3.3.1 Choice of the Questionnaires Sample

Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling, Kumar (2011) argues that convenience sampling involves selecting the research participants based on accessibility rather than random selection. Convenience sampling has practical considerations and prioritizes the participants' availability due to the limitations of time and/or accessibility. In this study, the supervisees' perceptions are considered a suitable indicator of the supervision process that is inherently private, thus can be best evaluated by the supervisees themselves. Despite our awareness of the limitations of this type of sampling, its practicality and compatibility with the research objectives and nature (exploratory) allowed us to collect data efficiently within the available resources and timeframe. To overcome its limitations, the study uses triangulation.

Nevertheless, the issue of determining and/or justifying the appropriate number of the participants to be included remains a concern (Marshall et al., 2013). Several authors acknowledge the pragmatic necessity of estimating sample sizes (Guest et al., 2006). In case studies, the number of the respondents "included in a study can easily fall in the range of 25-50", the number depends also on "the complexity of your study topic and the depth of data collection from each unit" (Yin, 2011, p. 91). In light of these recommendations, we determined that distributing the questionnaire to 60 participants would sufficiently facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the discussed topic.

3.3.2 Choice of the Interview Sample

The primary objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, specifically focusing on the perceptions and

practices of English Language Master Supervisees in the dissertation supervision process. Therefore, we have opted for purposive, also called purposeful, sampling as the most appropriate sampling method. This approach is researcher-based as it involves his selection of participants who provide detailed and reliable information that will enhance the understanding of the issue at hand (Klenke, 2008). According to Kumar (2011), purposive sampling consists of the selection of participants to be used in a study based on the expected relevance of data in relation to the study's objectives questions. Neuman (2014) characterizes this sampling approach as highly beneficial in distinct situations, commonly applied in exploratory or field research.

Klenke (2008) argues that the significance of sample size varies between qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Quantitative studies prioritize the sample representativeness and inclusivity, whereas qualitative research targets a profound understanding of the problem and its contextual intricacies. Consequently, qualitative researchers often commence their studies without a predetermined sample size, as determining the ideal number of participants remains uncertain (Schneider et al., 2013). Nevertheless, some scholars (e.g., Marshall et al., 2013) argue that in qualitative research, the sample size adequacy can be determined by reaching saturation which is widely accepted as the criterion for achieving sufficient sample size. Kumar (2011) notes:

In qualitative research, as the main focus is to explore or describe a situation, issue, process or phenomenon, the question of sample size is less important. You usually collect data till you think you have reached saturation ... Once you think you are not getting much new data from your respondents, you stop collecting further information. Of course, the diversity or heterogeneity in what you are trying to find out about plays an important role in how fast you will reach saturation point. (p. 191)

As similar instances are encountered repeatedly, the researchers gain empirical assurance that the category has reached saturation. The saturation generally signifies reaching a stage of informational redundancy, where further data collection does not significantly enhance or contribute anything new to the study. Guest et al. (2006) raised a question about the number of the participants required to achieve saturation

and determine the appropriate sample size despite their acknowledgment that “it is virtually impossible to do so” (p. 61). Guest et al. (2006) in their study found that saturation occurred within the first twelve interviews. Bernard (2017) similarly recommended ranges of 10-20 and 20-30 participants, respectively, for qualitative interview studies. To ensure that the methodology used is grounded in established practices and theoretical frameworks relevant to qualitative inquiry, we depended on these suggestions and concluded that interviewing **20** participants would adequately achieve saturation and ensure a comprehensive grasp of the topic being studied.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The research questions were investigated using three instruments, through administering questionnaires, conducting interviews, and analyzing administrative supervision-related documents provided by the Department of English Language at Algiers 2 University. These instruments were chosen to ensure a comprehensive approach to gathering data on the research topic. In the pursuit of achieving validity and reliability in research, McNeill and Chapman (2005) and Creswell (2014) argue that the researchers employ a variety of data gathering tools (i.e., triangulation). Table 2.1 provides a detailed demonstration of the systematic approach and the research instruments employed to address the research questions.

Table 3.1

Research Aims and Instruments

Research Question	Aim	Research Instrument
What are Master supervisees' perceptions about the supervision process?	To investigate supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process	- Perceptions Questionnaire - Perceptions Interview - Document Analysis
What are Master supervisees' practices the supervision process?	To investigate supervisees' practices during the supervision process	- Practices Questionnaire - Practices Interview - Document Analysis
What is the relationship between supervisees' relationship	To investigate the relationship between	This relationship is inferential, it was examined

perceptions and practices supervisees' perceptions and using qualitative assessment about supervision process in practices. rather than numerical real contexts? analysis

The questionnaires and the interviews items were developed based on the framework discussed in section 2.6. Prior to the main data collection, both instruments were pilot-tested to evaluate item clarity, as further elaborated in the subsequent section.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires, as outlined by Taherdoost (2021) are fundamental instruments for collecting primary data from specific populations. They consist of a series of questions and response options designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative information efficiently, particularly useful when managing large study samples. According to Taherdoost (2021), questionnaires serve diverse purposes, predominantly for statistical data recording and collection as well as measuring variables such as behaviours, preferences, and factual information.

In the following section, the supervisees' perceptions and practices questionnaires are discussed in terms of the questions they include and the rationale behind each question.

3.4.1.1 Description of the Supervisees' Perception Questionnaire. The supervisees' perceptions questionnaire (see Appendix E) begins with a concise introduction outlining the study's objectives and inviting the participants to respond to the questions. This initial paragraph assures the participants that their responses will be strictly used for research purposes and guarantees their anonymity. The introduction concludes by expressing gratitude for the participants' cooperation.

Given the focus on the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process, we find it appropriate to organize the questionnaire into distinct sections corresponding to the various steps of the supervision process, as delineated in our proposed framework. Each section is dedicated to exploring specific aspects of the supervision journey. All

in all, the questionnaire contains 54 questions divided on 09 sections. This structured approach is designed to facilitate a comparative analysis across the different phases of the supervision process, thereby illuminating the varied perceptions held by the supervisees.

Section 01 is entitled “*General Information about the Supervision Journey*” and contains seven questions (**Q01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, and 07**). The first two questions inquire about the respondent’s gender and age, respectively. These demographic queries serve as preliminary information and are not directly relevant to the research aims but are included to examine the characteristics of the participants / sample to tap how representative it is. Question **03** aims to assess the respondents’ prior knowledge of the supervision process steps. Question **04** seeks to gauge the extent to which the participants are familiar with the sequential stages typically involved in the dissertation supervision. Question **05** explores the respondents’ difficulty they met during their experience of the dissertation supervision. Question **06** seeks to know the frequency of supervisory meetings and Question **07** asks about the average time spent in one supervisory session. Overall, the questions of this section intend to capture the respondents’ perceptions about the supervision journey in general.

Section 02, “*Finding the Right Supervisor,*” includes five questions (**Q 08, 09, 10, 11, and 12**). Question **08** is in the form of a table which contains several items aimed at understanding the importance of various factors in selecting a supervisor. The 11 items which probe the significance of factors such as chemistry with the supervisor, the supervisor’s relevant experience, shared visions, approachability, personality traits compatibility, work style alignment, professionalism, enthusiasm, curiosity about the respondent’s background, and the creation of a supportive atmosphere, collectively aim to elucidate the respondent’s perceptions about the importance of these factors. Question **09** attempts to uncover the supervisees’ perceptions of the way they are assigned supervisors (draw). Question **10** asks whether the supervisees accept to be assigned supervisors or would they have preferred to choose their own supervisors. Question **11** aims at discovering whether the supervisees encountered difficulties/challenges in working with their selected supervisor. Question **12** aims to

know the participants' perceived importance of a positive supervision relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee.

"Creating the Supervision Commitment Agreement" is the title of Section 03. It includes 07 questions (**Q 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19**) focused on the creation, implementation and impact of the Supervision Commitment Agreement in the supervision process. Question **13** assesses the perceived importance of this document; while Question **14** investigates the supervisees' perceptions of the elements that should be included within it. Question **15** investigates whether the supervisees participated in making the supervision commitment agreement. Additionally, Question **16** seeks to discover the supervisees' satisfaction with this document. Question **17** targets knowing the duties of the supervisees included within the working contract whereas Question **18** aims at revealing the supervisees satisfaction with their roles included within the supervision commitment agreement. Question **19** seeks to discover whether the supervisees faced hurdles in this step.

Section 04, *"Making the Research Proposal,"* features questions focused on the essential elements and the perceived importance of the research proposal in the supervision process. It contains six questions (**Q 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25**). Question **20** queries the participants on the importance of key elements included in the research proposal. Question **21** explores the advantages brought by the development of the research proposal in the supervision journey. Question **22** seeks to know if the supervisees met challenges in developing their research proposals. Questions **23** and **24** aim at exploring the supervisees' satisfaction with the assistance, assessment and feedback received from their supervisors during this stage. Question **25** investigates the supervisees' perceived satisfaction with the fulfilment of their duties during the development of their research proposals.

Section 05, *"Executing the Research,"* investigates the participants' perceptions about the practical steps involved in conducting their secondary research within the supervision framework. It includes 06 questions (**Q26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31**). Question **26** asks about the supervisees' familiarity with the main steps of secondary research in order to know which steps the participants consider essential, while

Question **27** aims at knowing whether they were flexible or strictly adhered to their suggested research proposals. Question **28** aims to explore whether the respondents faced challenges in executing the research. Additionally, Questions **29** and **30** seek to uncover the respondents' satisfaction with what they received from their supervisors in terms of: assistance, assessment and feedback successively. Question **31** intends to know whether they believe that they effectively performed their duties during this phase.

Section 06, "*Producing the Dissertation Text*," focuses on the participants' perceptions and engagement during the dissertation writing phase, it contains 04 questions (**Q32, 33, 34, and 35**). Question **32** assesses the participants' subjective evaluation of the dissertation writing process whether it was challenging for them or no. Questions **33** and **34** explore the supervisees' perceptions, sequentially, about the assistance, assessment and feedback, provided by the supervisor whereas Question **35** seeks to know the participants' critical evaluation of the fulfilment of their duties.

Section 07, "*Refining the Dissertation and Preparing the Viva Voce*," addresses the refinement process and preparation for the viva voce examination. It contains 09 questions (**Q 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44**). Question **36** seeks to explore if the supervisees faced any challenges in refining their dissertations. Question **37** aims at delving into the participants' views of the supervisors' feedback. Questions **38** and **39** intend to explore the satisfaction of the respondents towards the supervisors' assistance, assessment and feedback during the phase of refining the dissertation. On the other hand, Question **40** targets investigating whether the participants encountered difficulties in preparing for their viva voce. Question **41** aims at delving into the supervisees' perceptions about the importance of the supervisors' feedback during the preparation stage. Question **42** inquires about the respondents' satisfaction with the assistance provided by their supervisors. Besides, Question **43** seeks to investigate the supervisees' perceived ideas about the importance of this preparatory stage while Question **44** aims at knowing whether the participants are satisfied with their performances.

Section 08, “*Viva Voce*,” focuses on the participants’ expectations and concerns regarding the viva voce examination, it contains 06 questions (**Q45, 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50**). Question **45** aims at knowing if the supervisees faced any challenges during the viva voce. Question **46** explores the participants’ expectations and preparedness regarding the types of questions they anticipate during the viva voce. Question **47** investigates any concerns the participants had about viva voce examination process. Question **48** and **49** seek to know the supervisees’ satisfaction with their supervisors’ roles and the support they received and their satisfaction with the duties they enacted during this critical phase respectively. Question **50** seeks to know if the respondents perceived the viva voce as beneficial.

Section 09, “*Post-viva Voce*,” examines the participants’ perspectives on the impact of the viva voce on their final version of the dissertation; it contains 04 questions (**Q 51, 52, 53, and 54**). Question **51** aims to know if the respondents introduced the required corrections discussed during the viva voce. Question **52** seeks to know whether the supervisees believe they adequately fulfilled their duties as supervisees after the viva voce while Question **53** seeks to reveal whether the supervisees faced any administrative procedures challenges. Lastly, Question **54** aims to explore the supervisees’ perceptions about the influence of the viva voce on the final dissertation.

3.4.1.2 Description of the Supervisees’ Practices Questionnaire. Just like the supervisees’ perceptions questionnaire, the supervisees’ practices questionnaire opens with an introductory paragraph which indicates the objectives of the study. This introduction invites the participants to respond to the questions and reassures them the anonymity and confidentiality of data as the answers they provide gets to be used exclusively for research purposes. The introductory paragraph concludes with an expression of appreciation for the supervisees’ participation.

Contrary to the supervisees’ perceptions questionnaire, this questionnaire (see Appendix F) is not divided into section; rather it presents the questions in one continuous format. The reason behind this is to be straightforward and maintain focus and flow through the questions and to enable the respondents to provide more

integrated and holistic answers. The entire questionnaire contains 26 questions tackling the supervisees' practices and skills employed during the supervision process steps.

Question **01** aims at knowing the skills used by the respondents in each of the supervision process steps. Question **02** seeks to know the roles played by the supervisees during each of the supervision process steps. Moving to Question **03** which intends to know what the supervisees did during the first meeting with their supervisors while Question **04** seeks to investigate the supervisees' satisfaction with their performance during the first meeting.

The purpose of Questions **05, 06, 07** and **08** is to reveal the roles the supervisees played and the practices they enacted in the creation of the supervision commitment agreement, the development of the research proposal, the execution of the research as well as the writing and the refinement of the dissertation respectively. Question **09** intends to know whether the supervisees referred to their colleagues and/or other supervisors during the refining stage to enhance their dissertation before submission. This question is followed by Question **10** which is addressed only to the supervisees who confirmed consulting others, this follow up question seeks know to whether they ask for the supervisors' permission before doing so.

Question **11** asks the supervisees about the role they played and practices they enacted during the preparation for the viva voce whereas Question **12** intends to know whether the supervisees referred to their colleagues and/or other supervisors during the preparatory stage to enhance their performance before the viva voce. This question has Question **13** as a follow up question, addressed to the supervisees who confirmed that they do consult others, in which they are asked whether they consulted their supervisors before doing so. Additionally, Questions **14** and **15** aim at exploring the roles the supervisees played and the practices they enacted during and after the viva voce successively.

Question **16** asks the supervisees whether they adhered to the ethical skills throughout the whole supervision process. This question is followed by Question **17**

asking the respondents to explain how they did so. Question **18** investigates whether the respondents managed the time and deadlines well throughout the entire supervision journey. Question **19** seeks to know the means through which the supervisees kept track of the supervisors' input and feedback provided during the supervisory meetings and throughout the supervision process. Question **20** inquires about supervisees' use of ICTs skills. This question is ensued by Question **21** asking to justify their answer.

Question **22** seeks to know the supervisees' frequency and initiative in sending their works to the supervisors whereas Question **23** aims at shedding light of the practices the supervisees employed to overcome the challenges they encountered within the supervision process. Question **24** seeks to know the supervisees' frequency in incorporating and taking into consideration the supervisors' feedback. Lastly, Question **25** asks the supervisees about their satisfaction with their performance throughout the whole supervision process whereas Question **26** asks the participants about the actions/ practices they would do differently in case of dissatisfaction.

3.4.1.3 Types of Questions Used in the Questionnaires. Both questionnaires consist of a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. For the closed-ended category, it includes three types of questions: dichotomous questions, Multiple Choice Questions and rating scales questions.

- **Dichotomous Questions:** these questions take only one answer between two exclusive options. The respondents are required to select the one answer that subjectively reflects their situation (e.g., yes/no questions, male/female gender).
- **Multiple Choice Questions:** these questions, also known as MCQs, present a set of options that can be selected. The participants select one or more appropriate answer (s) from the alternatives provided.
- **Rating Scale Questions:** these questions, also referred to as Likert scale, are used to elicit and measure the participants' opinions, attitudes and perceptions about the topic under research. The respondents are provided with a continuum of response categories on which they position their

stance according to their situation. Particularly, in the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire, the supervisees were required to identify:

- a- The level of difficulty:** 1. Very difficult. 2. Difficult. 3. Somewhat difficult. 4. easy
- b- The level of familiarity:** 1= Unfamiliar, 2= Slightly familiar, 3= moderately familiar, 4= very familiar, 5= extremely familiar
- c- The level of importance:** 1 = Not Important At All, 2= Slightly Important, 3= Neutral, 4= Important, 5= highly important
- d- Frequency:** (1. Always. 2. Often. 3. Sometimes. 4. Rarely)

As for the open-ended category, the participants are not provided with any options; rather they are required to rely on their thoughts, perceptions and experiences to produce an answer that best describe and reflect them. Details about the number of each category are demonstrated in the following table:

Table 3.2

Number and Types of Questions Used in the Questionnaires

Items	Closed-ended Questions			Open-ended Questions
	<i>Dichotomous</i>	<i>MCQs</i>	<i>Rating scale</i>	
Perceptions Questionnaire	Qs: 01, 02, 03, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53	Qs: 14, 37	Qs: 04, 05, 06, 08, 20, 26	Qs: 07, 17, 46, 47, 51, 54
Practices Questionnaire	Qs: 04, 09, 10, 12, 13, 16, 20, 25	Qs: 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 11, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23	Qs: 24	Qs: 07, 14, 17, 21, 26

3.4.2 Follow- up Interviews

Interviews represent one of the most demanding yet rewarding methods of data collection. They necessitate personal sensitivity, adaptability, and adherence to the

interview's structural framework. Unlike questionnaires, which gather data indirectly, interviews involve direct interaction where questions are posed and responses are collected firsthand.

Bernard (2017) state that effective interviews typically involve a combination of carefully prepared questions, follow-up queries, and probing questions. Therefore, this research uses semi-structured interviews to enable the research to gain insights based on the interviewees' answers. He argues that the semi-structured interview is an exploratory method as it is guided by pre-established and structured questions, yet it is flexible and still allows the researcher to delve deeply into the subject for further discovery through the use of unstructured follow up questions. According to Taherdoost (2021):

Semi-structured interviews are formal and are conducted based on a guide. The interviewers ask questions considering the guidance; however, when researchers or interviewers need extra information, they can continue the conversation based on the questions provided ahead of time.... it is an appropriate choice when you do not have the chance of interviewing with individuals more than once and you should gather clear, comparable, and reliable qualitative data in the first meeting. (pp. 18-19)

In the following section, the supervisees' perceptions and practices semi-structured interviews are outlined. The discussion focuses on the questions included within each of the interviews as well as the rationale behind the inclusion.

3.4.2.1 Description of the Supervisees' Perceptions Interview. After distributing the questionnaires, we determined it would be beneficial to conduct semi-structured follow-up interviews with the supervisees as the questionnaire did not contain all the questions which should have been included due to its length. As shows appendix E, most of the questionnaire questions were dichotomous (yes/no) questions (e.g., Q 10, 19, 28, 33, 49, 53) and some were rating scale questions (e.g., Q 4, 8, 20, 26) which require follow-up questions to provide justification (e.g., Q34) or explanation (e.g., Q39). The important questions could not be effectively addressed without the inclusion of open ended questions and extended probing. However, open

ended questions (e.g., Q7, 17, 46, 47, 51, 54) were already numerous, it has been decided to let them for the interview.

The interview was designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to elaborate on the topic in greater detail beyond what was captured in the questionnaires. Specifically, the goal of this interview is to supplement the questionnaire findings and enable the supervisees to expand upon their responses, this offers a more holistic understanding of the supervisees' perceptions of the various facets of their supervision journey. In essence, the interview consists of 14 open-ended questions (see Appendix H).

Question **01** aims at understanding the supervisees' satisfaction regarding their supervisor's assistance, support, assessment and feedback throughout the supervision process. Question **02** seeks to delve into the supervisees' thoughts about what could be done differently to enhance the supervision experience they had. Following this, Question **03** aims to uncover the supervisees' perceived thoughts about the relationship they had with their supervisors. Subsequently, Question **04** focuses on eliciting the supervisees suggested improvements to build and maintain a positive relationship.

Question **05** seeks to dig into the supervisees' perspectives on the function and significance of establishing a supervision commitment agreement or a working agreement contract while Question **06** investigates the respondents' contribution into the development of such a document. Building on this, Question **07** explores the supervisees' perspectives on the function of the research proposal while Question **08** seeks to identify the informants' perceived necessity of the supervisors' feedback during this particular stage of the supervision process. Question **09** delves into the interviewees' approach to organizing their thoughts and preparing responses to potential viva voce examination.

Moving forward, Question **10** captures the supervisees' detailed thoughts about seeking help from their colleagues and other supervisors. Question **11** seeks to explore the supervisees' perceptions about the advantages brought by the preparation for the

viva voce. Question **12** seeks to investigate the administrative challenges that faced the supervisees. Question **13** aims at discovering the supervisees' subjective evaluation of the roles they played in the different stages of the supervision process. Lastly, Question **14** aims at comparing the interviewees' supervisory experience and their initial perceptions and expectations.

3.4.2.2 Description of the Supervisees' Practices Interview. Just like the supervisees' perceptions interview, the supervisees' practices interview sought to provide the participants with an opportunity to discuss the topic in more depth than what was covered in the questionnaire. As indicates appendix F, most of the questions included within the practices questionnaire were MCQs (**Qs:** 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 11, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23) and some were dichotomous (**Qs:** 04, 09, 10, 12, 13, 16, 20, 25) which limited the respondents' ability to provide detailed responses or elaborate on their views regarding their practices. Therefore, the opportunity to delve into the practices and their associated challenges was reserved for this interview (see Appendix I). The interview includes 16 open-ended questions organised in a systematic way to tackle the interviewees' enacted practices during the different phases of the supervision process.

Question **01** aims at exploring the challenges the supervisees encountered in working with their supervisors while Question **02** aims at revealing the strategies/skills the supervisees employed to overcome these challenges. Similarly, the purpose of Questions **03** is to delve into the difficulties the supervisees faced when they made the research proposal while Question **04** focuses on uncovering the strategies or skills the supervisees used to address and overcome these challenges.

The aim of Question **05** is to understand the specific strategies, techniques, and processes the supervisees employed in conducting their study, including any practical examples or illustrations that can clarify their approach. Question **06** intends to understand the obstacles that arose during the research process and to decipher their nature while Question **07** seeks to explore the strategies, practices and skills the informants employed to address and overcome the challenges identified in the previous question.

The objective of Question **08** is to uncover the interviewees' practical steps involved in writing their dissertations, including any detailed examples or illustrations of their approach. Questions **09** and **10** seek to unveil the challenges they encountered during the writing and the refinement stages of their dissertation and the strategies or skills they applied to effectively overcome those challenges respectively.

Question **11** intends to gain insight into the specific methods, strategies, and practices the supervisees employed in preparing for the viva voce, including any detailed examples or illustrations of their preparation approach. Question **11** seeks to identify and understand the difficulties or obstacles the informants encountered before the viva voce, during the viva voce examination and after it whereas Question **13** aims at exploring the techniques, strategies, or skills the supervisees applied to effectively address and overcome the challenges they faced throughout the different phases of the viva voce.

Question **14** seeks to understand how the supervisees responded to/ integrated the feedback they received from their supervisors during the supervision process; including the strategies they used to apply this feedback effectively. Question **15** intends to gain insights about the supervisees' self-assessment of their overall performance during the supervision process. Lastly, the purpose of Question **16** is to identify the specific skills the interviewees found needed most and discovered to be essential for improving their performance during the supervision process, and how these skills contributed to their overall success.

3.4.2.3 Types of Questions Used in the Interviews. Regarding the types of questions, as already stated, our semi-structured interviews used two types of open-ended questions: structured and unstructured questions. The structured questions refer to the core questions which are focused on the main topic and prepared by the interviewer beforehand. Akerlind (2005a) indicates that structured questions involve two categories: contextual questions and primary questions.

- a. Contextual questions:* these are initial questions designed with the aim of cultivating a conversational tone and to foster a comfortable

environment that encourages genuine and candid dialogue (e.g., How are you feeling after finally submitting your dissertation?). These questions do not only help to build rapport but also pave the way for deeper and more insightful discussions as the interview progresses.

- b. *Primary questions:*** these crucial questions reflect the foundation of the research; they are generated to elicit focused and deep insights which yield critical data (eg., Could you describe the approach you used in executing the research or what are the challenges you faced during the supervision process and what strategies/skills did you use to overcome them).

The unstructured follow-up questions are questions which were not planned; rather they emerged based on the interviewees' responses spontaneously, such as: 'could you provide me with an example?' or 'could you provide more details'. The flexibility unstructured follow-up questions have makes them of considerable importance and, in some instances, may be more critical than the initial structured questions, in this regard Akerlind (2005a) reports that:

In many cases, the follow up questions are more important in eliciting underlying meanings than the pre-determined questions. However, the aim at all times is to provide opportunities for the interviewees to reveal their current experience of the phenomenon as fully as possible without the interviewer, introducing any new aspects not previously mentioned by them (except for the planned introduction of topics according to the research design.(Akerlind 2005a, p.106-107)

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Besides the questionnaires and interviews, we also analysed some documents related to the supervision process which were provided by the English Department to Master 2 students majoring in Didactics. Precisely, we used document analysis of the Supervision Commitment Agreement, General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines, Viva Voce Examination Guidelines and Oral Presentation Outline to triangulate data and verify the practicality of the documents used by the supervisees

and their supervisors in effectively fulfilling the requirements of the supervision process which were detailed in our suggested framework.

Document analysis consists of the process of critically reading a document to gather data. Cohen et al. (2007) define document analysis as a valuable research tool which consists of analyzing various types of written documents such as articles, and reports. Document analysis serves as a vital research method that goes beyond mere reading. It involves a structured and systematic approach to examining both printed and electronic materials to extract meaningful data. By interpreting these documents, the researchers can uncover insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of their research topic, ultimately aiding in the development of empirical knowledge in their fields.

After collecting data through the questionnaires and the interviews, we analysed the supervision-related documents which were provided by the administration in the English Department at Algiers2 University. There are four documents in total, the first one is the Supervision Commitment Agreement, the second is the General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines, the third is the Viva Voce Examination Guidelines, and the last one is the Oral Presentation Outline.

The analysis of these documents allowed us to complement and triangulate the data gathered through the questionnaires and the interviews. Furthermore, the analysis of these formal administrative documents enabled us to situate the supervisees' responses about the supervision process into a greater context by delving into the department's guidelines and policies that influence their perceptions and inform their practices. Furthermore, it facilitated the verification of the extent to which the supervisees reported responses about their perceptions and practices in the supervision process comply with what is officially prescribed. It also served as a comparative tool to verify the department's documents against the international academic standards.

Following the design of the research instruments and outlining the rationale behind their use and content, the discussion shifts now towards the procedures of

administering them. The following section is devoted to the field work and the use of these instruments in the research setting.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

To attain the study's objectives and answer the research questions, to gather the data needed about the supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process were followed. The data was first collected through the questionnaires, which were distributed to gather general information from the participants about their perceptions and practices in the supervision process. Each supervisee's response to the perceptions questionnaire was carefully stored alongside their corresponding response to the practices questionnaire, ensuring that the data remained accurately matched for subsequent analysis. After that, interviews were conducted to provide rich and detailed data about the supervisees' perceptions and practices. Later, document analysis of the documents related to the supervision process, provided by the English Department at Algiers 2 University, was conducted to gain deeper insights about the topic under discussion. In the following section, the procedures involved in data collection are presented.

3.5.1 The Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices Questionnaires

Despite its length (07 pages long), the students' perceptions questionnaire was not divided, it was administered all at once, for two main reasons. The first is related to the type of questions included as most of the questions are closed-ended questions (yes/no = **Qs** 01, 02, 03, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 50, 52, 5 or to choose one answer = **Qs** 04, 05, 06, 08, 14, 20, 26, 37). The second reason is related to the participants, as we had another questionnaire related to their practices to be filled. Therefore, we wanted to make sure that they fill both questionnaires without them getting the feeling that they answered three questionnaires. The supervisees' perceptions questionnaire was administered after the graduation of the participants. The perceptions questionnaire was administered to 75 supervisees. However, 60 answers were received after one week. The supervisees' practices questionnaire is

shorter (26 items) than the perceptions' questionnaire. It was administered directly after the first one, it was administered to the same 60 supervisees and all the answers were received after a few days.

Both questionnaires were systematically coded to ensure that each participant's responses could be accurately linked across both instruments. Specifically, a unique identifier was assigned to each participant, which was then recorded on both questionnaires. This method allows for the precise matching and integration of the individual responses and facilitates the analysis of the relationship between each supervisee's perceptions and their practices.

3.5.2 The Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices Interviews

Prior to conducting the interviews, a consent form (see Appendix G) was sent to the supervisees willing to be interviewed. This document sought to serve two major purposes; the first was to incite and invite the target supervisees to take part in the interview while the second was to ensure that they consented to the terms of participation and understood the objective behind the study. The form ensured that only the researcher had access to their answers; thus, the data analyzed would be treated confidentially and anonymously.

Following the questionnaires administration (which took 12 days) and the consent procedures, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the supervisees to complement the data obtained from the questionnaires. Each of the interviewees scheduled the interview timing according to their availability. On average, each interview lasted from 45 minutes to 1h. The perceptions interview was conducted first; when all the interviewees shared their perceptions about the supervision process, the practices interview followed, i.e., each interviewee participated in two interviews.

3.5.3 Document Analysis

The document analysis included an initial superficial review (skimming) of the documents, followed by a detailed examination of the content and the elements

discussed in each document (scanning), and concluded with the interpretation of the analyzed data in accordance with the content and elements included within the supervision framework (Figure 2.1). This iterative approach integrates aspects of both content and thematic analysis. Content analysis involves categorizing the information which occurred in the four administrative documents according to the steps and components of the supervision process.

3.5.4 *The Pilot Study*

Pre-testing the research instruments at a small-scale prior to carrying out the research with the real sample is called Piloting. Pilot studies are small feasibility studies carried out to check the different aspects of the research tools planned for the main research. Ismail and Kenchin (2018) posit that:

A pilot study is crucial for a well-planned study design. Its benefits are unarguably and essential for both qualitative and quantitative researchers, if, that is, the PS has a well-defined set of aims and objectives to ensure methodological rigour and scientific validity. (p. 15)

Piloting is a validating means which ensures the reliability of the tools and enables the researchers to negate the confusing items within the research instruments. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that piloting the questionnaires serves several functions such as: ensuring all the questions and instructions as well as layout are clear, gaining feedback on the alignment between the items included and the research objectives, excluding any confusion or wording-related difficulties, spotting misunderstood items and identifying ill-constructed or non-completed items. Hence, the supervisees' perceptions and practices questionnaires, the supervisees' perceptions and practices interviews were piloted. The questionnaires were piloted with 04 supervisees whereas the interviews were piloted with 02; all the 06 supervisees belong to the sample. Their feedback was solicited as an attempt to check that the questionnaires and the interviews items are clear and do not cause any confusion or ambiguity in terms of wording, order, content, format and layout.

For the questionnaires, 03 of the supervisees highlighted some confusing items in the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire. Based on their remark, these items were refined before the administration of the questionnaire. In the version administered to them, **Q8** (the first question in section 2) was written as follows:

8- On a scale from 1 to 5, rate how important is each of the following items by ticking (✓) the right column: (1 = Not Important At All, 2= Slightly Important, 3= Neutral, 4= Important, 5= highly important)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
How important was it for you to have good chemistry with your supervisor?					
How important was it for your supervisor to have relevant experience in the field you're studying or working in?					
How important was it for your supervisor to share similar visions?					
How important was it for your supervisor to be approachable and supportive?					
How important was it to have compatible personality traits with your supervisor?					
How important was it to have a work style that aligns with your supervisor's for effective collaboration?					
How important was it for your supervisor to demonstrate professionalism in their appearance and demeanour?					
How important was it for you to have a supervisor who is enthusiastic to work with you?					
How important was it for the supervisor to demonstrate curiosity about your previous experiences and achievements?					
How important was it for the supervisor to inquire about your expectations and goals for the supervision process?					
How important was it for your supervisor to create a welcoming, friendly, and supportive atmosphere?					

As shows the table, items **2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11** in the table use 'how important was it for your supervisor to...' to start the statement. The 03 supervisees were confused in this question because they got the impression that the items tackle the importance of the criteria for the supervisors whereas the question intends to ask the supervisees about their perceptions of the criteria that are important to be in their supervisors. One supervisee suggested changing it to 'how important is it for you that your supervisors...' while another one recommended using 'how important is it for

supervisees that their supervisor...’ Consequently, we followed the first suggestion and revised the wording making it ‘How important is it for you that your supervisor...’ to enhance clarity and ensure that all the participants fully understood the questions. Following this modification, the table was updated as follows:

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
How important was it for you to have good chemistry with your supervisor?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor has relevant experience in the field you’re studying or working in?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor shares similar visions as yours?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor is approachable and supportive?					
How important was it for you to have compatible personality traits with your supervisor?					
How important was it for you to have a work style that aligns with your supervisor’s for effective collaboration?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor demonstrates professionalism in their appearance and demeanour?					
How important was it for you to have a supervisor who is enthusiastic to work with you?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor demonstrates curiosity about your previous experiences and achievements?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor inquires about your expectations and goals for the supervision process?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor creates a welcoming, friendly, and supportive atmosphere?					

For the interviews, both supervisees did not highlight any anomaly related to the questions included especially that the interviews were semi-structured; therefore, the interviews did not undergo any modification. We discuss in the following section the data analysis procedures.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

This section provides an overview of the processes, techniques, and methodologies and details the specific steps employed to examine and process the collected data and transform it from raw data into treated data. The various analytical approaches used are of two types: the analysis of qualitative data and the analysis of quantitative data. Each of them has its own analysis procedures.

3.6.1 Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data include the analysis on the open-ended questions in both questionnaires (the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process questionnaire and supervisees' practices in the supervision process questionnaire), both interviews (the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process interview and supervisees' practices in the supervision process interview) as well as the content of the four administrative documents (Supervision Commitment Agreement, General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines, Viva Voce Examination Guideline and Oral Presentation Outline).

Simons (2009) defines data analysis as “a formal inductive process of breaking down data into segments or data sets which can then be categorized, ordered and examined for connections, patterns, and propositions that seek to explain the data” (Simons, 2009, p.117). In this analysis phase, we followed Drever's (2003) three-stage process: data preparation, analysis and data summarizing for analyzing raw qualitative data.

In the first stage, data preparation, the raw data was organized into a manageable format. This step is crucial, as careful preparation allows for smoother analysis later on. This process aimed primarily at identifying and exploring the connections between the data sets. Although time-consuming, especially when dealing with unclear expressions, through preparation, we ensured that original information is retained as much as possible, avoiding any significant loss or distortion. When coding responses, participants' exact phrases such as ‘I felt like I was walking on eggshells’ were preserved within the thematic labels.

The second stage is the analysis, where the prepared data was coded, categorized, and reorganized to identify patterns related to the research questions and objectives. The data gathered from the open-ended questions underwent content analysis, where they get thematically organized based on common key concepts. For example, when several participants mentioned challenges related to motivation,

listening, empathy and understanding, their responses were grouped under a theme such as ‘insufficient emotional support’.

We started by coding then categorizing the answers provided by each participant in the perceptions questionnaire. Later on, the process was duplicated on the practices questionnaire. The responses of each participant on the perceptions questionnaire and practices questionnaire were kept together for subsequent analysis. Organizing data this way helped us track the source of specific information, linking it back to the original respondent or interview question.

For the interviews, the recorded data gathered were transcribed using professional transcribers. Drever (2003) posits that transcription consists of reproducing the participants’ spoken words in an interview into written text. This process started by transcribing verbatim into a written, readable and meaningful text. Later on, the transcripts gained from the supervisees’ perceptions and practices interviews were read carefully multiple times to be subject to the same coding and categorizing process. For example, responses reflecting a need for focused feedback or more structured guidance were coded under themes such as ‘vague feedback’ and ‘ineffective assistance and guidance’.

After determining the thematic categories in each questionnaire and interview, themes found in the perceptions questionnaire were compared to those found in the perceptions interview to determine whether the assertions made in relation to the phenomenon being discussed are aligned. Then, the same comparison procedures were applied to the practices questionnaire and interview in order to determine whether the reported practices and skills are compatible. This comparison between the data, which marks the final stage, aims at strengthening the findings’ validity by cross-checking them to detect similarities and discrepancies. This allows drawing conclusions about the alignment between the supervisees’ perceptions and their enacted practices in the supervision process.

As for the document analysis, the same analysis procedures were applied. Data was first thematically categorized (according to the content of each) and coded to

assess their effective applicability and practical compatibility with the supervision process steps and dynamics.

3.6.2 Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data comes from the different closed-ended questions included within the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and the supervisees' practices in the supervision process questionnaires. Ali (2021) argues that this analysis consists of statistical mechanism and descriptive statistics that allow the presentation of data in a quantitative and easily accessible form. Therefore, the responses obtained from the supervisees were subject to numerical conversion to percentages and were presented through tabulation for interpretation and discussion.

3.7 Discussing Trustworthiness of the Research

The process of assessing the quality, validity, and reliability of a research study is called checking the trustworthiness. This concept ensures that the findings of a study are accurate, consistent, and worthy of consideration by others (Creswell, 2014). Discussing trustworthiness in research is crucial because it provides the reader with confidence in the study's findings. By addressing these components in the following sections, we demonstrate that our study is methodologically sound and that the conclusions drawn are based on reliable and credible data.

3.7.1 Ensuring the Reliability of the Research

Kumar (2011) and Taherdoost (2016) believe that ensuring reliability is important as it refers to the consistency across the parts of a measuring instrument each time when replicated. There are various methods used for reliability test of tools, including test-retest, alternate forms and internal consistency. In this study, test-retest reliability which is considered the most common form of reliability check is used.

Kumar (2011), Cohen et al. (2007) and Taherdoost (2016) argue that a test-retest reliability method is a stability check which consists of administering the same tool of measurement to the same participants under the same conditions in two

different points of time to check whether the instrument yields the same results. In our research, stability was verified through the piloting procedures. The perceptions and practices questionnaires were piloted with 04 supervisees and the perceptions and practices interviews were pre-tested with 02 supervisees. This pilot study allowed comparing the responses of the respondents who took part in the pilot study with their responses in the main study. In doing so, we made sure that the duration between the pilot study and the main study was of appropriate length to prevent memory effect. Therefore, we estimated that 10 days was a convenient duration between the pilot study and the main one.

According to Kumar (2011), a measuring tool needs to be valid and reliable. Reliability is essential as it ensures the replication and consistency, yet it does not suffice alone. It must be paired with validity to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the results. Kumar (2011) defines validity as the measurement of what is targeted to be measured. Validity must cover different levels to be ensured.

3.7.2 Internal Validity through Triangulation

According to Creswell (2014), research triangulation enhances the reliability and the validity of the research findings. Essentially, triangulation aims to validate the results of a study. McNeill and Chapman (2005) contend that it provides a multifaceted perspective on the subject. Triangulation offers a comprehensive view by cross-checking and integrating various perspectives on the subject.

Research has showed that triangulation goes beyond merely including varied methods. According to Patton (2015) and Creswell (2014), triangulation in research encompasses five types: (a) data sources triangulation, which involves using different sources to validate results; (b) investigator triangulation, which includes multiple researchers to minimize bias; (c) methodological triangulation, employing various research methods; (d) theoretical triangulation, applying multiple theoretical perspectives; and (e) data analysis triangulation, utilizing diverse techniques for analyzing data.

Our study did not employ data sources triangulation, given that our data were exclusively collected from the supervisees. Additionally, investigator triangulation was not utilized, as the data collection and analysis were conducted by a single analyst. The study also did not incorporate theoretical triangulation, as it did not apply multiple theoretical perspectives in interpreting the data. Conversely, the study implemented methodological triangulation by integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, with the qualitative approach as the dominant, through the mixed methods approach and data analysis triangulation by applying two analytical techniques through numerical and thematic analysis.

3.7.2.1 Methodological Triangulation. According to Thurmond (2001), methodological triangulation is used synonymously and interchangeably with multi-method, mixed-method, or method triangulation. Patton (2015) highlights methodological triangulation as the use of multiple methods and/or tools in research to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings and to gain a more valid understanding of the research topic. It helps to corroborate the findings and reduce the potential biases or limitations of any single method or tool. This research attempted to fulfil the requirements of methodological triangulation through:

a) Mixed-methods Approach

As previously detailed in the research design (section 3.2), this research uses a concurrent-nested mixed-methods approach. Relying on a single approach only is not sufficient to reveal all the desired data as both quantitative and qualitative approaches have their drawbacks when used separately. The quantitative approach has a deficiency in yielding in-depth data and the qualitative approach lacks appropriate assessment criteria. As a result, this study employed a combination of both approaches.

b) Data Collection Instruments

As formerly elaborated in the discussion of the data collection instruments (section 3.4), this study gathered data by means of three different research tools: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. This triangulation

enabled us to mitigate the limitations of using a single data collection method, compare the results across different instruments, provide a more comprehensive and reliable analysis and thereby significantly enhance the validity of our findings.

3.7.2.2 Data Analysis Triangulation. Because the study triangulated two research methods and three research tools; the triangulation of data analysis procedures is an automatic outcome. The quantitative data gathered through the closed-ended questions included within the questionnaires use numerical analysis whereas the qualitative data collected through the open-ended questions within the questionnaires, the interviews' question and the document analysis use thematic analysis. Comparing the results gained from these different analyses ensures that the conclusions are valid and reliable.

3.7.3 Content Validity in the Questionnaires and the Interviews

Kumar (2011) and Creswell (2014) highlight that content validity is crucial for ensuring that the instrument fully encompasses the construct it intends to measure; thus, providing comprehensive assessment of the research variable. Content is assessed by evaluating the relevance and adequacy of the items in relation to the construct. Besides, Kumar (2011) and Cohen et al. (2007) and Taherdoost (2016) emphasize the importance of expert evaluation in content validity, which helps in confirming that the assessment tool is inclusive of all essential components of the construct.

3.7.3.1 The Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices Questionnaires. To ensure our questionnaires content validity; a thorough approach was employed in determining the elements to be investigated, as well as in designing the sequence and content of questions within the questionnaires (Appendices E and F). Each element was carefully selected to align with the specific objectives of the study and to systematically conform and be consistent with the framework developed based on the review on the literature. We ensured that the items comprehensively cover all the relevant aspects of the supervision process.

As already highlighted, expert evaluation plays a crucial role in assuring the content validity of an instrument and to confirm that the tool encompasses all the

critical elements of the construct being measured. Therefore, a review meeting with the supervisor was held to examine the items of the questionnaires and assess their relevance to the study's objectives and the literature review. This meeting yielded many revisions prior to finalizing and administering the final versions.

3.7.3.2 The Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices Interviews. To ensure our interviews' content validity, after finalizing and administering the questionnaires, we generated the interviews questions in relation to the framework based on the literature review while focusing on areas that required justification and deeper exploration beyond what could be captured through the questionnaires. This approach allowed us to cover the relevant aspects of the supervision process, providing a more nuanced understanding of the study's objectives. The interviews underwent the same review procedures as the questionnaires. A review meeting with the supervisor was conducted to evaluate the interview questions and their alignment with the questionnaires, the study's objectives and the literature review. This process led to multiple refinements of the interview questions, with many revisions before finalizing and conducting the interviews.

3.7.4 The Questionnaires' Face Validity

Face validity refers to the extent to which a test or measurement instrument appears to gauge what it is intended to measure based on subjective judgment. Kumar (2011) highlights its role in ensuring that the research instruments are scientifically sound and perceived as credible and relevant by all the parties involved in the research process. In this regard, Taherdoost (2016) states the following:

Face validity is the degree to which a measure appears to be related to a specific construct, in the judgment of non-experts such as test takers and representatives of the legal system. That is, a test has face validity if its content simply looks relevant to the person taking the test. It evaluates the appearance of the questionnaire in terms of feasibility, readability, consistency of style and formatting, and the clarity of the language used. (p. 29)

If a tool lacks face validity, the participants question its relevance or refuse to take part in it which undermines the quality of the data collected.

In ensuring our questionnaires' face validity, the supervisor offered valuable recommendations concerning the layout, the response formats for certain items in both questionnaires; she paid special attention to the length of the perceptions questionnaire and shortened it to its actual length. Additionally, piloting both questionnaires served as a crucial step in establishing their face validity. Both questionnaires were subject to a preliminary testing with four participants. This piloting allowed evaluating the clarity, the structure, response formats and wording of the items. As previously detailed in section 3.5.4., the feedback and suggestions received were thoughtfully considered and incorporated to refine and enhance the quality of the questionnaires.

3.7.5 Concurrent Validity

Taherdoost (2016) defines concurrent validity as a way to check if a new tool is measuring something accurately by comparing it to a proven one. Kumar (2011) stresses the importance of concurrent validity in ensuring that new research instruments or scales are accurate and reliable and highlight that concurrent validity involves comparing a new measure with an established one to ensure consistency and accuracy.

This research used the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire, the supervisees' perceptions interview, the supervisees' practices questionnaire and the supervisees' practices interview besides document analysis. It was essential to consider how well the results from the questionnaires align with those from the interviews. Therefore, the items and questions included within the questionnaires were closely related to the questions asked in the interviews. The questions of the supervisees' perceptions interview required details and elaboration for the questions used in the supervisees' perceptions questionnaires (see Appendices E and H). Similarly, the questions of the supervisees' practices interview required details and elaboration for the questions used in the supervisees' practices questionnaires (see Appendices F and I). Besides, there

was a need to consider how well the results of perceptions tools of each participant align with the results of practices tools of the same participant to draw relationships.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research involve ensuring that the study respects and protects the rights of the participants. This encompasses obtaining their informed consent, safeguarding their privacy, and reporting their responses and insights with integrity. Recent research highlights that ethical practices are essential not only for protecting individuals from harm but also for maintaining public trust in research. This study is designed and conducted with a strong commitment to ethical principles and standards.

Before initiating the research, the participants were contacted via Facebook and formally invited to participate. The researcher provided detailed information about the study's objectives, data collection instruments and procedures to ensure transparency and an informed participation. The participants were clearly informed that they were expected to provide answers that accurately reflect their personal perceptions and practices to enhance the reliability of the investigation.

The researcher specified that the data collected from the questionnaires would be utilized directly in the study, while the interviews data would be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Before conducting the interviews, the participants received consent forms to confirm their understanding and agreement with the terms of their involvement. Emphasis was placed on the commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, with assurance that access to the collected information would be restricted solely to the researcher. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Upon the completion of collecting data, we reiterated the commitment to confidentiality and anonymity. It was assured that all the interviews recordings would be securely destroyed following the submission of the dissertation. Furthermore, the researcher confirmed that she would provide the participants with the study's results,

fulfilling an ethical obligation to inform them of the outcomes and impact of their contributions.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter outlined the research design adopted to explore Master students' perceptions' and practices in the supervision process within the English Department at Algiers 2 University. Using a qualitative case study within an exploratory concurrent nested design, data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the analysis of institutional documents provided essential context for evaluating the alignment between supervisees' experiences and official supervision policies. The integration of these diverse methods supported triangulation and contributed to the reliability and validity of the findings.

**CHAPTER FOUR:
PRESENTATION
AND ANALYSIS
OF SUPERVISEES'
PERCEPTIONS
DATA**

Introduction

In chapter three, an overview of the study design, sample, research instruments, and the procedures followed for collecting and analysing data was provided. In this chapter, we present and analyze the findings from the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire, followed by the findings from the supervisees' perceptions interviews. By analyzing the qualitative insights from the questionnaires and interviews and the quantitative results from the questionnaires, this chapter aims at highlighting common themes and patterns of the way the supervision process is perceived.

4.1 Results of the Supervisees' Perceptions Questionnaire

As previously discussed in the research design chapter (section 3.4.1.1), the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire consists of 54 questions. These questions are systematically divided on 09 distinct sub-sections, each reflecting the supervisees' perceptions of a different aspect of the supervision process: general information about the supervision journey, finding the right supervisor, creating the supervision commitment agreement, making the research proposal, executing the research, producing the dissertation text, refining the dissertation and preparing the viva voce, viva voce and post-viva voce. The questionnaires were distributed to 60 Master supervisees majoring in Didactics; the respondents were selected through convenience sampling procedures. When the questionnaires were returned, each participant's questionnaire was given a code to facilitate subsequent analysis.

4.1.1 General Information about the Supervision Journey (Questions 01 - 07)

Q 01: Gender

Table 4.1*The Supervisees' Gender*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Male	18	30
b) Female	42	70

As reveals Table 4.1, the sample who participated in this study is not gender-balanced, with a notable majority of females comprising 70% of the participants, compared to 30% males.

Q 02: Age group**Table 4.2***The Supervisees' Age Group*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) 20 -25	54	90
b) 26 – 30	06	10
c) 31 - 35	00	00
d) +36	00	00

As indicates Table 4.2, the e majority of the participants (90%) fall within an average age range of 20 to 25 whereas only 10% are aged between 26 and 30.

As previously mentioned in the method chapter (section 3.4.1.1), the earlier questions related to the age and the gender of the supervisees who participated in the study were included as opening questions and were not intended to bring about any result to the present research.

Q 03: Were you informed about the supervision process in the Research Methodology course?

Table 4.3

The Supervision Process in the Research Methodology Course

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	53	88.3
b) No	07	11.7

The majority of the respondents (88.3%) confirm that they were informed about the supervision process in the Research Methodology course while seven supervisees (11.7%) reported that they were not well informed.

Q 04: From 1 to 5 which extent were you familiar with the following supervision process steps before starting your research? (1= Unfamiliar, 2= slightly familiar, 3= moderately familiar, 4= very familiar, 5= extremely familiar)

Table 4.4

The Supervisees' Familiarity with the Supervision Process Steps

Options	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Finding the right supervisor	00	00	00	00	03	05	07	11.7	50	83.3
Creating the supervision C A	55	91.7	05	8.3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Making the research proposal	00	00	12	20	24	40	10	16.7	14	23.3

Executing the research	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	60	100
Producing the text of the dissertation	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	60	100
Refining + preparing for the Viva voce	26	43.3	30	50	04	6.7	00	00	00	00
Viva Voce	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	60	100
Post-viva Voce	44	73.3	12	20	04	6.7	00	00	00	00

As indicates Table 4.4, all the participants were familiar, in varying degrees, with the importance of finding the right supervisor before starting their research. The majority of the supervisees (83.3%) were extremely familiar, 7 of them (11.7 %) were very familiar and 3 (05%) were moderately familiar of the significance of finding the right supervisor as a foundational step in the supervision process. Concerning the creation of the supervision commitment agreement, the supervisees provided varied responses. Except 05 participants (8.3%) who reported being slightly familiar the remaining 55participants (93.3%) asserted that they were unfamiliar with the document before they started the supervision process. As for the step related to making the research proposal, 12 respondents (20%) reported that they are slightly familiar with the step, 24 participants (40%) confirmed that they are moderately familiar with making the research proposal, 10 of them concurred that they were very familiar while 14 (23.3%) said they were extremely familiar with the step before starting the research process.

All the respondents unanimously (100%) affirmed that they were extremely familiar with the importance of executing the research and writing the dissertation text as critical elements in the supervision process before embarking on their research. When it comes to refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce, the supervisees reported varied responses. Half of the participants (50%) reported that they were slightly familiar with refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce as

important steps even before starting their research. 26 respondents (43.3%) reported that they were unfamiliar with this step whereas only 04 (6.7%) confirmed that they were familiar with this phase before starting the supervision process. The supervisees unanimously affirmed that they were familiar with the viva voce as an important step in the supervision process before they even started. Contrary to the post-viva voce phase where the vast majority of the respondents (73.3%) reported that they are unfamiliar with. 12 supervisees (20%) attested that they were slightly familiar with while only 04 participants (6.7%) stated that they were familiar with this stage as part of the supervision process.

Q 05: How did you find the dissertation supervision process?

Table 4.5

Difficulty in the Supervision Process

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Very difficult	09	15
b) Difficult	36	60
c) Somehow difficult	11	18.3
d) Easy	04	6.7

As unveils Table 4.5, the supervisees' perceptions about the difficulty of the supervision process diversify. The majority of the participants (60%) attested that they found the journey difficult. 11 participants (15%) reported that it was somehow difficult while 09 of them (15%) found the process very difficult. Contrary, only 04 participants (6.7%) affirmed that they found the supervision easy.

Q 06: How often did you meet your supervisor during the research supervision process?

Table 4.6*Frequency of Meeting the Supervisor*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Always	09	15
b) Often	35	58.4
c) Sometimes	14	23.3
d) Rarely	02	03.3

Regarding the frequency of meetings with the supervisors, table 4.6 shows that more than half of the supervisees (58.4%) reported that they held supervisory sessions often. 14 respondents (23.3%) said that sometimes they met their supervisors. 09 participants confirmed that they always met their supervisors whereas only 02 of them reported that they did not meet their supervisors at all.

Q 07: On average, how long did each supervision meeting last?**Table 4.7***Average Duration of Each Supervision Meeting*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Less than 30 mins	09	15
b) 30 mins – 1 hour	39	65
c) 1h – 1h30	07	11.7
d) + 1 hour	05	8.3

As shown in Table 4.7, the vast majority of the respondents (65%) reported that the average duration of their supervisory meetings lasts between 30 minutes and 1

hour. Other 09 participants (15%) attested that the supervision session used to take. Less than 30 minutes on average. 07 respondents (11.7%) confirmed that their meetings usually last between 1h and 1h30 while the remaining of the supervisees (8.3%) reported that, on average, they meet their supervisors for more than 01 hour.

4.1.2 Finding the Right Supervisor (Questions 08 - 12)

Q 08: How important is each of the following qualities to be in your supervisor? (1 = Not Important At All, 2= Slightly Important, 3= Neutral, 4= Important, 5= highly important)

Table 4.8

Importance of Key Qualities in a Supervisor

Options	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Chemistry	02	3.3	00	00	15	25	43	71.7	00	00
Experience	00	00	00	00	00	00	09	15	51	85
Similar vision	00	00	08	13.3	42	70	10	16.7	00	00
Approachable and supportive	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	60	100
Compatible traits of personality	60	100	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Similar work style	00	00	52	88.7	00	00	08	13.3	00	00
Professionalism	00	00	06	10	00	00	17	28.3	37	61.7
Enthusiasm	00	00	00	00	00	00	26	43.3	34	56.7
Curiosity about your experiences	31	51.7	19	31.7	00	00	07	11.6	03	05

Inquiry about your expectations	00	00	24	40	00	00	17	28.3	19	31.7
Welcoming and friendly	00	00	05	8.3	00	00	48	80	07	11.7

Table 4.8 indicates varying degrees of importance paid by the supervisees to the main characteristics that should be in a supervisor. The results reveal that 15 of the supervisees (25%) have a neutral stance towards having good chemistry and 42 (70%) towards having similar vision between the supervisor and the supervisee. They unanimously (100%) perceive of the supervisors' being approachable and supportive as highly important. Additionally, no supervisees (0%) rated the following as not important or neutral: having chemistry between the two, the supervisors' experience in the supervisees' research domain, having similar visions, approachable and supportive supervisors, having compatible personality traits between the supervisor and the supervisee, having similar working styles, supervisors' professionalism in appearance and demeanour, enthusiastic supervisors, supervisors' curiosity about the supervisees previous experiences, the supervisors' inquiry about their supervisees' expectations and welcoming and friendly supervisors.

The majority of the supervisees 43 (71.7%) rated chemistry as important whereas only 2 respondents (3.3%) perceive of it as slightly important. For experience, all the supervisees rated experience as either important (15%) or very important (85%), with none rating it as less than important. Furthermore, 8 participants (13.3%) considered similar visions as slightly important and 10 (16.7%) important. The great majority of the supervisees (88.7%) confirmed that they perceive a similar work style between them and their supervisees as slightly important and 8 (13.3%) as important. Only few supervisees (10%) rated professionalism as slightly important, 17 (28.3%) as important and 37 (61.7%) as very important. Moreover, 26 of the participants (43.3%) rated enthusiasm as an important trait to be in their supervisors while the remaining 34 supervisees (56.7%) see as indispensable. Almost half of the respondents (51.7%) rated the supervisor's curiosity about their experiences as not important, 19 (31.7%) as

slightly important, 7 (11.6%) as important, and only 3 (5%) as very important. When it comes to the supervisor's inquiry about the supervisees' expectations, 24 of them (40%) rated it as slightly important, 17 (28.3%) as important, and 19 (31.7%) as very important. 5 supervisees (8.3%) rated being welcoming and friendly as slightly important, 48 (80%) as important, and 7 (11.7%) as very important.

Q 09: Did you appreciate the implementation of the draw system in assigning supervisors?

Table 4.9

The Supervisees' Perceptions of the Draw System in Assigning Supervisors

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	03	05
b) No	57	95

As shows Table 4.9, the large majority (95%) reported their discontent whereas only 03 respondents (05%) reported their satisfaction with the draw system in assigning supervisors.

Q10: Would you have preferred to choose your supervisor?

Table 4.10

The Supervisees' Preference for Choosing the Supervisor

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	57	95
b) No	03	05

Similarly to the previous question and as reveals table 4.10, the large majority of the respondents (95%) reported that they would have preferred to choose their

supervisors whereas only 03 of them (05%) reported their satisfaction regarding the assigned supervisors they had.

Q 11: Did you meet any challenges/difficulties in working with your supervisor?

Table 4.11

Challenges in Working with the Supervisor

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	39	65
b) No	21	35

The results in Table 4.11 show that 39 supervisees (65%) reported that they faced challenges or difficulties in working with their supervisor while 21 supervisees (35%) confirmed that they did not encounter any issues.

Q 12: Is a positive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee important in the supervision process?

Table 4.12

The Importance of a Supervisor-Supervisee Positive Relationship

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Table 4.12 reveals that all the respondents (100%) agreed on the importance of a positive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee in the supervision process.

3.1.3 Creating the Supervision Commitment Agreement (Questions 13 - 19)

Q 13: In your opinion, is it important to develop a well-defined and individualized supervision commitment agreement for a supervision experience?

Table 4.13

The Importance of a Well-defined Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Table 4.13 reports that all the participants (100%) perceive of having a well-defined and clear supervision commitment agreement as important for a successful supervision experience.

Q 14: Which elements you think should be included within the Supervision Commitment Agreement?

Table 4.14

Components of the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Supervisees Roles	60	100
Meetings Schedule	52	86.7
Feedback Mechanisms	22	36.7
Workload Distribution	52	86.7
Dealing with Conflicts	18	30
Duties of the supervisor	60	100
Meetings formats	01	1.7

Communication protocols	00	00
Administrative Matters	03	05
Intrusion of a Third Party	00	00

As shown in Table 4.14, it appears there is a discrepancy in how supervisees perceive the importance of the various components of the supervision commitment agreement. While the duties/roles/responsibilities of the supervisors and the supervisees were both considered important by all supervisees (100%), other aspects like meeting schedule and workload distribution were rated as important by 52 supervisees (86.7%). The supervisees reported less emphasis on feedback mechanisms and conflict resolution which received lower ratings, with 22 (36.7%) and 18 (30%) respectively. There is minimal attention given to meetings formats with only 1 supervisee (1.7%) seeing it important whereas administrative matters were considered important by 3 (5%). Communication protocols and the intrusions of a third party were not rated as important by any supervisees.

Q 15: Did you take part in the making of the rules included?

Table 4.15

Contribution in Making the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	00	00
b) No	60	100

Table 4.15 indicates that all the supervisees (100%) attested that they did not participate in the creation of the supervision commitment agreement.

Q 16: Were you satisfied with the working contract provided by the administration?

Table 4.16

Satisfaction with the Administrative version of Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3%
b) No	46	76.7%

Table 4.16 unveils that the great majority of supervisees (76.7%) were not satisfied with the final working contract, while a minority (23.3%) expressed satisfaction.

Q 17: What supervisees' duties were included in the supervision commitment agreement?

Table 4.17

The Supervisees' Duties Included in the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Discipline/ Respect	60	100
b) Respecting deadlines	49	81.6
c) Regular work	53	88.3
d) Seriousness	07	11.7
e) Implementing the supervisors' feedback	08	13.3

As demonstrates Table 4.17, the responses were categorized according to thematic similarities. The results reveal that 60 responses (100%) identified discipline and respect as the prominent duties included within the supervision commitment agreement. Respecting deadlines followed closely, with 49 responses (81.6%) while regular work was indicated by 53 responses (88.3%). In contrast, 7 respondents

(11.7%) confirmed that seriousness was mentioned among their duties. Similarly, the implementation of the supervisor's feedback was noted in 8 responses (13.3%).

Q 18: Were you satisfied with the roles assigned to you through the supervision commitment agreement?

Table 4.18

Satisfaction with the Supervisees' Duties Included in the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	22	36.7
b) No	38	63.3

Table 4.18 reveals that 38 respondents (63.3%) were not satisfied with supervisees' duties included in the supervision commitment agreement whereas 22 of them (36.7%) affirmed their satisfaction with them.

Q 19: Did you face any challenges in complying with the supervision commitment agreement?

Table 4.19

Difficulties faced in Complying with the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	49	81.7
b) No	11	18.3

Table 4.19 shows that a significant majority of 49 out of the 60 respondents (81.7%) reported having faced challenges, while 11 (18.3%) indicated they had not

encountered any challenges in complying with the supervision commitment agreement.

4.1.4 Making the Research Proposal (Questions 20 - 25)

Q 20: How important is each of the following items in making the research proposal?

Table 4.20

The Importance of the Elements Included within the Research Proposal

Options	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Timeline	29	48.3	00	00	00	00	31	51.7	00	00
Background of the study	09	15	14	23.3	07	11.7	30	50	00	00
Significance of the study	00	00	00	00	20	33.3	18	30	22	36.7
Research objectives	00	00	00	00	00	00	17	28.3	43	71.7
A synopsis of the literature	13	21.7	00	00	31	51.7	16	26.7	00	00
Resources	49	81.7	03	05	00	00	08	13.3	00	00

Table 4.20 reveals the varied perspectives on the importance of different elements in a research proposal. There is a general agreement on some items while there are divergent views on others.

No respondents (0%) rated the timeline, significance of the study, or research objectives as slightly important or neutral, rather, they see them either as important or highly important. Conversely, resources were widely deemed not important, with no respondents rating them as very important.

The results reveal that 29 respondents (48.3%) rated the timeline as not important at all, and 31 respondents (51.7%) rated it as very important, indicating an opposition with no intermediate ratings.

The background of the study received a more varied distribution: 9 respondents (15%) rated it as not important at all, 14 respondents (23.3%) as slightly important, 7 respondents (11.7%) were neutral, and 30 respondents (50%) rated it as important. The significance of the study was more consistently valued, with 20 respondents (33.3%) rating it as neutral, 18 respondents (30%) as important, and 22 respondents (36.7%) as very important.

For the research objectives, 17 respondents (28.3%) rated them as important and 43 respondents (71.7%) as very important, indicating a strong consensus on their significance. The synopsis of the literature was perceived with mixed importance: 13 respondents (21.7%) rated it as not important at all, 31 respondents (51.7%) as neutral, and 16 respondents (26.7%) as important.

Finally, resources were overwhelmingly considered not important at all by 49 respondents (81.7%), with only 3 respondents (5%) rating them as slightly important, and 8 respondents (13.3%) considering them important; no respondents (0%) rated resources as neutral or very important.

Q 21: Was this step (making a research proposal) advantageous?

Table 4.21

The Perceived Advantage of Making the Research Proposal

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Table 4.21 shows that the results regarding the perceived advantages of a research proposal are varied. Out of 60 respondents, 46 (76.7%) reported that the

research proposal was not advantageous for them, while the remaining 14 (23.3%) confirmed that it was beneficial.

Q22: Did you face any challenges in making your research proposal?

Table 4.22

Challenges Faced in Making the Research Proposal

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	00	00
b) No	60	100

In response to whether they faced challenges in making the research proposal, table 4.22 reveals that the respondents unanimously (100%) reported that they did not encounter any challenges.

Q 23: Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor making the research proposal?

Table 4.23

Satisfaction with the Level of Assistance Received in Making the Research Proposal

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Regarding satisfaction with the supervisor assistance received from the supervision in making the research proposal, the results of table 4.23 show that 46 respondents (76.7%) expressed dissatisfaction regarding the supervisor's provided help whereas 14 respondents expressed their satisfaction.

Q 24: Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by the supervisor about the research proposal?

Table 4.24

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment and Feedback Received in Making the Research Proposal

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Table 4.24 reveals the level of the respondents' satisfaction with the assessment and feedback provided by the supervisor about the research proposal. 46 supervisees (76.7%) were not satisfied, while 14 respondents (23.3%) were satisfied.

Q 25: Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process?

Table 4.25

Self-Satisfaction with the Duties Performed in Making the Research Proposal

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Table 4.25 indicates that the large majority of the supervisees did not feel they had met their responsibilities in making the research proposal effectively. Precisely, only 14 respondents (23.3%) answered affirmatively, while 46 (76.7%) answered negatively.

4.1.5 Executing the Research (Questions 26 - 31)

Q 26: To which extent were you familiar with the following research process steps?

Table 4.26

The Level of the Supervisees' Familiarity with the Research Process Steps

Options	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Selecting 03 articles	00	00	46	76.7	06	10	05	8.3	03	05
Developing the theoretical background	00	00	07	11.7	26	43.3	27	45	00	00
Presenting an overview of the articles	00	00	00	00	26	43.4	17	28.3	17	28.3
Comparing and contrasting the articles	00	00	08	13.3	14	23.4	20	33.3	18	30
Discussing the findings	00	00	11	18.3	27	45	00	00	22	36.7

Table 4.26 shows a range of familiarity levels with different secondary research steps. It is worth noting that no respondent (0%) reported being unfamiliar with any step of the secondary research process, indicating that all participants had some level of exposure to each component. For the step related to the selection of 03 articles, the majority of the respondents were slightly familiar (76.7%). Fewer respondents reported that they were very familiar (8.3%) while only (5%) confirmed that they were extremely familiar. In developing the theoretical background, most respondents were either very familiar (45%) or moderately familiar (43.3%), indicating a strong understanding of this task. Presenting an overview of the articles showed that 43.4% of the participants were moderately familiar, while 56.6% were very/extremely familiar.

Comparing and contrasting the articles had a substantial number of respondents who were very familiar (33.3%) or extremely familiar (30%), with fewer being slightly (13.3%) or moderately familiar (23.4%). Finally, discussing the findings revealed that

45% were moderately familiar, 36.7% were extremely familiar, and 18.3% were slightly familiar. This implies that the respondents had a good level of familiarity with secondary research steps.

Q 27: Were you flexible in following and deviating from the initial research proposal?

Table 4.27

The Supervisees' Flexibility in the Research Execution

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	52	85.7
b) No	08	13.3

Table 4.27 reveals that 52 respondents (85.7%) indicated they were not flexible in following and deviating from the initial research proposal, while 08 respondents (13.3%) confirmed that they were flexible.

Q 28: Did you face any challenges in executing your research?

Table 4.28

Difficulty Faced by the Supervisees in Executing the Research

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	46	76.7
b) No	14	23.3

In response to whether they faced challenges in doing the research, table 4.28 shows that 46 respondents (76.7%) indicated that they encountered challenges, while 14 respondents (23.3%) reported that they did not face any challenges.

Q 29: Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

Table 4.29

Satisfaction with the Level of Supervisor's Assistance Received in the Research Execution

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

In terms of the supervisees' satisfaction with their supervisors' assistance in doing the research, table 4.29 reports that 14 respondents (23.3%) expressed satisfaction, while 46 respondents (76.7%) were not satisfied.

Q 30: Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by your supervisor about the execution of research?

Table 4.30

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment and Feedback Received in Doing the Research

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Table 4.30 reveals that 14 respondents (23.3%) reported their satisfaction with their supervisors' assessment and feedback, while 46 respondents (76.7%) were not satisfied.

Q 31: Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee in executing the research?

Table 4.31*Self-Satisfaction with the Duties Performed During the Research Phase*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Table 4.31 indicates a strong consensus among the respondents (100%) regarding their satisfaction with their duties in the research process.

4.1.6 Producing the Dissertation Text (Questions 32 - 35)

Q 32: Did you face any challenges in writing your dissertation?

Table 4.32*Difficulties in Writing the Dissertation*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

As demonstrates Table 4.32, all the respondents (100%) reported perceiving the dissertation writing phase of the supervision process as challenging.

Q 33: Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor during the writing phase?

Table 4.33

Satisfaction with the Level of Supervisor's Assistance Received in Writing the Dissertation

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Regarding the supervisees' satisfaction with the level of supervisor's assistance received during the dissertation writing phase, Table 4.33 shows that 14 respondents (23.3%) expressed satisfaction, while 46 respondents (76.7%) were not satisfied.

Q 34: Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by your supervisor on the dissertation writing?

Table 4.34

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment and Feedback Received during the Writing Phase

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Table 4.34 reveals that there is a disagreement among the respondents regarding the satisfaction with the level of supervisor's assessment and feedback received. Specifically, 14 respondents (23.3%) indicated that they were satisfied, while 46 respondents (76.7%) were not satisfied.

Q 35: Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process?

Table 4.35*Self-Satisfaction with the Duties Performed During the Writing Step*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Regarding whether respondents believe they adequately fulfilled their duties as supervisees during the dissertation writing stage of the supervision process, table 4.35 shows that all the respondents (100%) expressed their satisfaction.

3.1.7 Refining the Dissertation and Preparing the Viva Voce (Questions 36 - 44)

Q 36: Did you face any challenges in refining your research?

Table 4.36*Challenges in Refining the Dissertation*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	11	18.3
b) No	49	81.7

Table 4.36 reveals that 11 respondents (18.3%) affirmed that they did find refining the dissertation a challenging task, while 49 respondents (81.7%) did not.

Q 37: How did you perceive the feedback given by the supervisor?

Table 4.37*Perceptions of the Feedback Received in the Refinement Stage*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
A way to improve the quality of your work.	14	23.3
A complement alongside your judgment.	46	76.7
An external input and did not rely on it	00	00

Regarding the perception of feedback given by the supervisor, as reveals table 4.37, 46 respondents (76.7%) saw it as a complement to their judgment. In contrast, 14 respondents (23.3%) viewed it as a way to improve the quality of their work.

Q 38: Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?**Table 4.38***Satisfaction with the Level of the Supervisor's Assistance in the Refinement*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Regarding whether respondents received enough assistance from their supervisor in refining the dissertation, the results reported in table 4.38 reveal that 14 respondents (23.3%) answered yes, while 46 respondents (76.7%) answered no.

Q 39: Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by your supervisor on refining the dissertation?

Table 4.39*Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment and Feedback Received in the Refinement*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Contrary to the previous questions, table 4.39 shows that all the respondents (100%) were satisfied with their supervisor' input during the dissertation refinement.

Q 40: Did you face any challenges in preparing for the viva voce?**Table 4.40***Difficulties in Preparing for the Viva Voce*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	11	18.3
b) No	49	81.7

Regarding the preparation for the viva, table 4.40 reveals that the majority (81.7%) did not face difficulty whereas 11 respondents (18.3%) found it challenging.

Q 41: Was the supervisor's feedback necessary in your preparation?**Table 4.41***Perceived Necessity of the Supervisor's Feedback in the Preparation for the Viva Voce*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100

In terms of the necessity of the supervisor's feedback during the preparation for the viva voce, results in Table 4.41 show that all the respondents (100%) agreed that the supervisor's feedback was necessary in their preparation.

Q 42: Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

Table 4.42

Level of Satisfaction with the Assistance Received during the Preparation for the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	14	23.3
b) No	46	76.7

Regarding whether respondents received enough assistance from their supervisor in this preparatory phase, the results from Table 4.42 demonstrate that 14 respondents (23.3%) confirmed their satisfaction with the assistance received, while 47 respondents (76.7%) reported their dissatisfaction.

Q 43: Was this preparatory phase advantageous for you?

Table 4.43

Perceived Benefit of the Preparatory Phase for the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Table 4.43 shows that all the supervisees 100% perceived of the preparatory phase as beneficial for them.

Q44: Were you satisfied with your performance at this stage of the process?

Table 4.44*Self-Satisfaction with the Performance during the Preparation for the Viva Voce*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Table 4.44 reports that the respondents were unanimously satisfied with their performance at this preparatory stage of the supervision process.

4.1.8 Viva Voce (Questions 45 - 50)

Q 45: Did you face any challenges during the viva voce?

Table 4.45*Challenges Faced during the Viva Voce*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	12	20
b) No	48	80

Table 4.45 shows that 12 respondents (20%) indicated that they encountered difficulties during the viva voce, while 48 respondents (80%) reported that they did not face any challenges.

Q 46: What expectations did you have regarding the types of questions that would be asked during the viva voce?

Table 4.46*Expectations about the Questions of the Viva Voce Examination*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
The methodology of the 03 selected studies	48	80
The application of the research in the field of study	06	10
The challenges/ limitations of the selected studies	13	21.7
Motivation/ reason behind the selection	27	45
Complex/ambiguous questions	19	31.7

Concerning the expectations supervisees had regarding the types of questions that would be asked during the viva voce, their responses were thematically analyzed and categorized into key areas that provide a comprehensive overview of the areas supervisees expected to be probed and reflect their focus during this stage. Table 4.46 shows that a substantial majority of 48 respondents (80%) anticipated questions related to the methodology of the three selected studies. In contrast, only 6 respondents (10%) expected questions about the application of their research in the field of study, suggesting a lesser focus on practical implications.

Additionally, 13 respondents (21.7%) anticipated questions addressing the challenges and limitations of the selected articles, demonstrating a critical awareness of potential weaknesses in their research. Nearly half of the respondents, 27 in total (45%), expected questions related to their motivation for selecting the specific studies which signifies a reflective approach to their choices. Furthermore, 19 respondents (31.7%) identified complex or ambiguous questions as a significant concern, although they did not specify the exact focus of these questions.

Q 47: What concerns, if any, did you have about the viva voce examination process?

Table 4.47*Concerns about the Viva Voce Examination*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
The use of visual aids and stress	19	31.7
Time sufficiency and stress	34	56.7
Harsh criticism	53	88.3
Unexpected questions	42	70
Stress	07	11.7

The responses to this question were analyzed using the same categorizing process as the previous question. Table 4.47 reveals that the respondents had varied concerns about the viva voce. A significant number, 53 respondents (88.3%), expressed apprehension about facing harsh criticism while 42 respondents (70%) worried about encountering unexpected questions, reflecting anxiety about the unpredictability of the viva. Time sufficiency and stress were concerns for 34 respondents (56.7%). Visual aids besides stress were a concern for 19 respondents (31.7%); these participants were focused on the effectiveness of their presentation tools. Lastly, 7 respondents (11.7%) reported concerns about stress only.

Q 48: Were you satisfied with your supervisor's role during the viva voce?**Table 4.48***Satisfaction with the Supervisor's Role during the Viva Voce*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	42	70
b) No	18	30

Regarding the supervisees' satisfaction with the supervisor's role during the viva voce, Table 4.48 indicates that 42 respondents (70%) were satisfied, while 18 respondents (30%) were not satisfied.

Q 49: Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process?

Table 4.49

Self-Satisfaction with the Performance during the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

As shown in Table 4.49., all the participants (100%) affirmed that they were satisfied with their performance and believed they adequately fulfilled their duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process.

Q 50: Was the viva voce beneficial for you?

Table 4.50

Perceived Benefits of the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

In a similar vein, Table 4.50 highlights that all the supervisees' (100%) perceived the viva voce as a valuable and advantageous component of their research process.

4.1.9 Post-viva Voce (Questions 51 - 54)

Q 51: What were your perceptions about post-viva voce phase?

Table 4.51

Perceptions about the Post-viva Voce Phase

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Direct submission	40	66.7
Self-directed correction then submission	06	10
Reviewing corrections with the supervisor	14	23.3

Table 4.51 presents the perceptions of the supervisees regarding the post-viva stage after undergoing careful analysis and categorization according to their content focus. A substantial majority, 40 respondents (66.7%), perceived direct submission of their work as the most effective approach. In contrast, 06 respondents (10%) perceived that submitting their work only after making corrections was more appropriate. Additionally, 14 respondents (23.3%) perceived that reviewing corrections with their supervisor and deciding what and how to correct before submission was a valuable step.

Q 52: Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee after the viva voce?

Table 4. 52

Self-Satisfaction with the Performance after the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

The results of table 4.52 indicate that all the respondents (100%) perceived that they adequately fulfilled their duties as supervisees following the viva voce. This shows that every respondent felt they had effectively met their duties after the viva voce.

Q 53: Did you face any administrative challenges in this phase?

Table 4.53

The Administrative Challenges after the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	39	65
b) No	21	35

Regarding the administrative challenges, Table 4.53 reveals that 39 respondents (65%) reported experiencing such issues, while 21 respondents (35%) did not encounter any administrative challenges.

Q 54: How did the viva voce influence the outcome of your dissertation?

Table 4.54

The Influence of the Viva Voce on the Dissertation

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Improvement	55	91.7
b) No effect	05	8.3

As reveals Table 4.54, the majority of respondents, 55 in total (91.7%), attested that the viva voce had a positive impact on the outcome of their dissertations. They described this influence using various expressions such as ‘improved,’ ‘enhanced,’ ‘upgraded,’ and ‘made better,’ reflecting a consensus that the viva voce significantly

contributed to the overall quality and effectiveness of their dissertations. Conversely, 5 respondents (8.3%) reported that the viva voce had no effect on their dissertation outcome.

In the upcoming section, we will provide a holistic presentation of the data gathered from the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire.

4.1.10 Holistic Presentation of Data from the Supervisees Perceptions Questionnaire

Table 4.55

Each Participant's Perceptions of Each Step of the Supervision Process

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
SP 1	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 2	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 3	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 4	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 5	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 6	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 7	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 8	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 9	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 10	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 11	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 12	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 13	Facilitative	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Independent correction
SP 14	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 15	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate

16								submission
SP	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
17								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
18								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
19								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
20								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
21								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
22								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
23								
SP	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
24								
SP	Facilitative	suboptimal	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Independent correction
25								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
26								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
27								
SP	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
28								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
29								
P	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
30								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
31								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
32								
SP	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
33								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
34								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
35								
SP	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
36								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
37								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
38								
SP	Facilitative	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Collaborative
39								
SP	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
40								

SP 41	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 42	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 43	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 44	Facilitative	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Independent correction
SP 45	Facilitative	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Independent correction
SP 46	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 47	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 48	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 49	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 50	Facilitative	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Independent correction
SP 51	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 52	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 53	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 54	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 55	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 56	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 57	Facilitative	Satisfactory	Constructive	Manageable	Challenging	Formative	Evaluative	Collaborative
SP 58	Facilitative	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Independent correction
SP 59	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission
SP 60	Authoritarian	suboptimal	Unnecessary	Demanding	Challenging	Formative	Stressful	Immediate submission

The analysis of the data gathered through the perceptions questionnaire and provided in table 4.55 indicates that the responses of the 60 participants can be grouped under three major categories.

The first category consists of the supervisees who formed negative perceptions about the step of the supervision process. Precisely, 39 respondents (SP 01, 02, 03, 05,

07, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37,38, 40, 41,43, 46, 48, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 59, and 60) believe their supervisors were authoritarian; therefore, difficult to deal with. For them, the administrative supervision agreement commitment was deficient and not inclusive whereas the research proposal was an unnecessary document. Furthermore, these supervisees assert that the execution of the research was a demanding step and that the process of producing the dissertation text was challenging. The ulterior stages, namely: refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce were deemed important steps. Like all the supervisees, they perceive of their viva voce as a stressful phase. Lastly, this category believes that direct submission of the final version of the dissertation is what characterized the post-viva voce phase.

The second category includes the supervisees who developed positive perceptions about the steps of the supervision process; the majority of their perceptions contrast the perceptions of the first category. To specify further, 14 participants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17, 24, 28, 33, 36, 42, 47, 49, 53, and 57) believe their supervisors were facilitative and helpful. According to them, the supervision agreement commitment provided by the administration was satisfactory and the research proposal was a constructive element. Additionally, they see that the research execution was a manageable process, yet producing the text of the dissertation was challenging. For the dissertation refinement and the viva voce preparation, these supervisees attest it was a formative step. Besides, they believe the viva voce was an evaluative phase while the post viva voce step was seen as a collaborative approach in which the supervisor and the supervisee decide upon the required correction and the final submission.

The third category involves the participants who had a facilitative supervisor, yet they developed different perceptions regarding the remaining steps. 06 supervisees (SP 13, 25, 44, 45, 50, and 58) confirm that their supervisors were facilitative. However, they perceive the supervision agreement commitment as a suboptimal document and creating the research proposal as an unnecessary step. Moreover, they believe the research process was demanding and the dissertation writing was challenging. With regards to refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce,

this category perceives this step as formative while it attests that the viva voce was a stressful experience. As for the post-viva voce, these supervisees independently corrected their dissertations before submitting them to the administration, except SP 39 who reported that the post-viva voce was a collaborative phase.

The holistic presentation and analysis of the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire also highlights that regardless of the perceptions formed about the different steps of the supervision process, all the supervisees perceive of the research execution as a challenging process and the refinement and preparing for the viva voce step as helpful and formative.

In the upcoming section, the interview results are presented, along with additional details and elaboration on the students' responses to certain closed-ended items in the perceptions questionnaire.

4.2 Results of the Supervisees' Perceptions Interview

As stated in details in the method chapter (section 3.4.2.1), crucial insights could not be explored without the inclusion of open-ended questions and in-depth probing. The primary aim of the interview is to complement the questionnaire findings and give the supervisees the chance to elaborate on their responses, offering a more comprehensive view of their perceptions of the supervision process. The semi-structured interview includes 14 open-ended questions; the interviews were conducted with 20 supervisees selected through purposive sampling procedures. The verbatim obtained from the interview was subject to thematic analysis and stored using the same code used for the respondents in the perceptions questionnaires.

4.2.1 General Information about the Supervision Journey

4.2.1.1 The supervisees' Satisfaction with What the Supervisor Provided during the Supervision Process. When the supervisees were queried in the questionnaire about their satisfaction with the guidance provided by their supervisors (assistance, support, assessment and feedback) at the various stages of the supervision process, the majority expressed dissatisfaction whereas few expressed total

satisfaction. This prompted further investigation into the underlying reasons for their content/discontent. Therefore, we included Q 01 to allow the supervisees to elaborate on the level of their satisfaction regarding their supervisor's assistance, support, assessment and feedback throughout the supervision process. The findings revealed the following:

a. Satisfaction with the Supervisor's Assistance: 15 informants (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20) reported that their supervisors had a tendency to instruct them what should be done without providing them with the 'how to be done' aspect nor guiding them towards it throughout the whole stages of the supervision process. They further contend that their assistance was purely theoretical without bringing about any practical help or solutions. This point is exemplified by the following remark from SP 03:

“Whenever I asked the supervisor for help in anything he used to send me old dissertations and ask me to use as an example to follow without any clarification or attempt to help ... I had to handle everything by myself which is tiring, frustrating and time consuming.”

Contrarily, five supervisees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17) expressed their satisfaction with the assistance received from their supervisors. They confirmed that the supervisors' assistance was relevant and helpful. This claim is best illustrated by the following SP's 17 comment:

“Personally speaking, my supervisor helped me a lot throughout the whole process and this help was crucial because it guided me and shaped the direction of the whole dissertation I was working on ... She was of great help and we really benefited from her knowledge and expertise.”

b. Satisfaction with the Supervisor's Support: six supervisees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 13 and 17) stated that their supervisors never ceased to encourage them and actively boost their motivation to complete their dissertations. In this regard, SP 06 said: *“without the emotional and psychological support of my supervisor I think I would not have completed it energetically within the timeframe.”*

In contrast, 14 informants (SP 01, 02, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20) felt that the supervisor's approach throughout the different stages was overly critical, with little regard for the academic and emotional challenges faced by students. This lack of supportive guidance contributed to a sense of isolation and stress. SP 08 expressed it as follows:

“Honestly speaking my supervisor did not provide me with any emotional or psychological support at any given stage of the supervision process; I got only blaming for tardiness and mistakes from her without knowing the difficulties we go through academically and emotionally... As if the stress of the dissertation was not enough, she made me feel frustrated too.

c. Satisfaction with the Supervisor's Assessment and Feedback: five supervisees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, and 17) expressed a high level of satisfaction with their supervisor's assessment and feedback throughout the different stages of the supervision process, noting that they were consistently ongoing, thorough, constructive, and focused on both strengths and areas for improvement. They appreciated the balanced feedback, which provided clear guidance for enhancing their work and contributed positively to their overall progress. Concerning this, SP 09 said:

“the supervisor used to provide us with positive feedback even if we do not deserve it ... it was received online during the same week after sending it then discussed during the meeting. Whether online or live, we were always encouraged not to hesitate to ask any question no matter how it seems stupid to us, which made all the difference.”

On the other hand, 11 informants (SP 01, 03, 05, 07, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 20) were dissatisfied with their supervisor's assessment and feedback, describing it as overly critical and lacking the constructive quality. They argue that their supervisors' feedback reflected a lack of consideration for the broader context of the supervisees' struggles. SP 18 said: *“I had the impression that the supervisor is assessing the work just to spot the mistakes and humiliate us with them!”*

Four informants (SP 02, 08, 13, 19) described the feedback received as dissatisfactory because of its ambiguity. In this regard, SP 02 stated: “I think my supervisor himself needed help as his feedback was most of time confusing because it was too general.”

4.2.1.2 The Supervisees’ Suggested Enhancement for the Supervision Process. The interviewees’ were asked in Q 02 to provide suggestions to enhance the supervision process. Their suggested responses can be divided into two categories. The first focuses on ideas suggested for the supervisees while the second encompasses improvement proposed for the supervisors.

a. Suggestions for the Supervisees: three interviewees (SP 04, 11, 12) stated that the supervisees should enhance their performance; they argue that they should have been more knowledgeable about some necessary skills related to research and dissertation writing such as how to discuss ideas and argument, how to independently and intellectually share opinions and how to ask the supervisor for assistance.

b. Suggestions for the Supervisors: 17 interviewees (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20); however, addressed their supervisors’ practices specifically focusing on how supervisors can improve their methods and interactions to better support supervisees throughout the process. This idea is better illustrated in SP’s 07 following comment: *“the supervisor should be present more.....should reply to the emails more often and should provide timely and concretely helpful feedback.”*

4.2.2 Finding the Right Supervisor

Finding the right supervisor is an important step in the supervision process. The questions of this section in the perceptions questionnaire were generated to explore how supervisees navigate relationships with supervisors they did not choose, and how they manage to work effectively despite potential mismatches throughout the supervision process. The data captured needed elaboration; therefore, Q 03 which describes the supervisory relationship is further asked in this interview. The participants’ responses are categorised as follows:

4.2.2.1 Describing the Supervisory Relationship. The answers of the respondents can be categorized in to different opposing categories: positive and negative relationships. Six interviewees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 13 and 17) announced that the relationship with their supervisors was friendly and characterized by mutual respect and cooperation. This created a productive atmosphere where both parties valued and supported each other's contributions. SP 09 stated that: "we literally could contact the supervisor 24h ... we felt like we were friends or colleagues more than we were supervisors-supervisee". Nevertheless, 14 interviewees(SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20)complained about having a *"rigidly/too/inflexible/shallow professional relationship"* with their supervisors in which they strictly adhered to formal protocols and boundaries, often at the expense of personal rapport and supportive interaction. In this regard, SP 02 stated that *"I could not even ask the supervisor about anything even if it was at the core of his role as a supervisor because any attempt to seek guidance or clarification felt unwelcome or inappropriate."*

4.2.2.2 The supervisees' Suggested Enhancement for the Supervisory Relationship.Q 04 requires the interviewees to provide recommendations for building a productive relationship. All the informants highlighted the importance of performing roles appropriately. Particularly, 15 informants (SP 01, 02, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14,15, 16, 17,18, 19, and 20) suggested that the supervisors need to provide clear and consistent guidance, offer timely and constructive feedback, to be adaptable to the supervisee's needs and to establish an open line of communication to foster trust and mutual respect. The following comments best demonstrate this:

- "The supervisor has to act upon his role as a supervisor and to assume all the responsibilities that come with it. This does not mean the supervisee is innocent, no! Supervisees have assume their roles too after all it is their research and dissertation not the supervisor's" SP 17
- "The supervisor must make his supervisees feel that he is in their side, he is a partner, a guide, knowledge holder and a supporter. In return, the

supervisees have to show readiness to lean, collaborate and upgrade their performance through the help of the supervisor. ” SP 06

Five informants (SP 03, 04, 06, 09, 11) suggested that the supervisees have to recognize that their performance plays a crucial role in determining the productivity and the performance of the supervisor in the supervision process. Therefore, they need to improve their performance through continuous self-reflection, actively seeking and implementing feedback, staying organized and focused on their goals, and consistently striving to enhance their skills and knowledge. Regarding this idea, SP 11 said “I am the one responsible on my research, so I have to show the supervisor that I know this by taking the initiative to do things, the supervisor is my guide yes but this does not mean he does things on my behalf. My supervisor used to show me the road only and I get into the point by myself, whenever I got stuck she guides me to the right way”.

4.2.3 Creating the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Crafting the supervision commitment agreement is fundamental to the supervisory relationship; however, the supervisees were given this document by the administration. The two questions related to this section seek to gain deeper insights into the results gathered through the questionnaire.

4.2.3.1 The Importance of the Supervision Commitment Agreement. The results gathered through Q 05 have many insights into the supervisees’ perceptions of this document. Surprisingly, 18 informants (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) indicated that they did not consult the supervision commitment agreement at all. This suggests that the agreement, despite its intended role, was either overlooked or deemed unnecessary by most of the participants throughout the supervision process. In this regard SP 05 stated that: “*it did not have any importance as we never consulted it.*” Similarly, SP 10 revealed that she: “*forgot this document existed in the first place*” and SP 13, “*we knew about it at first then as if it does not exist.*” Only two interviewees (SP 04 and 11) reported that they referred to the document occasionally.

4.2.3.2 The supervisees' Contribution to the Development of the Supervision Commitment Agreement. The responses to Q 06 reveal that all the 20 informants unanimously confirmed that they did not contribute to the development of the supervision commitment agreement. This lack of involvement may have contributed to their detachment from the document, as they did not feel a sense of ownership or connection to its contents. It likely felt imposed rather than collaboratively crafted, diminishing its perceived relevance and importance in their supervision experience. SP 14 said *"I did not take any part in developing this supervision commitment agreement as it was ready-made and given to us to be applied but it did not serve any purpose"*.

Yet, five informants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, and 17) confirmed that they made an internal agreement between them and their supervisors, SP 04 said: "we tried to make up some rules that govern our relationship," SP 11 stated that "the supervisor asked us to pay attention to other details such as when to meet and what to bring to the meetings."

4.2.4 Making the Research Proposal

The research proposal serves as a roadmap, guiding the direction and focus of the research. Including questions about this stage in the interview allows for a deeper understanding of how the supervisees approached it and how effectively they were able to translate their ideas into a structured plan. Moreover, exploring this step can reveal the alignment between the supervisee's vision and the reported supervisor's guidance.

4.2.4.1 Importance of the Research Proposal. Q 07 sought to explore the advantages of the research proposal. Remarkably, 15 informants (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20) affirmed that they did not make the research proposal in the first place because their supervisors did not ask them to as SP 01 puts it: *"I don't see the importance of the research proposal because we were not asked to make one. I believe we would have been asked to if it was important."* Conversely, five informants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17) confirmed that it guided them. Reflecting this idea,

SP 06 said: *“it directed me especially during the first stages”*, SP 17 stated that: *“it opened the gate for my research.”*

4.2.4.2 The Necessity of the Supervisors’ Feedback in Making the Research Proposal. The responses to the first part of Q 08 regarding the importance of the supervisor’s feedback reveal that the five informants who made a research proposal (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, and 17) reported that the supervisor’s feedback was of paramount necessity during the stage of making the research proposal. It enabled them align their proposal with academic standards and expectations. SP 06 commented on this saying that the supervisor’s feedback was: *“crucial in spotting pitfalls, clarifying complex steps or concepts and making sure that our research plan is feasible, significant and academically sound.”*

4.2.4.3 The Supervisees’ Implementation of the Supervisors’ Feedback in Making the Research Proposal. The responses to the second part of Q 08 regarding the incorporation the supervisor’s feedback during the creation of their research proposals revealed that the five informants who developed a research proposal see it as a focused process. Supervisee 04 noted, *“I followed the feedback and incorporated it strictly.”* Other supervisees 06, 09, 11, and 17 acknowledged that they made earnest efforts to implement all feedback as directed by their supervisor. They described their process as one of striving to meet the supervisor’s expectations, though this did not always result in perfect alignment. Occasionally, their revisions were well-received and accepted by the supervisor; however, there were times when the supervisor chose to accept only some of the changes incorporated. SP’s 11 comment best illustrates this idea:

“I think the supervisor eventually saw the proposal as just a draft and started to be more lenient with feedback. So, if we didn’t get everything right or missed some parts, she was more understanding and didn’t always insist on strict changes.”

4.2.5 Refining the Dissertation and Preparing for the Viva Voce

Refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce ensure that the research is polished and ready for final evaluation. The questionnaire did not fully capture the participants' perceptions of this phase, which is why this interview includes additional questions to explore these aspects in depth.

4.2.5.1 Description of the Supervisees' Approach to Prepare for the Viva Voce Examination. Q 09 intends to reveal the informants' approaches to preparing responses for potential questions during the viva voce examination. The results revealed the following:

- a. Consulting Masters:** SP 02, 03, 04, 07, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 20 indicated that they also consulted the supervisees who already completed their viva voce examinations. They asked them to share their experiences, provide insights into the types of questions they faced, and offer advice on how to prepare effectively.
- b. Engaging in Peer Discussions:** 01, 04, 11, 16, 17, 18 stated that they further organized study groups or discussion sessions with fellow peers/classmates. Discussing each other's work and potential questions helped them gain different perspectives and improved their readiness.

4.2.5.2 Seeking help from Other Supervisors or Peers. Q 10 which asked the supervisees about their perceptions of seeking help from peers or other supervisors revealed that 16 informants (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20) reported that they perceive of the seeking help for colleagues or other supervisors as an effective collaborative approach that saves the time of the supervisor and the supervisees throughout the whole process and during the preparation for the viva voce. In this regard, SP 14 said: *"it is a win-win situation, I get help and the supervisor does not get bothered."* Similarly SP 17 stated that: *"it is beneficial to collaborate with others because it is a sign of hard work and it makes the students gain some time instead of just waiting for the supervisor to be free to help."*

4.2.5.3 The importance of the preparatory Phase. Concerning the importance of the preparatory phase which is sought to be revealed through Q 11, all the informants reported that it was helpful. For SP 08, 11, and 16, it assisted in “*raising awareness*” about important details about the research, it “*boosted the readiness*” of SP 15 and “*optimized the preparation for criticism*” for SP 04 and 13.

4.2.6 Post-viva Voce

Many supervisees mistakenly believe that the supervision process concludes with the viva voce, but the post-viva voce phase is a crucial final step. Completing the required revisions is essential for the final approval of the dissertation and its subsequent submission. Therefore, it was important to gain deeper insights into the perceptions of the participants about this phase through Q 12.

4.2.6.1 The Administrative Procedures Challenges. 12 interviewees (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, and 17) reported that they had to go through the administration for the final submission. They stated that they faced challenges regarding some administrative papers required for the final submission. They were told that the supervisor should provide them with the papers required while the supervisors directed them to the administration. 08 interviewees (SP 04, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20), on the other hand, reported that they did not face any administrative challenges.

4.2.7 The Supervisees’ Satisfaction with their Roles in the Supervision Process

The responses of the participants to Q 13 which is related to their satisfaction with their roles revealed that all the interviewees reported their satisfaction with the roles they played during the supervision process. Here are some comments that best describe this satisfaction:

- “Given the fact that I almost was my own supervisor still I managed to complete the dissertation, to present my work and get a good mark, then I am highly satisfied.” SP 03

- “I followed the supervisors’ instruction and I did all what I was required to do... the members of the jury liked my work and my presentation, what do I want more?!SP 12
- “I am highly satisfied because I did all what I could, even if sometimes it was not enough but it was my best. Eventually I Masterd and here I am.” SP 19

4.2.8 Supervisees’ Description of their Supervisory Experience with Reference to their Initial Ideas and Expectations

All the informants acknowledged that their perceptions before the start of the supervision process differed significantly from their actual supervisory experience both in positive and negative senses. They found that the reality of the supervision process often did not align with their initial assumptions.

Five interviewees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11 and 17) reported that the supervision process turned to be a rewarding experience. The following excerpts from the interviews best explain this:

- “I listened so much to Master students who had a bad supervision experience and I think that made me generalize and reflect their experience on my situation without experiencing it and I was mistaken because the supervision process is relative and depends on the specific people involved in it. For me, the supervision process was a positive experience because it made me mature academically and become more communicative, collaborative...” SP 09
- “I was sceptical about how helpful supervision would be, but it ended up being much more beneficial and engaging than I had imagined.” SP 11
- “I thought supervision would be just a formality, but I was pleasantly surprised by how much valuable feedback and support I received.” SP 04

15 interviewees, on the other hand, (SP01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20) reported that the supervision process turned out to be different from their initial ideas in a negative way. The following quotes better demonstrate this:

- “It turned out that the supervision process is totally different from what I perceived it to be. I believe my thoughts about my roles and the supervisors’ roles contrast the roles played.” SP 05
- “It was nothing similar, the supervisor’s instructions and type of relationship she created with me disappointed me, I am glad it is over.” SP 01
- “I expected my supervisor to be very engaged and helpful throughout, but I ended up feeling quite unsupported and frustrated.” SP 18
- “Initially, I believed supervision would be a smooth and encouraging experience, but it turned out to be much more difficult and less supportive than I had hoped.” SP 03

After presenting the data gathered the perceptions interview, in the following section we provide a holistic presentation of each interviewee to facilitate cross-checking the validity and reliability of the data collected.

4.2.9 Holistic Presentation of Data from the Supervisees Perceptions Interview

Table 4.56

Each Interviewee’s Perceptions of Each Step of the Supervision Process

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 6	Step 8	Assistance	Support	Feedback
SP 01	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+ dismissive
SP 02	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Vague
SP 03	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+ dismissive
SP 04	Cooperative	Unnecessary	Important	Important	Manageable	Effective	Motivating	Timely + directional
SP 05	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+ dismissive
SP 06	Cooperative	Unnecessary	Important	Important	Manageable	Effective	Motivating	Timely + directional
SP 07	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+ dismissive
SP 08	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Vague
SP 09	Cooperative	Unnecessary	Important	Important	Manageable	Effective	Motivating	Timely + directional
SP 10	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+ dismissive
SP 11	Cooperative	Unnecessary	Important	Important	Manageable	Effective	Motivating	Timely + directional
SP	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical +

12								dismissive
SP 13	Cooperative	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Motivating	Vague
SP 14	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+dismissive
SP 15	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+dismissive
SP 16	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+dismissive
SP 17	Cooperative	Unnecessary	Important	Important	Manageable	Effective	Motivating	Timely + directional
SP 18	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+dismissive
SP 19	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Vague
SP 20	Inflexible	Unnecessary	Trivial	Important	Complicated	Impractical	Hindering	Critical+dismissive

Table 4.56 indicates that the insights collected through the supervisees' perceptions interview can also be categorized into three distinct categories.

11 informants (SP 01, 03, 05, 07, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 20) belong to the first category which formed negative perceptions regarding the different steps of the supervision process. These informants reported that their supervisors were inflexible, the supervision agreement commitment was unnecessary, the research proposal was trivial, the preparing phase was important and the post viva voce was complicated. Furthermore, they believe their supervisors' assistance was impractical, the emotional support was hindering and the assessment and feedback were critical and dismissive.

Five interviewees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17) make up the second category which developed positive perceptions towards the different steps of the supervision process. This group of informants believe their supervisors were cooperative, the supervision agreement commitment as unnecessary, the research proposal as important, the dissertation refinement and viva voce preparation as important, and the post viva voce as a manageable step. Additionally, they expressed their satisfaction with the supervisors' guidance during the supervision process. They saw the supervisors' assistance was effective, the emotional support was motivating and the assessment and feedback were timely and directional.

The third category includes 04 interviewees (SP 02, 08, 13, 19) who developed mixed perceptions towards the different steps of the supervision process. The only

difference between SP 02, 08, 13, 19 and the supervisees of the first category lies in their perceptions of the supervisor's provided feedback and assessment. This third category perceived the feedback to be provided but in a vague manner compared to the first category which perceived it as critical and dismissive. Moreover, the difference between SP 13 and the first category relates to SP's 13 supervisor. This supervisee believes his supervisor was cooperative and provided motivating emotional support but formed negative perceptions towards the remaining steps. That is, SP 02, 08, 13, 19 perceived of the supervision agreement commitment as an unnecessary document, developing the research proposal as a trivial step, and the viva voce as a complicated phase. Furthermore, they were dissatisfied with the assistance and feedback received from the supervisor perceiving them as impractical and vague.

The supervisees' perceptions interview revealed that the supervisees formed differing perceptions about the different stages of the supervision process. Despite this general divergence in perceptions, there is a shared agreement among them on the importance of the process of refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce. Moreover, regardless of whether their perceptions are positive or negative in general, there is a strong consensus among them on the insignificance of the supervision agreement commitment document provided by the administration.

Conclusion

This chapter included the analysis and presentation of the findings related to the supervisees' perceptions of the research supervision process. The quantitative data gained from the questionnaire outlined general trends about the participants' perceptions of the different steps and elements involved in the supervision process, while the qualitative insights gained from the questionnaire and the interview added depth by revealing individual supervisory experiences. In the following chapter, the findings from the supervisees' practices questionnaires and interviews will be analyzed.

**CHAPTER FIVE:
PRESENTATION
AND ANALYSIS
OF SUPERVISEES'
PRACTICES DATA
AND DOCUMENT
ANALYSIS**

Introduction

The upcoming chapter explores and analyzes the data collected from the supervisees' practices questionnaire and reviews the findings from the supervisees' practices interviews. The focus is on practical actions/skills the participants employed throughout the supervision process. It also outlines the analysis of the four administrative documents related to Master's supervision. The document analysis provides institutional perspectives on the research supervision process.

5.1 Results of the Supervisees' Practices Questionnaire

As details section 3.4.1.2 in the method chapter, the supervisees' practices questionnaire is composed of 26 questions that capture a detailed picture of the supervisees' practices. These questions are intended to cover a broad range of aspects, including how the supervisees approach their tasks, the skills they employ to address challenges, and the strategies they use to enhance their performance during the supervision process. After collecting the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire, the practices questionnaire was distributed to the same 60 participants. Each participant's responses to both questionnaires were coded and paired.

5.1.1 Presentation and Analysis of the Questions

Q 01: Fill in this table with letters to refer to the types of skills you employed in each step of your supervision process A= management, B= literacy, C= interpersonal, D= analytical, E= ICTs, F= flexibility, G= research s, H= ethical

Table 5.1

Skills Used in Each Step of the Supervision Process

Options	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Working	00	00	00	00	60	100	00	00	00	00	60	100	00	00	00	00

with the R SUP																
Creating the SCA	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	60	100	00	00	00
Making the R P	00	00	14	23.3	14	23.3	14	23.3	00	00	00	00	14	23.3	00	00
Research Execution	15	25	60	100	15	25	58	96.7	60	100	00	00	60	100	29	48
																.3
Producing + refining the D T	60	100	60	100	18	30	18	30	60	100	00	00	60	100	00	00
preparing for the VV	00	00	00	00	60	100	60	100	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Viva V	60	100	00	00	60	100	00	00	00	00	60	100	00	00	00	00
Post-VV	60	100	14	23.3	60	100	14	23.3	00	00	60	100	00	00	00	00

The data reveals distinct patterns of skill application across eight stages of the research process, as detailed in Table 5.1. The most frequently used skills across the entire research process were interpersonal, flexibility and management skills followed by literacy, ICT and research skills. These were pivotal to all the supervisees at multiple stages, ensuring the successful completion of tasks. On the other hand, analytical skills and ethical skills, while crucial in specific stages and throughout the whole process, were less consistently applied throughout the process.

In the first meetings with their supervisors, all the supervisees (100%) confirmed that interpersonal skills and flexibility were crucial. They used them to build a positive relationship with their supervisors in the early stages. Analytical skills, management, literacy, ICT, research, and ethical skills were not utilized, each with 0%. During the creation of the supervision commitment agreement, flexibility was the

only skill applied, with all 60 supervisees (100%) affirming the importance of following its rules. In making the research proposal, only 14 supervisees (23.3%) confirmed making the research proposal. Literacy, interpersonal, analytical and research skills were crucial for all the 14 supervisees (100%) who made the research proposal. Management, ICT, and flexibility skills were not used, with 0% for each.

Moving forward to the execution of the research, literacy, ICT, and research skills were indispensable for all 60 supervisees (100%). Analytical skills were highly significant for 58 supervisees (96.7%) while ethical skills were used by 29 supervisees (48.3%). Interpersonal and management skills were the least emphasized; with 15 supervisees (25%) using them while flexibility was not highlighted by any respondent. In the stage of writing and refining the text of the dissertation, management, literacy, ICT and research skills were unanimously (100%) applied. Analytical and Interpersonal skills were also notably used, with 18 supervisees (30%) for each indicating their application. Ethical skills and flexibility were not used by the supervisees at this stage.

As the supervision process advanced to the stage of preparing for the viva voce, only two skills were used. Interpersonal and analytical skills were reported by all the respondents (100%) whereas the remaining skills (management, literacy, ICTs, flexibility, research, and ethical skills) were not used by any supervisee (0%). During the viva voce, all the respondents (100%) affirmed using management skills, interpersonal skills, and flexibility. In contrast, literacy, analytical, ICTs, research, and ethical skills were reported not being used by any of the supervisees (0%). In the post-viva voce stage, management skills, interpersonal skills, and flexibility were all identified as crucial by the 60 respondents (100%). Literacy and analytical skills were less used with only 14 (23.3%) respondents reported employing them. However ICTs, research, and ethical skills were not used by the supervisees.

Q 02: How do you describe your role in each of the following stages?

Table 5.2*The Supervisees Roles in Different Stages of the Supervision Process*

Options	Leading		Participating		Following	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Finding the right supervisor	00	00	00	00	60	100
Creating the supervision C A	00	00	00	00	60	100
Making the research proposal	05	8.3	00	00	00	00
Executing the research	27	45	33	55	00	00
Producing the text of the dissertation	42	70	08	13.3	10	16.7
Refining + preparing for the Viva voce	53	88.3	05	8.3	02	3.4
Viva Voce	60	100	00	00	00	00
Post-viva Voce	34	56.7	17	28.3	09	15

Table 5.2 indicates that the roles (leading, participating or following) played by the supervisees varied significantly across the different stages of the supervision process. During the initial stages of finding the right supervisor and creating the supervision commitment agreement, all the 60 supervisees (100%) adopted a following role. As the process progressed to the stage of making the research proposal, there was a notable shift. Here, among the 60 supervisees, only 05 responded to this question (8.3%) asserting that they adopted a leading role. This demonstrates that only few supervisees had an active involvement in shaping the direction of their research.

The execution of the research saw a more balanced distribution of roles. Out of 60 supervisees, 27 (45%) led the process, while 33 respondents (55%) participated alongside their supervisors. None of the supervisees followed. In producing the text of

the dissertation, a majority of supervisees, 42 participants (70%), continued to lead the process, while 8 (13.3%) took a participatory role. A smaller group of 10 supervisees (16.7%) followed, showing that while many supervisees took charge of writing, some relied more on their supervisors for guidance.

As the focus shifted to refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce, leadership among supervisees peaked again. Here, 53 supervisees (88.3%) led the process, with 5 (8.3%) participating and only 2 (3.4%) following. During the viva voce itself, all 60 supervisees (100%) were in a leading role, reflecting their autonomy with no participation or following roles recorded. In the post-viva voce stage, the distribution of roles became more varied. Out of 60 supervisees, 34 (56.7%) led the final steps of the process, while 17 (28.3%) participated, and 9 (15%) followed. This indicates that while a majority of supervisees maintained control over the finalization of their work, some continued to collaborate with their supervisors, and a few relied totally on them to complete the process.

Q 03: What did you do during the first meeting?

Table 5.3

Points Discussed in the First Meeting

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Discussed in general the supervision process	17	28.3
Discussed the content of the dissertation	35	58.3
Discussed the research methodology	48	80
Other (expectations)	12	20

When asked about the first supervisory meeting, Table 5.3 reveals that the supervisees reported that the discussion of the research methodology was focused on by 48 respondents, representing 80% of the sample. Following closely, 35 respondents

(58.3%) reported discussing the content of their dissertation with their supervisors. This indicates that while the content is a significant part of the supervision, it is slightly less emphasized compared to the methodology for the supervisees and their supervisors. In contrast, only 17 respondents (28.3%) mentioned that the supervision process itself was discussed in general terms. This relatively lower percentage suggests that the overall process of supervision might not be a major topic of conversation during meetings. Additionally, 12 respondents (20%) indicated that other topics were discussed during supervision, namely: their expectations.

Q 04: Are you satisfied with your performance during the first meeting?

Table 5.4

The Supervisees' Satisfaction with their Performance during the First Meeting

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	54	90
b) No	06	10

Data in Table 5.4 reveal that the large majority of respondents, 54 out of 60 (70%), reported being satisfied with their performance during the first meeting. This suggests that most participants felt confident during this meeting. On the other hand, only 06 respondents (10%) expressed dissatisfaction with their performance which reflects that participants had concerns or faced challenges during their first meeting.

Q 05: What did you do during the creation of the SCA? You concentrated on:

Table 5.5

The Supervisees' Contribution in the Creation of the SCA

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Communicating your needs and expectations	05	8.3

Formalizing the document	03	05
You concentrated on negotiating terms	00	00
You did not participate in its creation	60	100
Other	00	00

Table 5.5 shows that, during the first meeting, all the supervisees (100%), reported that they did not participate in the creation of the document. Yet, some supervisees, 5 respondents (8.3%), focused on communicating their needs and expectations which indicates that while adhering to this administrative document, they felt it necessary to assert their goals and requirements. An even smaller group, 3 respondents (5%), concentrated on formalizing the document, showing that very few were engaged in the detailed aspects of documentation during the initial meeting. No respondents reported concentrating on negotiating terms or engaging in other activities.

Q 06: What did you do during the development of the research proposal?

Table 5.6

The Supervisees' Contribution in Making the Research Proposal

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
You reviewed research proposals/similar research and got inspired from	14	23.3
You relied on your understanding of the research proposal and its components	09	15
You collaborated with the supervisor	14	23.3
Other	00	00

When asked about the practices and skills employed during the development of the research proposal, only 14 participants responded. The results in table 5.6 indicate that all the 14 supervisees (23.3%) reviewed existing research proposals or similar research to gain inspiration and collaborated with their supervisor during the development process. This indicates that they sought external examples to guide their own proposal, leveraging past work to inform their approach; they chose to work closely with their supervisor, likely benefiting from direct guidance and feedback. Nine supervisees (15%) relied on their understanding of the research proposal and its components. This suggests that many supervisees felt confident in their knowledge and ability to draft the proposal based on their existing understanding. No respondents reported engaging in activities outside these categories.

Q 07: What did you do during the execution of the research?

Table 5.7

The Supervisees' Execution of the Research

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Selected 03 studies independently, validated them with the supervisor, then read and critically analysed them, then sent them to the supervisor for review	28	46.7
Selected many studies, validated 03 with the supervisor, compared and contrasted them then discussed the findings	30	50
No answer	02	3.3

After the data were collected, they were thematically organized, resulting in three categories of findings, which are presented in table 5.7. The results reveal that 30 (50%), half of the participants, reported that they selected many articles, then read and selected three collaboratively with the supervisor, compared and contrasted them, and

then discussed the findings. 28 participants (46.7%) indicated that they selected three studies independently, validated them with the supervisor, read them, and critically analyzed them. Lastly, 02 participants (3.3%) did not provide an answer.

Q 08: What did you do during the dissertation refinement stage?

Table 5.8

The Supervisees' Contribution in Refining the Dissertation

Options		Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
You used outlines and structured writing sessions.		14	23.3
You relied on self-editing and proofreading.		32	53.3
Other	Relied on the supervisor to refine	14	23.3
	Paid someone to do so	03	5

As shown in table 5.8, the participants utilized different methods to refine their dissertations. The majority, 32 participants (53.3%), relied on self-editing and proofreading while 14 participants (23.3%) used outlines and structured writing sessions. In the 'Other' category, 14 participants (23.3%) relied on the supervisor, while three participants (5%) sought external assistance to refine their dissertations.

Q 09: Did you seek input from peers or other supervisors to enhance your dissertation before submission?

Table 5.9

Seeking Input from Others before Submission

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	51	85
b) No	09	15

Table 5.9 shows that the majority of the participants, 51 participants (85%) sought input from peers or other supervisors to enhance their dissertation before submission. In contrast, 9 participants (15%) did not seek any external input.

Q10: If yes, did you consult with your supervisor before doing so?

Table 5.10

Consulting with the Supervisors before Asking for External Help

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	11	21.6
b) No	40	78.4

As demonstrates table 5.10, among the 51 participants who sought input from peers or other supervisors, 40 participants (78.4%) did not consult their supervisor prior to seeking additional input. Conversely, only 11 participants (21.6%) did.

Q 11: What did you do during the preparation for the viva voce?

Table 5.11

The Supervisees' Approaches to Preparing for the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
You simulated viva voce sessions	60	100
You revised the dissertation chapters	60	100
You wrote practice responses	42	70
You prepared a detailed outline	60	100
You prepared visuals	37	61.7
Other (Asking the peers who Masterd)	29	48.3

As revealed in table 5.11, the supervisees engaged in various activities to prepare for the viva voce, reflecting different approaches. All 60 participants (100%) simulated viva voce sessions, revised their dissertations, and prepared a detailed outline making this the most common preparation method. Additionally, 42 participants (70%) wrote practice responses while preparing visuals was done by 37 participants (61.7%). 29 participants reported another preparatory activity which consisted of asking the colleagues who had already Masterd before them.

Q 12: Did you seek input from peers or other supervisors/teachers to enhance your performance before the viva voce?

Table 5.12

Seeking Input from Others to Prepare for the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

Table 5.12 reports that, all the respondents (95%) sought input from peers or other supervisors and teachers to enhance their performance before the viva voce.

Q 13: If yes, did you consult with your supervisor before doing so?

Table 5.13

Consulting with the Supervisors before Asking for External Help during the Preparation for the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	00	00
b) No	60	100

All the participants who sought input from peers or other supervisors and teachers to enhance their performance before the viva voce did not consult their supervisor before doing so as confirmed in table 5.13.

Q 14: What did you do during the viva voce?

Table 5.14

The Supervisees' Practices during the Viva Voce

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Presented the research within the time allocated	60	100
Paid attention to the questions and remarks and showed interest	60	100
Demonstrated agreement and willingness to adjust	60	100
Used the body language to present	11	18.3
Used visuals to present the research	07	11.7

The supervisees' responses to the question about the actions taken during the viva voce were analyzed thematically, resulting in five main categories as presented in table 5.14. All the participants, 60 (100%), briefly presented their research, and showed interest during the discussion and towards the suggested adjustment. Additionally, 11 participants (18.3%) used body language to enhance their presentation, while 7 participants (11.7%) used visuals to present their research.

Q 15: What did you do after the viva voce?

Table 5.15*The Procedures Followed by the Supervisees after the Viva Voce*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
You introduced the required corrections before the final submission	30	50
You introduced only some minor corrections	12	20
You submitted without modification	15	25
No answer	03	05

After the viva voce, the participants took different approaches. Table 5.15 shows that half of the respondents, 30 (50%), confirmed introducing the required corrections before submitting. 12 participants (20%) reported that they implemented only minor corrections. In contrast, 15 participants (25%) acknowledged that they submitted their work without amending while three participants (5%) did not respond to this question.

Q 16: Throughout the whole supervision process, did you adhere to ethical skills?

Table 5.16*The Supervisees' Adherence to Ethical Skills during the Supervision Process*

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	47	78.3
b) No	13	21.7

As shown in Table 5.16, throughout the entire supervision process, 47 participants (78.3%) confirmed adhering to ethical skills, while 13 participants (21.7%) acknowledged not doing so.

Q 17: If yes, please explain how did you use the ethical skills

Table 5.17

The Supervisees' Ethical Practices

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Honesty / faithfulness in reporting data	25	41.6
Acknowledging the references	60	100

For those who adhered to ethical skills during the supervision process, the data gathered underwent content analysis and were grouped into categories reflecting similar or closely related meanings. As revealed in table 5.17, the practices reported answers include: 60 participants (100%) acknowledged their references while 25 participants (41.6%) emphasized honesty and faithfulness in reporting data.

Q 18: Throughout the whole supervision process, how were your time management skills?

Table 5.18

The Supervisees' Management Skills

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
You managed your time well	22	36.7
You did not manage your time well but you were within the deadlines	34	56.7
You asked for deadlines extensions	04	6.6

Table 5.18 demonstrates that the participants reported varying levels of time management skills throughout the supervision process. 22 participants (36.7%) managed their time well, 34 participants (56.7%) did not manage time effectively but still met the deadlines and four participants (6.6%) requested extensions for deadlines.

Q 19: Throughout the whole supervision process and during supervisory meetings you used to:

Table 5.19

The Supervisees' Practices Regarding the Supervisors' Input

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Take notes of the supervisor's feedback	33	55
Record the supervisor's speech	18	30
Listen to what the supervisor said	09	15
Other	00	00

Table 5.19 reveals that the respondents employed various practices in response to their supervisors' input. More than half of the participants, 33 (55%), attested that they took note of their supervisor's feedback. 18 participants (30%) recorded their supervisor's speech, and 9 participants (15%) focused on listening to the supervisor.

Q 20: Throughout the whole supervision process, have you used ICTs?

Table 5.20

The Supervisees' Use of ICTs

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Yes	60	100
b) No	00	00

As reveal the data in Table 5.20, all the participants, 60 (100%), reported using ICTs.

Q 21: Explain why /why not

Table 5.21

The Supervisees' Justification for Using ICTs

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Provide access to digital resources	60	100
Facilitate the search and organise the work	47	78.3
Facilitate collaboration and communication	53	88.3

The participants provided various reasons for using ICTs during the supervision process. The data was carefully analyzed and grouped into categories reflecting similar or closely related meanings. The results presented in table 5.21 showed that 60 participants (100%) used ICTs to provide access to digital resources, 53 participants (88.3%) utilized them to facilitate collaboration and communication, and 47 participants (78.3%) relied on icts to locate the literature and organize their work efficiently.

Q22: Throughout the whole supervision process, you used to:

Table 5.22

The Supervisees' Practices Regarding Sending Work to their Supervisors

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Send work regularly to your supervisor	24	40
Wait for the supervisor to ask you to send work	36	60

Table 5.22 shows that the participants reported different approaches to sending their work to their supervisors. 24 participants (40%) regularly sent their work to the supervisor on their own initiative, while 36 participants (60%) submitted their work only after their supervisor requested it.

Q 23: Throughout the whole process, how did you face challenges? You used to:

Table 5.23

The Supervisees' Practices Regarding the Challenges they Face

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
Find solutions independently	11	18.3
Collaborate with the supervisor	14	23.3
Ask help from colleagues or other supervisors	37	61.7
Other	00	00

Table 5.23 reveals that the participants used various strategies to overcome challenges. A majority, 37 participants (61.7%), sought help from peers or other supervisors. 14 participants (23.3%) collaborated with their supervisor, while 11 participants (18.3%) found solutions independently.

Q 24: How often did you take into consideration/incorporate your supervisor's feedback.

Table 5.24

The Frequency of Incorporating the Supervisors' Feedback

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a) Always	16	26.7
b) Often	07	11.7

c) Sometimes	11	18.3
d) Rarely	26	43.3

The supervisees varied in how frequently they incorporated their supervisor's feedback. Table 5.24 shows that the majority, 26 participants (43.3%), reported that they rarely considered their supervisor's feedback; while 11 (18.3%) reported sometimes doing so. 16 participants (26.7%) confirmed they always did, while 07 participants (11.7%) acknowledged that they often incorporated the feedback received.

Q 25: Are you satisfied with your performance during the supervision process?

Table 5.25

The Supervisees' Self-Evaluation of their Performance in the Supervision Process

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
a)Yes	42	70
b)No	18	30

Although the respondents expressed total satisfaction towards different stages of the supervision process, their satisfaction with their overall performance differs. Table 5.25 shows that 42 participants (70%) confirmed that they evaluate themselves positively while 18 participants (30%) did not.

Q 26: What would you do differently?

Table 5.26

Reflections and Proposed Adjustments to Supervision Practices by the Supervisees

Options	Occurrences count	Percentage (%)
I would be more independent	07	38.8

I would be more flexible	09	50
I would be more knowledgeable about research	18	100
I would start the research earlier	16	88.9
I would ask the supervisor for more help and clarification	14	77.8

Among the 18 participants who expressed dissatisfaction with their performance during the supervision process, several suggestions were offered for improvement. These suggestions were categorized and are summarized in table 5.26. Seven participants (38.8%) indicated that they would be more independent, nine participants (50%) would be more flexible, and all 18 participants (100%) would be more knowledgeable about research. Additionally, 16 participants (88.9%) would start their research earlier, and 14 participants (77.8%) would ask for more help and clarification.

The following section will be devoted to providing a general presentation of the data gathered through the supervisees' practices questionnaire. The table reveals the skills/practices used by each supervisee during each of the supervision process steps.

5.1.2 Holistic Presentation of Data from the Supervisees Practices Questionnaire

Table 5.27

Each Participant's Practices in Each Step of the Supervision Process

	Practices in Step 1	Practices in Step 3	Practices in Step 4	Practices in Step 5	Practices in Step 6	Practices in Step 7	Practices in Step 8
SP 1	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research	Managerial Literacy ICTs Research External sources	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial
SP 2	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research Analytical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Research External sources	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial

[illegible]

[illegible]

SP 55	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research Analytical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial
SP 56	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research Analytical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial
SP 57	Interpersonal Flexibility	Research Literacy Analytical Interpersonal	Literacy ICTs Research Managerial Interpersonal Analytical Ethical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Analytical Research	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial Literacy Analytical
SP 58	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research Analytical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Analytical Research	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial Literacy
SP 59	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research Analytical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial
SP 60	Interpersonal Flexibility	/	Literacy ICTs Research Analytical	Managerial Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interpersonal	Flexibility Managerial Interpersonal	Flexibility Interpersonal Managerial

Table 5.27 provides a holistic presentation of the data gathered through the supervisees' practices questionnaire. It details the skills/practices employed by each participating supervisee during each of the supervision process steps. The analysis of this table reveals that the supervisees' practices can be classified into two major groups. One group includes the supervisees who used many skills throughout the different stages while the other includes the supervisees who used the skills in a less integrative manner throughout the different stages. This group is further divided into four categories. However, the answers of five participants (SP 01, 08, 12, 13, 50) could not be included within any of the categories as they provided distinct answers. There are no skills related to the second step of the supervision process (creating the supervision agreement commitment) because the participants did not contribute in its creation, rather, it was provided by the administration.

The first group includes 14 participants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17, 24, 28, 33, 36, 42, 47, 49, 53, and 57) who used a wide range of skills in each stage of the supervision process. These supervisees made use of interpersonal and flexibility skills in working with their supervisors. Furthermore, they employed research, literacy, interpersonal and analytical skills to be able to develop the research proposal which informed their

research in ulterior stages. As far as the research execution is concerned, these supervisees managed their research well through the use of managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICT, research, and ethical skills. As the supervision process progresses to the dissertation writing and refining stages, this group of participants employed managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICT, and research skills to effectively write their dissertations. Before the viva voce and during their preparation, these respondents applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the oral defence, they used managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility. After the viva voce, they applied flexibility, managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to literacy and analytical skills to handle the corrections and the final submission.

The practices collected from 25 respondents (SP 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 46, 48, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 59, and 60) represent the first category of the second group. These respondents used interpersonal skills and flexibility to enable them to work with their supervisors; however, they did not use any skills in the step related to the research proposal because they did not develop a research proposal before starting the research journey. While doing the research, they employed ICTs, literacy, research and analytical skills to be able to conduct the research properly. During the dissertation writing stage, the members of this category employed managerial, literacy and research skills besides ICTs. For them, these skills helped them better produce the dissertation text. Moving to the stages related to the viva voce, before the viva voce, these respondents applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During and after the viva voce, they used managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility.

Another group which involves 10 supervisees (SP 05, 14, 15, 18, 20, 25, 39, 44, 45, and 58) constitutes the second category of the second group. This category used interpersonal and flexibility skills to help them work with the assigned supervisor; however, they did not develop a research proposal too. During the research execution, they employed literacy, research, analytical and ICT skills. While writing and refining their dissertation, they made use of managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICT, and research skills. During their preparatory phase for the viva voce, these

respondents applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During and after the viva voce, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility.

Four supervisees (SP 03, 07, 10, 19) employed similar skills throughout the different stages of the supervision process. They used interpersonal skills and flexibility in working with their supervisors. Moreover, they used literacy, analytical, ICT, research, and ethical skills during the research process. The writing and refining stage witnessed their use of managerial, literacy, research skills and ICTs. While they were preparing for the viva voce, these respondents applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility.

The last category that could be highlighted from the supervisees' practices contains two participants (SP 02 and 16). These two used flexibility and interpersonal skills to manage working with their supervisors. Their use of literacy, ICT, research and analytical skills is what characterizes this category's research execution. For the dissertation text production and refinement, SP 02 and 16 employed managerial, literacy, ICTs and research skills besides their dependence on external paid sources. While they were preparing for the viva voce, these respondents applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility.

As stated previously, SP 01, 08, 12, 13, 50 could not be grouped with any of the mentioned categories. SP 01 used flexibility and interpersonal skills to manage working with the supervisor and literacy, ICT, and research skills to conduct the research. This participant employed managerial, literacy, ICTs and research skills besides external paid sources. During the viva voce preparing phase, SP 01 applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility. SP 08 made use of interpersonal and flexibility skills in working with their supervisors. Furthermore, the use of literacy, ICTs, research and ethical skills characterize this participant's practice in executing the research. While writing and refining the dissertation, managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICTs, and research skills were employed. During the

viva voce preparing phase, SP 08 applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility.

SP 12 depended on interpersonal skills and flexibility to work with the supervisor and referred to literacy, ICTs, research and ethical skills to do the research. In the writing and refining stage, managerial, literacy, ICTs and research skills were used. Before the viva voce, this respondent applied analytical and interpersonal skills to prepare for it. During and after the viva voce, SP 12 used managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility. SP 13 depended on interpersonal skills and flexibility to work with the supervisor and referred to managerial, literacy, analytical, ICTs, research and ethical skills to do the research. In the writing and refining stage, managerial, literacy, ICTs, and research skills were employed. Before the viva voce, this respondent applied analytical and interpersonal skills to prepare for it. During and after the viva voce, SP 13 used managerial, literacy, interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility. SP 50 used flexibility and interpersonal skills to manage working with the supervisor and literacy, analytical, ICTs, research and ethical skills to conduct the research. Furthermore, the use of managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICTs, and research skills characterizes SP's 50 practices during the writing stage. As for the stages related to the viva voce, before the viva voce this respondent applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce, this supervisee used managerial, interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility while after the viva this participant used managerial, literacy, interpersonal skills and flexibility.

From this analysis, it can be noticed that the practices of the supervisees are similar during particular stages regardless of their overall performance; these include the use of interpersonal skills and flexibility during the first step which is related to working with the supervisor. Other skills are related to the sixth and seventh steps where all the participants used interpersonal and analytical skills to prepare for the viva voce and flexibility besides managerial and interpersonal skills during the viva voce.

In the upcoming section, the interview findings will be presented to offer deeper insights into these practices, shedding light on the context and nuances behind the supervisees' answers.

5.2 Results of the Supervisees' Practices Interview

As formerly discussed in section 3.4.2.2, the opportunity to explore the specific practices and the challenges that accompany them was deliberately reserved for this interview, allowing for a more in-depth and nuanced understanding that the questionnaire alone could not provide. Through 16 open-ended questions and extended probing, the interview was designed to fill this gap by providing the supervisees with the opportunity to discuss their practices in detail and share their personal experiences. The practices semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same 20 informants with whom the perceptions interviews were conducted. The data collected was subject to the same thematic procedures as the perceptions interviews and underwent the same coding, pairing and storing procedures as the questionnaires.

5.2.1 Working with the Assigned Supervisor

5.2.1.1 The Challenges Faced in Working with the Supervisor. When addressing challenges in working with a supervisor through Q 01, several key areas often emerge based on the interviewees' answers:

a. Communication Gaps: 15 informants (SP 01, 02, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20) cited communication issues as a major challenge in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. These gaps manifested in various forms, such as unclear/vague instructions, misinterpretation of messages, or infrequent communication. This lack of regular communication which left them feeling isolated or unsupported, particularly when working on complex tasks or navigating difficult stages of their projects. In this regards, SP 07 stated:

“I used to force myself to guess what my supervisor wanted because the emails sent were so brief and vague ... There were times when I didn't hear

from my supervisor for weeks, leaving me stuck without knowing how to advance.”

b. Expectation Misalignment: all the interviewees confirmed that there were misunderstandings about roles, responsibilities, deadlines, and the overall direction of the project. This disconnect can result in dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and even conflict, as each party may feel that the other is not meeting their expectations. The following comment made by SP 14 best describes this:

“We had different expectations right from the beginning. I thought my supervisor would be more involved so I expected more guidance and support, but my supervisor for some reason assumed I already knew what to do and expected me to be completely independent.”

c. Personality Conflicts: differences in personalities impacted the working relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. 13 informants (SP 01, 02, 05, 07, 08, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20) reported that the differences in temperament, work style, or communication preferences created tension and made collaboration challenging. Personality conflicts led to the feelings of stress, reduced the supervisee’s engagement, and ultimately affected the quality of work produced. Here are some excerpts of what some supervisees said:

- “My supervisor was very assertive, and I often felt intimidated, which made it hard to share my own ideas.” SP 01
- “My supervisor was very controlling, wanting to oversee every detail, which clashed with my need for some autonomy.” SP 07
- “My supervisor’s confrontational style made it hard for me to ask questions. I felt like I was walking on eggshells all the time.” SP 10
- “My supervisor’s perfectionism made every interaction stressful because I knew they would criticize even the smallest mistake.” SP 14
- “I’m more of a collaborative person, but my supervisor preferred working alone, which made me feel excluded from important decisions.” SP 18

- “My supervisor was very critical and rarely offered positive feedback, which made me dread our meetings. It felt like nothing I did was ever good enough.”
SP 20

d. Lack of Feedback and Support: Four interviewees (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20) reported a major difficulty in working with their supervisors because of the lack of support from their supervisors whereas 11 supervisees (SP 01, 03, 05, 07, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20) reported lack of feedback besides the lack of support. They further attested that they often relied on timely and constructive feedback and support to refine their work, gain insights, and improve their skills. When the feedback is sparse or delayed it made them feel directionless and unsure of how to proceed. Similarly, a perceived lack of support, whether emotional, professional, or academic, led them to feel isolated and frustrated. SP16 puts it as: *“I rarely got any feedback, and when I did, it was too vague to be helpful. I felt like I was just guessing what needed to be done.”* On the same line of thoughts, SP 10 said: *“there was little to no support from my supervisor. I felt abandoned, especially when I hit a rough patch and really needed guidance.”*

e. Delayed Correction: two supervisees (SP 05, 20) highlighted the issue of supervisors not addressing mistakes or problems in their work promptly. According to them, this delay was problematic, as it allowed errors to persist and potentially compound over time. When corrections were not provided in a timely manner, they continued on an incorrect path, investing time and effort into work that ultimately needed significant revision. Concerning this, SP 05 said: *“by the time my supervisor pointed out the mistakes, I had already moved so far ahead that it felt like I had to start all over again. It was incredibly disheartening.”* while SP 09 declared: *“There were corrections but they came too late, after I had already invested a lot of time. It made me question whether I was heading in the right direction at all.”*

5.2.1.2 The skills Used to Overcome the Challenges. Q 02 which aims at exploring the main practices adopted by the supervisees to face the challenges in working with their supervisors revealed one major skill. Unexpectedly, all the informants admitted that they were unable to overcome the challenges they faced in

working with their supervisors. Instead of addressing the issues head-on or finding effective solutions, they opted for coping with the situation and adapt to it in ways that allowed them to avoid confrontation or further conflict. This coping strategy was often related to two key interpersonal practices.

a. Silence: 12 informants (SP 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 08, 12, 13, 15, 18, and 19) chose to remain silent when faced with communication gaps, expectation misalignments, personality conflicts. Rather than confronting their supervisors or seeking clarification, they decided to intentionally overlook the problems and overcome them. This approach was often driven by a desire to avoid potential repercussions or additional stress. The following comments are extracted from the interviewees' responses to illustrate this idea:

- “I just kept quiet when things didn’t make sense. It seemed easier than asking questions and risking more confusion or conflict.” SP 12
- “There were many times I wanted to speak up, but I chose not to. I figured it was better to stay silent and avoid any potential fallout.” SP 13
- “I realized that bringing up issues didn’t lead anywhere, so I stopped trying and just let things slide.” SP 19

b. Apologizing: When conflicts arose, particularly those rooted in personality clashes or misaligned expectations, eight informants (SP 07, 09, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, and 20) often found themselves apologizing, even if they didn’t feel at fault. This behaviour was done on purpose as a way to de-escalate the situation and avoid further tension with their supervisors. By apologizing, they aimed to smooth over the conflict and maintain a working relationship, even if it meant compromising their own feelings or viewpoints. While this approach might have temporarily eased the tension, it also left them feeling disempowered, as they were not able to fully express their own needs or concerns. The following statements best demonstrate this perspective:

- “I often apologized during disagreements, not because I believed I was at fault, but because it was the quickest way to end the conflict” SP 09

- “I used to say sorry a lot to avoid any further argument. It felt like the only safe way to keep things from getting worse.” SP 20

5.2.2 Making the Research Proposal

5.2.2.1 The challenges in Developing the Research Proposal. Concerning the challenges encountered in making the research proposal. The responses to Q 03 revealed that the five informants who made one did not face any challenges in making the research proposal.

5.2.2.2 The skills Used in Making the Research Proposal. The skills employed by the informants, as targeted through Q 05, include research, literacy and analytical skills to find the appropriate articles, critically read them and write their research proposals. Besides, they also highlighted the use of interpersonal skills. Precisely, they used to: “*collaborate with the supervisor*”06, 09, 11, 17 “*communicate with the colleagues*” SP 04, 06, 09, 17 or “*consults trusted teachers/supervisors*” SP 11, 17.

5.2.3 Executing the Research

5.2.3.1 The Approach Used in Executing the Research. The interviewees reported in their responses to Q 05 two main approaches to executing the research.

a. Independent approach: 15 participants (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 13, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20) confirmed that they relied on themselves in executing the research emphasising their autonomy from the supervisor’s input. In this regard SP 16 stated: “*it was most of the time me doing the whole job based on my own decisions, the fact that my supervisor directly received my dissertation ready best proves it.*”

b. Collaborative approach: five interviewees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17) attested that their approach to executing the research relied on a combination of their autonomous skills informed by the supervisor’s input. This is highlighted by SP 04 who said: “*the research was done smoothly because we were trinomials more than we were a supervisor and two supervisees; we used to discuss everything until we reach something all the parties agree upon.*”

5.2.3.2 The challenges Faced in Executing the Research. The major challenge reported by the informants was the lack of guidance. The responses to Q 06 revealed that this lack was multi faceted as 15 of them (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) reported lack of guidance on how to execute the research while two supervisees (SP 04 and 11) reported lack of guidance on how to access relevant and up to date literature.

5.2.3.3 The Skills Used to Overcome the Challenges. In answering Q 08 all the informants reported the use of literacy, ICT and research skills through searching in online databases and libraries. In this regards here are some excerpts from their answers:

- “When we undertake research it is clear that we use research and literacy skills. I was in a continuous searching; reading and note taking process which made me progress. ICTs also were widely used to overcome any challenges because nowadays technology is integrated in all the domains including education” SP 03
- “I used to widen the research for the appropriate information through the internet, carefully integrate it within my research.” SP 16

Besides, 18 interviewees (SP 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 20) reported the use of analytical skills to overcome the challenges faced during the research execution. Regarding ethical skills, they were employed by 17 interviewees (SP 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 20). A small number consisting of six participants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 13, 17) reported the use of management and six interviewees (SP 04, 06, 08, 09, 11, and 17) reported the use of interpersonal skills at this stage of the supervision process.

5.2.4 Writing and Refining the Dissertation

5.2.4.1 The Approach Used in Writing the Dissertation. The informants reported in their answers to Q 08 approaches belonging to two different categories:

a. Paraphrasing: five out of the 20 informants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17,) mentioned paraphrasing as their approach to writing and refining their dissertations. They reported that they highlighted relevant ideas and used them using their own writing style, later they referred to the supervisors' feedback to enhance it. In this regard SP 04 said: *"I relied on my thoughts"*, SP 09, added: *"without cheating"* while SP 17 highlighted: *"using my critical thinking abilities."*

b. AI assisted paraphrasing and ideas generation: 12 informants (SP01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, and 20) reported using AI tools for Ideas generation whereas two informants (SP 15, 16) indicated that they relied on artificial intelligence services in terms of paraphrasing. This is confirmed by SP 01 who said: *"I used to gather ideas, categorize them then ask AI apps to paraphrase and enhance them."* SP 16 on the other hand, stated: *"ChatGPT saved my time as I provided it with content and asked it to generate ideas, comments and criticism about it."*

5.2.4.2 The challenges in Writing and Refining the Research. All the informants reported facing difficulties related to writing and refining the dissertation in their answers to Q 09. They reported that they faced difficulties in putting their ideas into words and maintaining a coherent narrative throughout the dissertation besides a high level of motivation to finish. In this regard SP 04 said:

"Maintaining a consistent and unified narrative across the entire dissertation was very difficult as there were times when the connection between different sections was not clear which made the document feel disjointed. Additionally, staying motivated during the edition phase, where attention to details was critical, was also a challenge."

Furthermore, they argued that generally the refinement touched many parts after the dissertation was almost complete. SP 05 said in this regard: "I was asked to do foundational corrections when I had not enough time", similarly SP 20 stated: "I got overloaded as the dissertation was corrected after I finished."

5.2.4.3 The skills Used to Overcome the Challenges. The interviewees reported in their responses to Q 10 using different skills to overcome the challenges

they faced in writing and refining their dissertations. All the supervisees reported the use of management, literacy, ICT and research skills. Some supervisees add the following:

a. Collaboration: 11 informants SP (02, 04, 06, 07, 09, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 19) reported that they tried to collaborate with their supervisors to direct and support them to overcome these challenges. SP 11 stated: *“in rough times my supervisor was my saviour.”* SP 04 mentioned that she: *“tried many solutions but what proved effective was revising the dissertation with the supervisor who provided both assistance in maintaining a coherent narrative and support in maintaining motivation.”*

b. Modelling and Communication: 11supervisees (SP 04, 05, 06, 08, 09,11, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20) reported that they referred to other dissertations by analyzing their approaches and trying to follow them. They examined previous dissertations in terms of content, structure and way of writing so that these completed dissertations guide them. SP stated: *“I used to refer to past dissertations and take them as an example to follow in order to figure out how to overcome my writing and refining challenges.”*

c. External Paid Writing and Proofreading: three interviewees (SP 01, 02, 16) indicated that they asked external individuals to write and/or refine for them. They admitted paying for these services to ensure the quality of their final submissions. SP 16stated: *“ I don ’t know if it is ethical, but I used to seek help from others to help me write or refine difficult parts, I get my parts done and they get money in return”* while SP 01confessed: *“honestly speaking, I used to pay people to write and polish parts of my dissertation whenever I got stuck.”*

5.2.5 Preparing for the Viva Voce

5.2.5.1 The Approach Used in Preparing for the Viva Voce. With regard to Q11, the supervisees indicated that they followed varied strategies to prepare for the viva voce including:

a. Simulating the viva voce with the supervisor and/ or colleagues: all the participants highlighted that their preparation focused on the oral presentation of their

dissertations. These practice sessions were reported very “*helpful*” by the interviewees. SP 08 mentioned that: “these rehearsal sessions boosted my confidence and gave me an idea about the evaluation I would receive”

b. Revising the dissertation and Preparing Notes/Outline: all the supervisees reported revising their dissertation and noting the important ideas as part of an outline to be presented in front of the board of examiners. The comments of SP 18 and 13 best demonstrate this idea.

- “I read the dissertation carefully then I made an outline to facilitate the revision and to present it to the board of examiners as we were asked to.” SP 13
- “I read twice the text of my dissertation to keep in mind the structure and the order of the dissertation parts. I took some notes and kept them with me even during the viva to check in case I lose ideas.” SP 18

c. Preparing Visuals and questions and answers for the viva voce examination: 12 interviewees SP 01, 03, 04, 06, 07, 09, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20 reported that preparing charts/slides which provide the main points of the dissertation as well as anticipating questions about them helped in equipping them with the necessary knowledge to manage the viva voce. SP’s 12 comment best demonstrate this:

“I felt I was confidently ready on all levels. I had all the necessary details about the dissertation in front of me in case I forget anything and I was alert to questions, I knew the questions would be related to what I prepared if not similar”.

d. Asking the colleagues who already had their viva voce: all the informants reported that they intentionally asked their classmates and colleagues about the viva especially those who had the same board of examiners as theirs to get an idea about their working style. In this regard, they stated the following:

- “Asking gave me a clear of what to expect and how to navigate the process.” SP 06

- “Asking the others about their viva may seem ineffective but I was lost before that and asking familiarized me with how to present, how to receive questions and how to best answer them.” SP 18
- “It allowed to have an idea about what my examiners will focus on” SP 13

5.2.6 Challenges Met in the Pre while Post Viva voce

5.2.6.1 Challenges Met in the Pre and While Viva Voce Phases. As far as Q 12 is concerned, all the informants expressed that the major challenges they faced were stress and anxiety before and during the viva voce. SP 02 stated that he: *“could not stay calm”*. SP 08 indicated that her *“English betrayed her because of stress”* while SP 17 said that *“she could not sleep nor eat before the viva whereas I felt my heart as skipping beats during the presentation”*.

5.2.6.2 Challenges Met in the Post Viva Voce. After the viva, all the informants stated that they were impatient to know the results. 12 informants (SP 02, 04, 05, 06, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, and 19) reported that they struggled with the required corrections especially because they experienced difficulty in meeting the supervisor for the final submission. In this regard, SP 10 stated that:

“It was very difficult and tiring to decide about the required correction as the feedback was vague and I could not figure how to implement it given the fact that meeting the supervisor during that period almost impossible as they were all busy with the huge number of candidates they supervise or examine. For me, it was the most challenging period ever.”

Additionally, 18 interviewees (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) noted that the administration made it even more difficult for them and described it as “torturous” SP 01 and 09, “unbearable” SP 02, 10, 16, 19 and “unmanageable” SP 05 and 12. SP 06 summarized it as: *“after going through intense hardship and just when I thought it was finally over, the endless paperwork and forms to be filled for the final submission emerged suddenly.”*

5.2.6.3 The skills Used to Overcome the Challenges. The interviewees unanimously reported in their responses to Q 13 that they just “*coped with the situation*” whether the challenge was stress/anxiety, meeting the supervisor or handling the administrative difficulties.

Before the viva voce, all the interviewees confirmed collaborating more with the supervisor. This was shown in their discussions regarding the performance, the questions and the process as a whole. Furthermore, they widely used literacy and management skills through highlighting and revising the most important elements to be presented within the timeframe. In this regard, SP 15 said: “days before the viva, I met my supervisor and showed her the presentation; she refined it with me and suggested some questions which she anticipated”. Similarly, SP 03 stated that “the supervisor added and/or omitted ideas, provided some valuable pieces of advice to manage stress, the criticism and the questions.”

During the viva voce, all the informants reported that although it was stressful, they made sure to manage the presentation within the timeframe; they were precise and concise. They also highlighted the use of interpersonal skills through demonstrating their interest in the questions and the remarks the panel of the examiners raised and discussed. SP 08 acknowledged having to “agree with all their remarks and appreciate them, the last thing I wanted was to give a negative impression or irritate one of the examiners.” SP 11, on the other hand, proclaimed using “communicative skills to present well, discuss the content and the remarks in an academic and respectful way while taking into consideration time because the time set was limited.”

After the viva voce, all the interviewees reported that they were patient in waiting for their supervisors and patient with the administration. 15 supervisees (SP01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20) reported that they had to solicit the administration for the final submission. In this regard, SP 10 said: “I was moving from an office to another like a bee” while SP 17 stated that: “handling the post viva stage was physically and emotionally taxing.”

05 interviewees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, and 17) reported the use of literacy and analytical skills after the viva in order to introduce the corrections and submit the final version. The following comments from SP 06 and 17 highlight this idea:

- “I scheduled a final supervision session with my supervisor; we analyzed and evaluated the required correction to decide upon the modification to be implemented.” SP 17
- “I choose the correction that made sense to me, applied it then shared it with the supervision to get the permission to submit.” SP 06

5.2.7 The Incorporation of the Supervisors’ Feedback throughout the Supervision Process

Q 14 which addresses the supervisees’ feedback incorporation elicited three distinct categories of answers. 11 supervisees (SP 01, 03, 05, 07, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 20) reported that they rarely received feedback and they did not take it into consideration. In this regard, SP 01 said: “I would have incorporated the feedback of the supervisor if I received any” whereas SP 05 stated: *“I did not receive frequent or consistent feedback, I received some remarks every once in a while that were not precise or clear, it is difficult to take them into consideration.”*

Four interviewees (SP 02, 08, 13, 19) reported that they used to receive feedback which was most of the time “vague” for SP 02 and 19, “not narrowed down” for SP 19 and “too general” for SP 02. Therefore, they reported that they incorporated the remarks they could understand and apply and discard the rest. In this regard, SP 02 stated: “to be honest, I used to read the feedback and try to spot remarks I understand and can implement, for what I cannot apply I just find an alternative for it”.

Five informants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17); however, reported that they followed the supervisors’ feedback and took it into consideration throughout the whole supervision process. SP 04 stated that: *“during all the stages of the supervision process, I integrated and applied my supervisor’s feedback as it was primary to upgrade my work.”* Similarly, SP 13 said: *“I am convinced that the feedback I used to receive was the secret behind effectively completing the research work.”*

5.2.8 Seeking help from Other Supervisors or Peers

Concerning the responses of the supervisees to Q 15, five informants (SP 04, 06, 09, 11 and 17) reported that they did not seek assistance from other supervisors during the supervision except for the preparation for their viva voce. This lack of consultation might indicate that the supervisees trust and rely on their supervisor's guidance. SP 04 said: *"I did not feel it was right to involve others due to concerns about conflicting advice from one side and disrespecting undermining my supervisor's authority from another side."*

Three supervisees SP 01, 12, 13 expressed a desire to consult peers or other supervisors but reported that their supervisor discouraged or forbade them from doing so. This restriction could stem from the supervisors' belief that external input might interfere with the established guidance or create inconsistencies in the feedback provided. SP's 13 comment: *"my supervisor used to say he is the supervisor and nobody else is"* best illustrate this.

The remaining 12 supervisees (SP 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20) who did consult their peers and/or other supervisors confirmed that they used to ask direct questions, sometimes accompanied with documents, related to the challenging elements for them. They noted that while such consultations were sometimes confusing, they were mostly beneficial. The external feedback provided diverse perspectives and insights that often helped them streamline their performance, saving both time and effort. When they were asked about consulting the supervisor before doing so, one of them, SP 19 said:

"Why would I ask the supervisor before getting help that's normally provided by him but which he probably didn't offer ... Talking to peers and other supervisors was a bit confusing sometimes, but it was mostly really helpful. It gave me different perspectives that made preparing easier and saved me a lot of time and effort."

5.2.9 The Supervisees' Evaluation of their General Performance throughout the Supervision Process

When asked about their evaluation of their performance during the supervision process through Q 16, all the participants expressed satisfaction with their performance throughout the supervision process. They reported that pride in navigating through the process despite all the difficulties encountered. Here are some excerpts from their responses:

- “It was not flawless, but I did my best.” SP 01
- “I am totally satisfied with my performance, I did all my duties.” SP 04
- “The least I can say is that it was acceptable as it led to timely completion.” SP 09
- “I cannot be more satisfied, though I made mistakes and I was an underachiever at given times, but overall I feel a sense of accomplishment.” SP 12
- “Despite the absence of the supervisor and lack of assistance and feedback, I did a great job on my own.” SP 16

5.2.10 Key Skills Required to Enhance the Supervisees' Performance throughout the Supervision Process

In their answers to Q 17, the informants expressed agreement regarding the importance of interpersonal skills followed by management, research, literacy skills and flexibility then ICTs skills. SP 03 said in this regard SP 11 said:

“I needed most time management to remain within the deadlines and adaptability to overcome the different challenges, of course research skills to undertake the research, reading to carefully read the articles, writing skills to write effectively and ICTs to gain time and effort. I needed also communication and collaboration which I believe was the basis of the relationship with my supervisor in a way that they allowed me to exchange ideas, seek feedback and discuss in general.”

Additionally, all the supervisees highlighted the importance of analytical skills including critical thinking and problem solving. The informants reported that they helped them make informed decision-making, enhance the research quality, and foster their independent thinking. In this regard, SP 04 said that these skills taught them: “how to think through difficulties and find solutions independently and now I still feel like I use them in my daily life.”

After detailing the data gathered through the supervisees’ practices interview, the subsequent section will provide a holistic presentation of the data gathered to cross-check the validity and reliability of the data collected against the data collected through the practices questionnaire.

5.2.11 Holistic Presentation of Data from the Supervisees Practices Interview

Table 5.28

Each Interviewee’s Practices in Each Step of the Supervision Process

	Step 1	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Feedback integration	Seeking help
SP 01	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs	Manager Literacy ICTs Research External sources	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Prohibited
SP 02	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research External sources	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Selectively reactive	Proactive seeker
SP 03	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 04	Flexibility Interpersonal	Research Literacy Analytical Interpersonal	Research Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Managerial Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial Literacy Analytical	Consistently reactive	Deferential refrainer
SP 05	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy Research ICTs Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 06	Flexibility Interpersonal	Research Literacy Analytical Interpersonal	Research Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Managerial	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial Literacy Analytical	Consistently reactive	Deferential refrainer

			Analytical Ethical	Analytic					
SP 07	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 08	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Selectively reactive	Proactive seeker
SP 09	Flexibility Interpersonal	Research Literacy Analytical Interpersonal	Research Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Managerial Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial Literacy Analytical	Consistently reactive	Deferential refrainer
SP 10	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 11	Flexibility Interpersonal	Research Literacy Analytical Interpersonal	Research Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Managerial Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial Literacy Analytical	Consistently reactive	Deferential refrainer
SP 12	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Prohibited
SP 13	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Managerial Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial Literacy	Consistently reactive	Prohibited
SP 14	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy Research ICTs Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 15	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 16	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical	Manager Literacy Research ICTs External sources	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker
SP 17	Flexibility Interpersonal	Research Literacy Analytical Interpersonal	Research Literacy ICTs Interpersonal Managerial Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial Literacy Analytical	Consistently reactive	Deferential refrainer
SP 18	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker

SP 19	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Selectively reactive	Proactive seeker
SP 20	Flexibility Interpersonal	/	Research Literacy ICTs Analytical Ethical	Manager Literacy ICTs Research Interpers Analytic	Analytical Interperson	Flexibility Managerial Interpersona	Flexibility Interperson Managerial	Rarely received	Proactive seeker

Table 5.28 provides a holistic presentation of the data gathered through the supervisees' practices interview. It details the skills/practices employed by each participating supervisee during each of the supervision process steps, besides their skills/practices in incorporating the supervisors' feedback and in seeking help from external parties. The analysis of this table reveals that the supervisees' practices can be classified into four categories. However, the answers of four interviewees (SP 01, 08, 12, 13) could not be included within any of the categories as they provided distinct answers. Similar to the practices questionnaire holistic presentation, there are no skills related to the second step of the supervision process (creating the supervision agreement commitment) because the interviewees did not contribute in its creation, rather, it was provided by the administration.

The first category includes five interviewees (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17) who used a wide range of skills in each stage of the supervision process. These supervisees made use of interpersonal and flexibility skills in working with their supervisors. Furthermore, they used research, literacy, interpersonal and analytical skills to be able to develop the research proposal which informed their research in ulterior stages. As far as the research execution is concerned, these supervisees managed their research well through the use of managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICT, research, and ethical skills. As the supervision process progresses to the dissertation writing and refining stages, this group of interviewees employed managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICT, and research skills to effectively write their dissertations. Before the viva voce and during their preparation, these informants applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the oral defence, they used managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility. After the viva voce, they applied flexibility, managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to literacy and analytical skills to handle the corrections and the final submission. The participants of

this category applied and followed the supervisors' feedback constantly and did not seek help from any external party because of their trust and respect to their supervisors.

The practices employed collected from five supervisees (SP 05, 14, 15, 18, 20) constitutes the second category. This category used interpersonal and flexibility skills to help them work with the assigned supervisor; however, they did not develop a research proposal. During the research execution, they employed literacy, research, analytical and ICT skills. While writing and refining their dissertation, they made use of managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICT, and research skills. During their preparatory phase for the viva voce, these informants applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During and after the viva voce, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility. The participants of this category rarely received feedback; therefore, they did not implement it. In contrast, they constantly sought assistance from peers and other supervisors/teachers.

Four supervisees (SP 03, 07, 10, 19) employed similar skills throughout the different stages of the supervision process. They used interpersonal skills and flexibility in working with their supervisors. Moreover, they employed literacy, analytical, ICT, research, and ethical skills during the research process. The writing and refining stage witnessed their use of managerial, literacy, research skills and ICTs. While they were preparing for the viva voce, these informants applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility. The participants of this category did not receive feedback appropriately, thus, they did not incorporate it except SP 19 who received vague feedback. Due to the feedback imprecision, this supervisee was limited to following and implementing only what could be understood. Moreover, the respondents included within this category sought help from peers and other supervisors/teachers throughout the different stages of the supervision process.

The last category that could be highlighted from the supervisees' practices includes two interviewees (SP 02 and 16). These two used flexibility and interpersonal skills to manage working with their supervisors. Their use of literacy, ICT, research

and analytical skills is what characterizes this category's research execution. For the dissertation text production and refinement, SP 02 and 16 employed managerial, literacy, ICTs and research skills besides their dependence on external paid sources. While they were preparing for the viva voce, these informants applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility. While both supervisees asked their peers other supervisors/teachers for help throughout the supervision process, their practices regarding the supervisors' provided feedback differ. SP 02 received vague feedback, therefore, evaluated it and selected what could be incorporated whereas SP 16 did not incorporate the feedback appropriately because it was rarely received.

As stated previously, SP 01, 08, 12, and 13 could not be grouped with any of the mentioned categories. SP 01 used flexibility and interpersonal skills to manage working with the supervisor and literacy, ICT, and research skills to conduct the research. This participant employed managerial, literacy, ICTs and research skills besides external paid sources. During the viva voce preparing phase, SP 01 applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, this supervisee used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility. Although the supervisor of SP01 rarely provided feedback, she prohibited him from asking other supervisors/teachers for help. SP 08 made use of interpersonal and flexibility skills in working with their supervisors. Furthermore, the use of literacy, ICTs, research and ethical skills characterize this participant's practice in executing the research. While writing and refining the dissertation, managerial, literacy, interpersonal, analytical, ICTs, and research skills were employed. During the viva voce preparing phase, SP 08 applied analytical and interpersonal skills. During the viva voce and after it, they used managerial and interpersonal skills besides flexibility. This supervisee rarely received feedback from the supervisor; therefore, she sought help from other teachers and supervisors.

SP 12 depended on interpersonal skills and flexibility to work with the supervisor and referred to literacy, ICTs, research and ethical skills to do the research. In the writing and refining stage, managerial, literacy, ICTs and research skills were

employed. Before the viva voce, this respondent applied analytical and interpersonal skills to prepare for it. During and after the viva voce, SP 12 used managerial and interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility. Although the supervisor of SP 12 did not provide frequent feedback; she did not allow asking help from other supervisors/teachers. SP 13 depended on interpersonal skills and flexibility to work with the supervisor and referred to managerial, literacy, analytical, ICTs, research and ethical skills to do the research. In the writing and refining stage, managerial, literacy, ICTs, and research skills were used. Before the viva voce, this respondent applied analytical and interpersonal skills to prepare for it. During and after the viva voce, SP 13 used managerial, literacy, interpersonal skills in addition to flexibility. Because this supervisee received timely and effective feedback which he followed and implemented, the participant was prohibited from seeking help from external parties.

From this analysis, it can be noticed that the practices of the supervisees are similar during particular stages regardless of their overall performance; these include the use of interpersonal skills and flexibility during the first step which is related to working with the supervisor. Other skills are related to the sixth and seventh steps where all the interviewees used interpersonal and analytical skills to prepare for the viva voce and flexibility besides managerial and interpersonal skills during the viva voce.

In the following section, the results obtained from the document analysis will be analyzed and presented.

5.3 Results of the Document Analysis

In this section, the findings from the administrative documents analysis will be examined and presented. Four documents related to the Master supervision process were provided by the English Department at Algiers 2 University. The first is the agreement about supervision between the supervisor and the supervisee. The second consists of a set of general standards and guidelines for the Master dissertation supervision process. The other two remaining documents provide outlines for the supervisees' oral presentation and the viva voce examination process respectively. As

stated in the third chapter (section 3.4.3), the rationale behind analyzing these documents is to position the supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process within the departmental policies and to assess the extent to which these documents comply with the academic standards.

5.3.1 Supervision Commitment Agreement

This administrative document is made up of three distinct parts (see Appendix A). The first part is an agreement document that deals with the duties of the supervisors and the supervisees. The second part is the supervisees' commitment statement and the final part is the Master's dissertation work plan template. Parts one and two require the signature of the supervisor and the supervisee.

5.3.1.1 The Agreement Document. This document opens with the names of the supervisor and his supervisees, followed by the duties of the supervisors, the duties of the supervisees and concludes with the required signature of both.

a. The supervisors' Duties. There is 06 responsibilities/roles of the supervisors included. To start with, the supervisors are required to schedule at least four face-to-face sessions in order to ensure regular and structured interaction between them and their supervisees. However, limiting onsite supervisory sessions to four might be insufficient to complete a dissertation. Besides, in case of absences or cancellations, the supervisors must send a notice 48h before to promote reliability and respect for both parties' time. Yet, this notification limits the flexibility as contingencies may occur. Furthermore, the supervisor is expected to help/guide the supervisees in narrowing down the focus of their research to improve its feasibility. This role is essential to render the research relevant, manageable and significant; but the document does not elaborate on how to do so; rather, it provokes the assumption that the supervisor's advice will inevitably result in a well-defined research topic. The following supervisor's duty dictates detailing the research methodology and discussing hypotheses to build a solid research foundation. While this obligation enables the supervisee to construe a coherent and methodologically sound dissertation, it is still deficient in terms of details. Moreover, it is mandatory for the supervisors to offer

detailed and regular feedback for the supervisees to direct them to make necessary corrections, refine and improve their dissertations. Nonetheless, the agreement document does not specify the frequency or the format of the feedback. In an attempt to create transparency and maintain accountability, the supervisors are required to notify, through electronic or written correspondence, the supervisee and the Master's Committee about any issue related to supervision. This is an effective way to address problems promptly and formally yet it may be inflexible in addressing time-sensitive matters. The last supervisor's duty covers the assessment of the final draft of the dissertation and writing a detailed and formal viability report to ensure that the dissertation adheres to the academic standards before submission.

b. The supervisees' Duties. There are 05 responsibilities/roles of the supervisees included. The first role requires the supervisees to adhere to the work plan provided by the administration. Additionally, the supervisees must send work regularly and integrate the required corrections to maintain an ongoing enhancement. Nevertheless, the focus on timely submissions and corrections is countered by an absence of details on how to manage feedback delays or disagreements over corrections. Additionally, the document emphasizes the supervisees' role in timely and cooperative completion of dissertations. Moreover, it requires the supervisees to regularly inform the supervisor of the updates on progress to optimize the supervisor's guidance. However, the document does not specify the format and the frequency of these updates. Similar to the supervisor's duties, the supervisees' roles include respecting the supervisory meetings schedules and notifying the supervisor 48h prior the session in case of cancellations or absences.

5.3.1.2 The Supervisees' Commitment Statement. On a ready-made document, the supervisee signs the commitment to show respect and adhere to the regulations of the university in terms of work and behaviour and acknowledging the awareness of potential disciplinary actions when misbehaving.

5.3.1.3 The Master's Dissertation Work Plan. The work plan sections namely: the title, corpus, keywords, problematic, objectives, rationale and organization which provide a structured framework to be followed.

5.3.2 General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines

This administrative document contains four pages which outline the detailed format and specific requirements for the Master 2 dissertation for the academic year 2023-2024 (see Appendix B).

5.3.2.1 Length and Structure of the Dissertation. The dissertation contains 15-20 pages written in pairs, which is relatively concise for a Master's level dissertation. This page number limit makes the supervisees focus on key points but could also inhibit the depth of their analysis potentially and leads to superficial coverage of critical aspects. The requirement for binomial work might encourage collaboration but could also create challenges in balancing contributions between students especially that their work distribution is not included.

5.3.2.2 Formatting Guidelines and content structure. The document details instructions about the format, such as font size, headings, margins, enumeration procedures, line spacing and quoting. This ensures uniformity in submissions and aligns with academic standards. It also offers details about the layout and the different components of the dissertation. These details are discussed below:

a. Prefatory pages: the dissertation must contain the front page with the board of examiners, declaration, dedication, acknowledgements, abstract, list of tables, list of figures, list of acronyms and abbreviations and the content.

b. The abstract: the abstract should contain the statement of the research problem, the type of the research and the major findings written in one block which does not exceed one page and followed by keywords.

c. The General Introduction: This section outlines the purpose, significance, and structure of the dissertation without titles. The exclusion of research questions adheres to the secondary research nature, but the rationale behind omitting them could have been explained more clearly.

d. Theoretical Background: This part includes definitions, theoretical frameworks, and opposing viewpoints, with an emphasis on transitions. The focus on presenting different perspectives is valuable for critical analysis.

e. Review of Empirical Studies and discussion of them: the supervisees are required to review three empirical studies from different geographical contexts focusing on the Algerian one. The studies should have the same topic and pedagogical context. This requirement ensures a comprehensive analysis which leads to an effective and critical evaluation of the three studies.

f. The General Conclusion. This involves a summary of the dissertation's content without including pedagogical implications or suggestions for further research. While this keeps the focus on summarizing findings, it inhibits the supervisees to think beyond the immediate findings.

g. References, Appendices and Abstract in Arabic. The reference list follows APA style (7th Edition) without separating primary, secondary, and electronic sources which promotes consistency. This list is followed by appendices if any and a translated abstract with its keywords into Arabic.

5.3.2.3 Additional Requirements and Final Notes. The supervisees are informed to submit three hard copies along with a CD, which ensures multiple formats for evaluation. The document concludes with pointing out the importance of aligning research topics with EFL teaching, engaging in timely supervision to avoid penalties, and maintaining consistent communication between supervisors and supervisees. It also emphasizes the need for adherence to APA 7th edition formatting. The document concludes by informing the supervisees that notes about the possibility or obligation of viva voce examinations would be communicated in due course, following the guidelines set by the Ministry of Higher Education.

5.3.3 Oral Presentation Outline

This administrative document is provided to supervisees to guide them through their viva voce (see Appendix C). It outlines that the presentation must include a

concise overview of the study's background, research problem, purpose, significance, and dissertation structure, necessitating a clear and effective summary. Following this, the theoretical background section requires the students to present relevant frameworks, models, and theories, including any opposing viewpoints, which demands a solid understanding of these concepts. Transitioning to the review of empirical studies, the students need to summarize research methodologies and findings, compare them, and offer a brief discussion, which calls for both synthesis and critical analysis. Finally, the conclusion should succinctly encapsulate the dissertation's content, reinforcing the main findings and contributions.

5.3.4 Viva Voce Examination Guidelines

This administrative document is given to the supervisors and communicated to the supervisees (see Appendix D). It details the procedures and expectations for viva voce examinations, including confidentiality protocols, time constraints, presentation formats, and the submission of presentation outlines. It also outlines the questioning protocol for examiners and emphasizes the importance of effective time management and proper documentation during the examination process.

It details that the viva voce is held in close sessions and is strictly limited to 30 minutes, including a 10-minute oral presentation. This tight schedule reflects the necessity for students to communicate their points concisely and effectively, but it places pressure on them to deliver their presentations clearly within the allotted time. The candidates are not required to use PowerPoint, which reduces the risk of technical issues. Consequently, the students need to rely more on verbal communication. However, the students can present a poster, which is advantageous for those who prefer a visual representation of their work. Additionally, the students must submit an outline of their oral presentation to the examiners on the day of the viva voce. While this adds an extra step in the preparation process, it ensures that examiners receive a clear structure of the presentation.

The examiners are expected to ask two questions, with a third question prepared as a backup. This questioning protocol indicates that the students should be prepared

for a focused and variable line of questioning, which requires them to anticipate and prepare for different areas of inquiry. The chairperson is responsible for managing time effectively and ensuring that the required signatures are collected. This emphasizes the importance of adhering to the procedural and formal aspects of the examination process.

These guidelines aim to create a structured and fair assessment environment but also impose specific requirements and constraints on students that may impact their preparation and presentation strategies.

Conclusion

As previously noted, this chapter was dedicated to the analysis and presentation of the collected data related to the supervisees' practices. The analysis began with a detailed examination of the data from the supervisees' practices questionnaire, followed by an exploration of insights gained from the supervisees' practices interviews. It then progressed to an analysis of four administrative documents related to Master's supervision. In the upcoming chapter, the final chapter, the findings from all research instruments will be synthesized and examined in relation to the reviewed literature and research questions. These findings will form the basis for proposing pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research designed to assist Master supervisees and supervisor better understand the steps and the requirements of the supervision journey, overcome the primary challenges encountered and enhance their overall performance in the supervisory experience.

**CHAPTER SIX:
DISCUSSION,
INTERPRETATION,
PEDAGOGICAL
IMPLICATIONS
AND
RECOMMENDAT-
IONS FOR
FURTHER
RESEARCH**

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to exploring how the results obtained from the research instruments provided answers to the research questions. In doing so, the data analyzed in the previous chapter are interpreted and discussed in relation to previous related studies and to our adapted framework to fulfil this purpose. This chapter is divided into six sections; the first three sections are designed according to the three research questions addressed. The first part intends to explore the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process. The second part seeks to explore the supervisees' practices in the supervision process. The third part deals with the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions and practices. In light of the research findings, pedagogical implications, study limitations, and recommendations for further research will be discussed in the three sections following the interpretation of the findings successively.

6.1 Discussion around the Research Questions

This study's ultimate objective was to investigate the perceptions that Master students hold about the supervision process and the practices they employed within it. By gaining a deeper insight into the participants' views and practices in the supervision process, we sought to decipher the relationship between their perceptions and practices. To achieve this objective, an exploratory concurrent-nested design, prioritizing the qualitative approach was adopted. The primary data was gathered through two questionnaires and two semi-structured interviews, while both primary and secondary data was obtained through the document analysis of four administrative documents related to the supervision process provided by the department where the study took place. The discussion and interpretation section was structured according to the following three research questions:

- **Research question 01:** What are Master supervisees' perceptions about the supervision process?
- **Research question 02:** What are Master supervisees' practices in the supervision process?

- **Research question 03:** What is the relationship between supervisees' perceptions about supervision and their practices in real contexts?

The discussion starts by presenting the leading categories that resulted from data triangulation. A discussion of the supervisees' perceptions and practices of each step of the supervision process in the three tools follows. While discussing, we compare the findings obtained from each research instrument and explain them in relation to the research questions, and with reference to the previous studies presented in the literature review chapter.

6.1.1 The Supervisees' Perceptions of the Supervision Process

As already stated, the first research question aims at exploring the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process. To reach this objective and answer this research question, the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire and the supervisees' perceptions interviews were used. Later on, the analysis of the four administrative documents was used to see how individual answers align with or differ from the broader context, such as institutional practices and guidelines and how these align with referential standards. The findings revealed that the supervisees' perceptions can be classified into three main categories: negative supervision experience, positive supervision experience, and mitigated supervision experience. Some of the findings cannot be discussed in relation to the previous studies because they are peculiar to the context of the study; that is, Master English Language students majoring in didactics at Algiers 2 University.

6.1.1.1 Category 01: negative supervisory experience. The first category includes the majority of the supervisees, the participants of this category developed negative perceptions towards the different steps of the supervision process.

Regarding the relationship with their supervisors, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, table 4.11 and section 4.2.2.1) revealed that these supervisees experienced a negative relationship with their supervisors and described them as authoritarian and inflexible which led to issues in working with them. Although the respondents stressed the importance of a positive relationship between the supervisor

and supervisee in the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, table 4.12 and section 4.2.2.1), they indicated that they were obliged to follow the professional code at the expense of developing a more personal rapport and supportive interaction. The documents analysis (Chapter 5, section 5.3) reached a similar conclusion and revealed that supervisors' traits and the relationship between the supervisors and the supervisees was not explicitly referred to in any document; rather they were inferred from the supervisees' and the supervisor's duties mentioned on the agreement page which call both parties to respect meetings' dates. These findings are inconsistent with the findings reached by many researchers including: Gronhret et al. (2024), Saleem and Mahmood (2017) and Millin et al. (2022) who stress the importance of a clear working relationship right from the beginning. These findings can be further related to the supervisees' discontent towards the draw system used for assigning supervisors (Chapter 4, table 4.9). Consequently, they indicated a strong preference to freely select their supervisors (Chapter 4, table 4.10). The high level of dissatisfaction implies that the draw system failed to pair supervisees with supervisors compatibly and highlights neglect for the supervisees' preferences. This finding implies that the administration prioritizes standardized and procedural aspects rather than the relational dynamics which eventually creates challenges for the supervisees and leads to their dissatisfaction. This finding is confirmed by the findings of Armstrong et al. (2004) who argue that the establishing compatibility is a cornerstone. Therefore, there is a need for redefinition/revision of this institutional supervisor assignment process to create more adaptable supervision relationships.

As far as the research proposal is concerned, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.4 and table 4.20) revealed that the supervisees perceived of the research proposal and its components as trivial. The interview (Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.1) further unveiled that the supervisees of this category did not make a research proposal because their supervisors did not ask them to. Moreover, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, table 4.22 and 3.27 and section 4.2.4.1) revealed that the respondents reported that they were not flexible in following their initial research plan and did not face any challenges. This is the result of skipping the stage of developing the research proposal; therefore, they did not have a reference to refer or adapt to. The document

analysis revealed that the supervisees are provided with The Master's Dissertation Work plan (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.3). This plan is similar to the research proposal only in the inclusion of two elements: the research objectives and the rationale of the study. The supervisors' absent commitment to making the research proposal may stem from the dependence on the administrative work plan despite its deficiency in terms of the other essential components. These findings contrast the findings of Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) who argue for the role of this document in guiding the research. This instantly provoked a question about the importance of the research proposal: why do these supervisees and supervisors skip such an important step of their supervision process? Hence, there is a need for more detailed instruction and resources to ensure that the supervisees sense the importance of the research proposal and feel fully equipped to develop a strong one.

During the research execution, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.3, table 4.4, table 4.26, table 4.28) revealed that these supervisees found this phase demanding and challenging. This can be attributed to the lack of the supervisors' assistance, feedback and support. Although the supervisees are required to undertake a secondary research only, they still find it challenging to do the literature review. In this regard, Benbellal (2022) confirmed that reviewing the literature is the most challenging part of the research execution.

Regarding the viva voce, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.45) revealed that the respondents did not encounter challenges; only few found the process difficult. This is confirmed by the results of the analysis of the Oral Presentation Outline (Chapter 5, section 5.3.3) which provides specific instructions on what to include in each section such as the introduction, theoretical background, review of empirical studies, and the conclusion to ensure that the supervisees address all the essential components of their dissertation, promoting a comprehensive and well-rounded presentation. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.47) showed that the fear of harsh criticism was prominent, indicating that many were apprehensive about receiving negative feedback. This implies that the supervisees perceived this stage to be a stressful and demanding stage because it is judgemental in nature. These results accord

with the findings of Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) and reflect a broader trend where the viva voce is perceived as a high-pressure event, with substantial emotional and psychological implications for the supervisees.

As for the Post-viva voce stage, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.4 and table 4.51) revealed that the supervisees were unfamiliar with the post-viva voce phase believing that the supervision process closes with the viva voce and direct submission of the dissertations without amending follows immediately. The interview (Chapter 4, section 4.2.6.1) revealed that a recurring issue involved confusion over who was responsible for providing necessary administrative papers. These findings contrasts the findings of the document analysis (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1) which dictates on the supervisors to assess the final draft of the dissertation and provide the supervisory committee with a detailed report approving of the supervisees' work submission. Moreover, the post-viva phase was perceived as challenging by many supervisees in the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.53), primarily due to administrative hurdles they encountered during the final submission of their dissertations. These include issues like paperwork, scheduling, or compliance with institutional policies. This lack of clear communication and responsibility created additional stress during an already demanding time. The documents analysis (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1) revealed a similar conclusion as the documents reflected a deficiency in terms of bureaucratic processes of the post-viva voce phase and lack of clarity in the procedures related to it.

Concerning the assistance, feedback, and support provided by the supervisors, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, tables 3.23, 3.24, 3.29, 3.30, 3.33, 3.34, 3.38, 3.42 and section 4.2.1.1) revealed a considerable dissatisfaction among the supervisees regarding the assistance and feedback received from their supervisors. In this regard, the supervisees reported that their supervisors offered direction on what needed to be done but did not guide them on how to efficiently execute the required tasks during the supervision process. The lack of practical assistance and precise feedback provoked the feeling of isolation which contributed to their frustration and encountered challenges reported in the results of the previous question. In contrast, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.39) revealed that the assessment and feedback

provided by the supervisors during the refinement phase were satisfactory. These results are in alignment with the conclusion reached by Semjin (2009) on the importance of the supervisors' responsiveness. Moreover, there is a general discontent of the support provided by the supervisors as they felt that their supervisors were unsympathetic towards the academic and emotional challenges they faced which intensified the degree of inhibiting anxiety. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.6 and table 4.7) revealed that the supervisees who had less frequent meetings for insufficient durations were likely provided with insufficient levels of assistance, support and feedback and faced hindering challenges. These results contrast the findings of Wisker (2001) and Lessing and Lessing (2004) on the necessity of extensive guidance, feedback and support. Although the supervisors' assistance, feedback and support depend on the supervisory style, regulation is needed to ensure all the supervisees receive equal academic and emotional support.

Regarding the supervisees' satisfaction with their roles, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, tables 3.25, 3.31, 3.35, 3.44, 3.49, 3.52 and section 4.2.7) revealed that the participants expressed complete satisfaction with their roles throughout the different stages of the supervision process. This finding highlights a sense of confidence and pride among the participants. While they encountered difficulties and expressed dissatisfaction with the assistance, support and feedback received, they still could navigate through the research process.

The negative perceptions formed towards each step of the supervision process resulted in forming negative perceptions towards the process as a whole. These perceptions stem from the accumulation of the challenging nature and disturbed relationship with the supervisor besides the lack of feedback, assistance and support throughout the previous stages. These insights highlight the importance of directional and supportive supervision, thorough preparation and timely problem solving as the stages of the supervision process are interrelated.

6.1.1.2 Category 02: positive supervision experience. The second category includes 14 supervisees, the participants of this category developed positive perceptions towards the supervision process.

Regarding the relationship with their supervisors, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, table 4.11 and section 4.2.2.1) revealed that these supervisees experienced a positive relationship with their supervisors and described them as facilitative and flexible. These findings are consistent with the findings reached by Gronhret et al. (2024), Saleem and Mahmood (2017), and Millin et al (2022) who stress the importance of a clear working relationship right from the beginning. This finding implies that amiable and respectful partnership fosters a productive atmosphere where both parties supported and valued each other's contributions. This type of rapport creates a sense of camaraderie and openness that facilitates effective communication and collaboration.

As far as the research proposal is concerned, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.4 and table 4.20) revealed that the supervisees perceived the research proposal and its components as a constructive step. Their made proposals served as a valuable guide and a foundational document that provided direction and structure for their work. Moreover, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, table 4.27 and section 4.2.4.1) revealed that the respondents reported that they were flexible in following and deviating from their initial research plan which reflects an adaptive attitude towards the evolving needs and challenges of the research. Consequently, the supervisees affirmed, in the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.22), encountering challenges in making their research proposal. The interview revealed that the feedback from their supervisors was considered crucial (Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.2). This group of supervisees reported that their supervisors' feedback played a pivotal role in guiding them and aligning their proposals with the required academic standards. Furthermore, the supervisees described the implementation of the feedback as careful and thorough (Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.3). These supervisees made concerted efforts to incorporate all the feedback provided by their supervisors, aiming to meet expectations as closely as possible. Moreover, the interview (Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.1) revealed also that this category received motivational support. These findings are congruent with the findings of Fleming and Kowalsky (2021) who stress the importance of the research proposal and the necessity of providing guidance and emotional support at this initial stage.

During the research execution, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.3, table 4.4, table 4.26, table 4.28) revealed that these supervisees found this phase manageable. This implies that these supervisees could effectively undertake their research because they received conducive guidance and support. Regarding the viva voce, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.45) revealed that the respondents did not encounter challenges although they believe the viva voce was an evaluative stage. This highlights that the viva voce is less stressful and demanding when the supervisees are aware of its importance and well prepared for it. This is confirmed by the results of the analysis of the Oral Presentation Outline (Chapter 5, section 5.3.3) which provides specific instructions on what to include in each section of the presentation. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.47) showed that the fear of harsh criticism was prominent despite these supervisees' positive perceptions about this step. This implies that the viva voce examination by nature is a stress causing experience as confirmed by Knight et al. (2018). Additionally, there is a general satisfaction among the majority of the participants, as highlighted in the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.48), with the supervisor's role during the viva voce. This indicates that the supervisors were largely perceived as supportive. These respondents reported in the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.54) that the viva voce had a positive impact on the outcome of their dissertations. This suggests that the viva voce is viewed as a valuable component in the dissertation process which contributed significantly in addressing the weaknesses and enhanced the quality and effectiveness of their dissertations (Fleming and Kowalsky, 2021).

The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.51) also revealed that the post viva voce phase was seen as a collaborative task in which the supervisor and the supervisee decide upon the required correction and the final submission. This perspective highlights the importance of ongoing guidance and validation in refining the supervisees work and reflects a cautious attitude towards ensuring that all feedback has been thoroughly addressed. This suggests a need for continued collaboration and feedback to enhance the final product. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.53) revealed that these supervisees could smoothly transition through the administrative procedures, encountering no challenges, is also consistent with the documents analysis

(Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1) which detailed the responsibility of the supervisors on the submission report.

The questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, tables 3.23, 3.24, 3.29, 3.30, 3.33, 3.34, 3.38, 3.42 and section 4.2.1.1) revealed that the supervisees with positive perceptions benefited from consistent encouragement, relevant assistance and timely and directional feedback, together; these led them to manage the supervision process and progress through their research. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.6 and table 4.7) revealed that the supervisees who met their supervisors frequently and for an adequate duration were likely to receive appropriate levels of assistance, support and feedback and faced less challenging situations. Accordingly, they did not seek external assistance and feedback as they were sufficiently guided academically and emotionally. Regarding the supervisees' satisfaction with their roles, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, tables 3.25, 3.31, 3.35, 3.44, 3.49, 3.52 and section 4.2.7) revealed that the participants expressed complete satisfaction with their roles throughout the different stages of the supervision process. This finding can be related to the findings of the previous questions regarding the supervisory relationship and the supervisors' guidance and support. This implies that these supervisees fulfilled their duties effectively as they had a supportive supervisory relationship characterized by tailored and timely feedback besides emotional support.

6.1.1.3 Category 03: mitigated supervision experience. The third category includes seven supervisees who developed mixed perceptions regarding the different steps of the supervision process. Precisely, these supervisees share with the participants of category 01 their negative perceptions towards, making the research proposal, executing the research, refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce, and the viva voce. On the other hand, these supervisees share with the participants of category 02 their positive perceptions towards their supervisors. These participants also accord with all the participants in their satisfaction with their performance throughout the supervision process, neglect of the creation of the supervision agreement commitment and the challenging nature of writing the dissertation text and the formative nature of refining and preparing for the viva voce.

What is peculiar to these supervisees is their perception of the post-viva voce. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.51) revealed that these supervisees applied only minor corrections on their dissertations after the viva voce. This implies that they corrected only the elements they found easy to be refined and neglected some major required correction. This independent correction approach further relates to the findings of the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 4, tables 3.23, 3.24, 3.29, 3.30, 3.33, 3.34, 3.38, 3.42 and section 4.2.1.1) which revealed a considerable dissatisfaction among the supervisees regarding the assistance and feedback received from their supervisors. In this regard, the supervisees reported that their supervisors offered emotional support and feedback with which they were satisfied. However, the assistance was impractical and the feedback was vague. Although the supervisees received emotional support and help, they were left with room for misinterpretation and uncertainty. This finding highlights a gap between offering feedback and assistance and offering effective feedback and assistance. Moreover, these supervisees wanted to seek external assistance but they were prohibited by their supervisors. This finding implies that these supervisees cannot compensate the gaps left in their supervisors' assistance and feedback which creates challenges for them.

Despite the discrepancies in the supervisees' perceptions towards the steps of the supervision process, the supervisees of the three categories agree in their perceptions regarding the supervision agreement commitment, writing the dissertation text, refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce.

The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.4) revealed that all the supervisees were unfamiliar with the supervision agreement commitment and perceived the administrative version as unnecessary. This finding contradicts the results of the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.3) which revealed that the research methodology course was formative in introducing and explaining the supervision process in which the supervision commitment agreement is a crucial element. The questionnaire, the interview and the document analysis (Chapter 4, table 4.15, section 4.2.3.2 and Chapter 5, section 5.3.1) consistently revealed that the supervisees did not take part in creation of the supervision commitment agreement. Without the supervisees'

input/contribution, the agreement was perceived as an imposed set of rules rather than a collaboratively crafted guideline that reflected their needs and expectations which created a significant gap between the intended purpose of the supervision commitment agreement and its actual use by the supervisees. Moreover, the administration overlooked an opportunity for fostering a more engaged and collaborative approach to the supervision process which increases the feeling of ownership and engagement, thereby acceptance. Therefore, they did not consult it during their supervision process (Chapter 4, section 4.2.3.1) as it lacks precision regarding the roles of the supervisors and the supervisees. This finding is supported by the document analysis of the Supervision Commitment Agreement (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1) which includes only some of the duties of the supervisors and the supervisees and is not well elaborated to include the multidimensional aspects of the supervision process. Therefore, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.16, table 4. 18 and table 4.19) indicated dissatisfaction with this document and the roles included within it, which led to challenges in complying with. However, the supervisees of category 02 reported in the interview (Chapter 4, section 4.2.3.2) that they had contributed in making an internal agreement with their supervisors which included elements like punctuality and bringing work each supervisory session. These contributions, though limited, suggest that when the supervisees are actively involved in the creation of guidelines or agreements, they are likely to engage with and value them throughout the supervision journey. These findings demonstrate a lack of perceived relevance and raise the need for redefining the creation process of the working contract which effectively addresses key aspects of the supervision process and matches the supervisees' perceptions. These findings support the findings reached by Gronhert et al. (2024) which stress the idea that changes in power, role expectations and needs between the supervisors and the supervisees over time must be negotiated regularly.

Furthermore, all the participants reported in the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.4) their familiarity with the dissertation writing process. The questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.32) revealed that all the supervisees, regardless of the level of assistance, feedback and support received, perceive dissertation writing as challenging. This indicates that while they understand the process theoretically, practical difficulties

remained a common experience. This unanimous experience emphasizes the inherent difficulties and complexities associated with producing a dissertation. The challenges faced include issues related to structuring the text, integrating research findings, or overcoming writer's block, indicating that this stage of the process is particularly demanding and often fraught with obstacles as Benbellal (2022) confirmed. Nevertheless, the document analysis of the General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines (Chapter 5, section 5.3.2) revealed inconsistency with these results as it details the format, the structure and all the necessary details related to the Master dissertation writing stage.

Concerning the stage of refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.4 and table 4.36) reveal that the supervisees found the process of refining their dissertation challenging. These challenges stem from the need to address substantial feedback, reorganize content, or enhance the clarity of arguments. This indicates that this phase is a critical point where further improvements and adjustments are made (Fleming& Kowalsky, 2021); therefore, it presents particular difficulties related to the complexity of the task or the adequacy of the support received. Moreover, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.37) revealed that the supervisees who developed negative perceptions (category 01) perceive the supervisors' feedback as complementary to their own judgment which reflect partial trust in or dependency on the supervisor's guidance. On the contrary, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.37) revealed that the supervisees who developed positive perceptions (category 02) perceive the supervisors' feedback as a means to improve their work which reflects work alliance and trust in the supervisors' input. Additionally, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.40) showed that the majority of the participants did not find preparing for the viva voce particularly challenging. This result is further elaborated through the findings of the interview (Chapter 4, section 4.2.5.1) which indicated that the respondents employed various strategies to prepare for the viva voce examination, each reflecting their effort to anticipate potential challenges and ensure thorough readiness. This finding is supported by the findings of the analysis of the Viva Voce Examination Guidelines (Chapter 5, section 5.3.4). This document facilitated the task through imposing limits on the presentation time and the

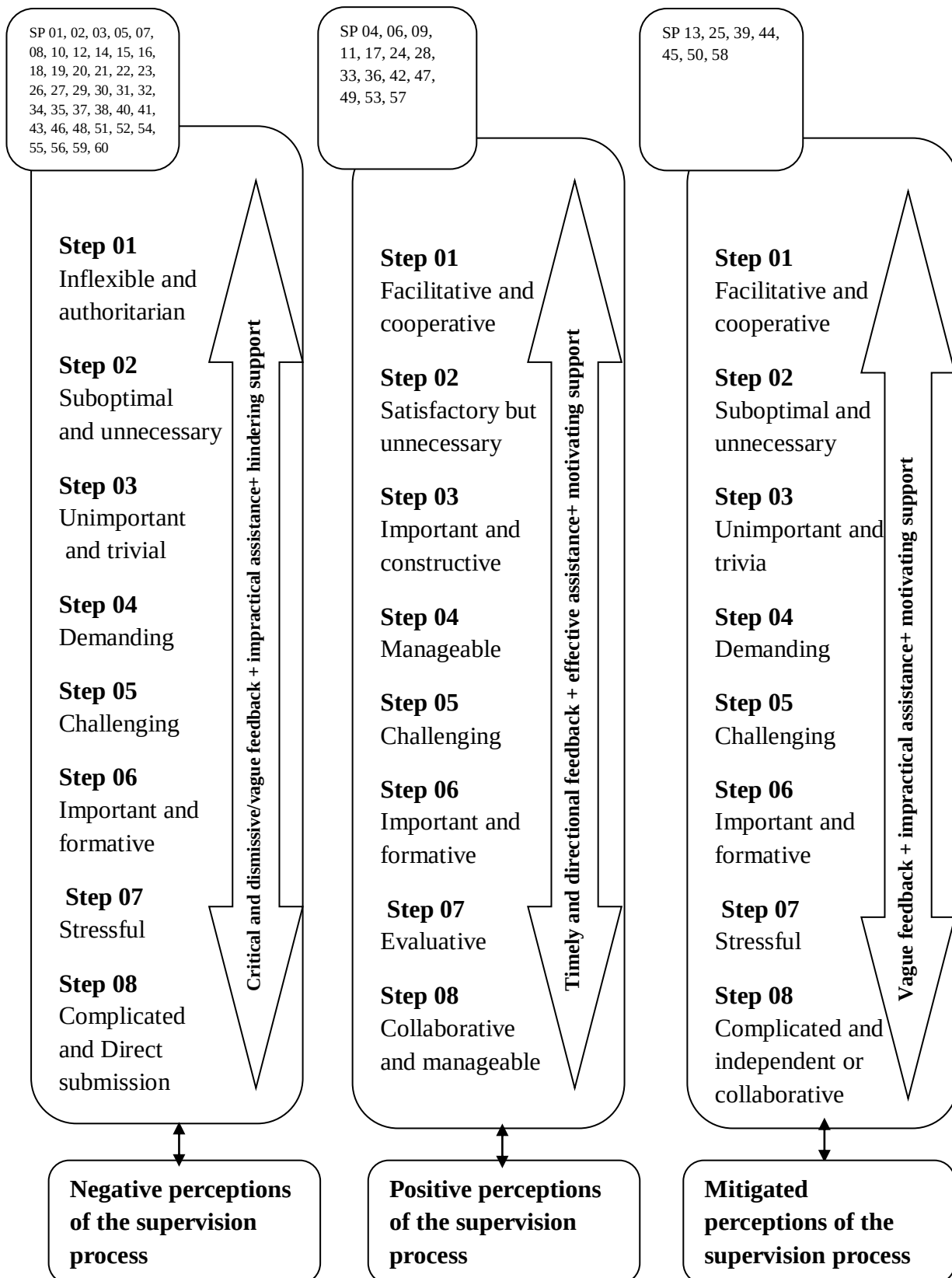
number of the examination questions. Moreover, the questionnaire (Chapter 4, table 4.41) affirmed the necessity of supervisors' feedback during the viva voce preparation which highlights the critical role that supervisors play in preparing supervisees for the viva voce, ensuring that they are well-prepared to address questions and defend their research. This finding is supported by the findings of Anastasiadis and O'Brien (2019), Millin et al. (2022), Semjin et al. (2009) and Gronhret (2024) on the indispensability of the supervisors' input at this stage. All the supervisees perceive refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce as a formative stage as it boosted their confidence and ensured that they were mentally and academically equipped to tackle the questions and critiques that arose during the examination.

Moreover, they all perceive the viva voce as a valuable and advantageous yet stressful component of their supervision process. This finding is confirmed by the finding of Knight et al. (2018) and the overwhelming consensus from the respondents (Chapter 4, table 4.50) reflects the significance of the viva voce in the overall research experience. This implies that the viva voce provided crucial feedback, validation, and opportunities for intellectual engagement that are highly valued by the participants.

As already discussed, the participants' perceptions of the different steps of the supervision process can be classified into three different categories: positive, negative and mixed perceptions. The following figure summarizes the perceptions of the supervisees of each step of the supervision process:

Figure 6.1

Summary of the Supervisees' Perceptions



As reveal the data and figure 6.1, a positive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is of paramount importance. The more the supervisor is perceived by the supervisees as cooperative, facilitative, motivating and flexible, the easier the supervision process becomes which leads the supervisees to appreciate and develop positive perceptions about it. Conversely, the more the supervisor is perceived by the supervisees as authoritarian, inflexible and hindering the harder the process becomes which leads the supervisees to criticize and develop negative perceptions about it. What is even more important than the type of the supervisory relationship is the quality of the assistance and feedback provided. Even if the relationship is positive and the supervisor is facilitative and motivating, without timely, directional and tailored feedback and assistance, the supervision process becomes challenging and leads the supervisees to criticize and develop negative perceptions about it.

6.1.2 The Supervisees' Practices in the Supervision Process

The second research question aims at exploring the supervisees' practices during the supervision process. To reach this objective and answer this research question, the supervisees' practices questionnaire and the supervisees' practices interview were used. Later on, four administrative documents were analyzed to provide a broader framework for interpreting the participants' answers and understanding them in relation to the existing administrative guidelines and policies. Our study as well as the previous studies approach practice(s) differently. Specifically, Semjin et al. (2009) focus on identifying the influence of the supervisor's characteristics including responsiveness and methodological and process-related aspects of supervision and the use of thesis circles to assess their effect on the supervision process. Millin et al.'s (2022) study views practices as support systems and academic processes and looks at how well these practices meet established standards and highlights areas where improvements can be made. Gronhert et al. (2024) develop an input-process-outcome framework based on a systematic literature review, and identify key elements such as the student-supervisor relationship, supervisor attitudes, and the characteristics of students and supervisors that contribute to a successful supervision process. Our research views practices as employment and

execution of transferable, research and ethical skills in the supervision process phases. Hence, although difficult, we will attempt to interpret the findings in relation to these studies. We will start discussing the supervisees' practices in working with their supervisors, during the creation of the supervision commitment agreement, in preparing for the viva and during the viva voce. The rationale behind this decision stems from the similarity of the supervisees' practices during these stages regardless of their type of perceptions. Then the discussion continues to the other steps separately.

Concerning the supervisees' practices in working with the supervisors, the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.1.1) revealed that as the supervision process advanced and extended for many meetings, several challenges primarily revolving around communication gaps, expectation misalignment, personality conflicts, lack of immediate feedback and support, and delayed correction emerged. Although the aforementioned challenges aggravated the supervisees' feelings of isolation and impeded effective problem-solving, supervisees kept avoiding the confrontation of their supervisors as a means to overcome these obstacles. This avoidance stems from the supervisees' desire to prevent conflict, avoid additional stress or negative repercussions. However, this practice can lead to unresolved issues and ongoing frustration. The informants' responses (Chapter 5, sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2) revealed that, unexpectedly, all of them were unable to address the challenges they faced when working with their supervisors. Instead, they prioritized maintaining harmony in the relationship over resolving conflicts. They opted either for silence when they felt isolated due to a lack of clear communication or apologizing when a sense of power imbalance arose provoking the feeling that ending conflicts is more important than asserting their needs. However, these are persistent and deep-rooted supervisory issues that span across different stages of the research process which cannot be solved through silence and apologizing. This finding is consistent with the finding of the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.1) which revealed the use of interpersonal skills and flexibility and with Gronhert et al. (2024) who stress the importance of effective communication and relationship-building in establishing a productive supervisory relationship right from the beginning. The questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.2) showed that the participants were not included within the

supervisors' distribution procedures. This finding justifies the reason why the supervisees did not use the other skills such as analytical and managerial skills as the supervisees were not involved in the selection process. Therefore, it is crucial for the supervisees on conflict resolution and finding common ground to facilitate collaboration; otherwise, the challenges can lead to long-term dissatisfaction and hinder productivity. As already stated, the administration provided a ready-made supervision commitment agreement (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1) which had to be followed by the supervisees. All the supervisees reported that they did not contribute in the creation of this document (Chapter 5, table 5.2) rather they were obliged to take a following role (Chapter 5, table 5.5) at this stage.

Additionally, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5. 67) revealed that the supervisees engaged in a variety of activities to prepare for the viva voce, showcasing different strategies for readiness. All the supervisees engaged in simulating viva voce sessions, revised their dissertations and prepared a detailed outline making these the most commonly employed preparation methods. These approaches built familiarity and allowed the supervisees to practice their responses in a simulated environment, which likely helped in reducing anxiety and improving performance. Writing practice responses to potential viva questions were undertaken by the majority of the participants while consulting peers who had previously undergone the viva voce was also a common practice. These strategies allowed the supervisees to gain insights into the examiners' expectations and better understand the viva voce process from the perspective of those who had already experienced it. Moreover, the data gained from the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.12) revealed the supervisees' tendency to seek feedback from additional sources to enhance their performance for the viva voce. As for the challenges met in this preparatory stage, the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.6.1) revealed that the informants unanimously suffered from stress and anxiety. This emotional strain was consistently reported which showcases a significant area of concern in the viva voce experience. These emotional challenges included physical symptoms such as sleep disruption. The supervisees could not overcome this challenge in preparing for the viva; instead they coped with it. The questionnaire findings besides the finding of the first question related to the supervisees' practices in each

step (Chapter 5, table3.57) revealed that the supervisees' skills in this final preparation stage concentrated on interpersonal and flexibility skills due to the fact that they are directly related to the preparatory procedures. Accordingly, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.10) further highlights that the respondents took a leading role in which they were autonomously responsible for preparing for their oral defence.

Moreover, the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.6.1) showed that all the supervisees reported high levels of stress and anxiety during the viva voce. This may stem from the fear of the board of examiners' criticism and difficult questions. This finding is supported by the supervisees' answers about the concerns they had reported in the perceptions finding. The questionnaire findings besides the finding of the first question related to the supervisees' practices in each step (Chapter 5, table 3.57), the interview (Chapter 5, sections 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.5, 5.2.6, 5.2.10) and the document analysis (Chapter 5, section 5.3.4) revealed that the viva voce itself saw a high application of management, flexibility and interpersonal skills by all the supervisees. This reflects the need for effective organization, clear communication, and adaptation during the examination. The complete absence of literacy, analytical, ICTs, research, and ethical skills indicates that these skills were less relevant in the context of the oral examination, which focused more on oral presentation and immediate responses. Accordingly, during the viva voce, (Chapter 5, table3.58) all the supervisees were in a leading role, indicating their responsibility for presenting and defending their work. This complete autonomy reflects the evaluative nature of the viva voce, where the supervisees are expected to independently articulate and defend their research.

As far as the remaining steps are concerned; that is, making the research proposal, the execution of the research, writing and refining the dissertation and post-viva voce phase, the findings revealed that the supervisees' practices can be grouped into two main groups: effective and integrated practices and less effective and less integrated practices.

4.1.2.1 Group 01: effective and integrated practices. For the supervisees' practices in making the research proposal, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.6)

revealed that the supervisees adopted different approaches. The first approach consisted of reviewing different research proposals which indicates that they wanted to align their proposals with the established standards or to gain insights into effective structures. The second approach consisted of consulting the supervisor and benefiting from personalized guidance and feedback. Moreover, these participants relied on their own understanding of the proposal components (Chapter 5). This reflects either the effectiveness of their prior academic training or a well tailored supervisors' guidance as confirmed by the perceptions questionnaire. In the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.2.2), the supervisees revealed that they employed collaborating with the supervisors and consulting with colleagues. The questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.1) and the interview revealed that literacy skills to carefully read about and write the research proposal, interpersonal skills to collaborate with the partner and the supervisor, analytical skills to decide on which aspects to be focused on and research skills to locate studies and compare/contrast them and draw conclusions were used. Furthermore (Chapter 5, table 5.2), all the supervisees who developed a research proposal performed a leading role in making the research proposal, which demonstrates their active engagement and ability in shaping the direction and content of their research proposals.

As far as the execution of the research is concerned, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.7) and the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.3.1) revealed two distinct approaches to conducting the research. These participants selected many studies and validated 03 with the supervisor, compared and contrasted them then discussed the findings, reflecting a reliance on supervisory recommendations and guidance for their research. This indicates a collaborative approach in which the participants took a participating role (Chapter 5, table 5.2) by engaging with material recommended by their supervisors to inform their work. This collaboration could reflect a preference for trust in the supervisor's expertise in selecting relevant material. It also highlights the complex nature of these stages that require guidance especially the literature review part. As for the skills employed to navigate this stage, the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.3.3) and the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5. 57) indicated that the supervisees referred to a wide range of skills namely: managerial skills to execute the research

within the timeframe, literacy skills to critically read the literature and write about it, interpersonal skills to collaborate with the supervisor and the partner, analytical skills to analyse and critically think of the similarities and the differences between the selected studies, ICT skills to effectively to consult the wider field and search the literature, research skills to undertake the steps of secondary research, and ethical skills to ensure research integrity and avoid misconduct. Furthermore, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.24) and the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.7) revealed that these supervisees received feedback sufficiently and incorporated it consistently which made them avoid seeking assistance from external parties.

For the supervisees' practices in writing and refining the dissertation, the questionnaire and the interview (Chapter 5, table 5.8, section 5.2.4.1) revealed that these participants used outlines and structured writing sessions, which indicates a methodical approach to organizing and improving their dissertations by breaking down the dissertation into manageable parts for better focus. This method is particularly beneficial for ensuring coherence and logical flow in the document. These findings are complemented by the findings of the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.1) in which these supervisees reported the use of paraphrasing. This skill allows for the integration of ideas into a personal writing style. The questionnaire findings besides the finding of the first question (Chapter 5, table 5.1) which requires the supervisees to indicate their practices in each step of the supervision process and the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.3) revealed that management, literacy, research, ICTs, analytical and interpersonal skills were applied by these participants during writing and refining the dissertation text. This implies that these supervisees received the necessary feedback and assistance.

After the viva voce, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.15) revealed that the supervisees demonstrated a strong devotion to the supervision process till its last stages by introducing the corrections and incorporating the feedback highlighted by the board of examiners during the viva voce. The supervisees' assurance to improve their work before the final submission even after the defence indicates their commitment. The questionnaire findings besides the finding of the first question

related to the supervisees' practices in each step (Chapter 5, table 5.1) revealed that flexibility, management, and interpersonal skills were all deemed crucial by the supervisees. This suggests that the supervisees engaged in organizing final submissions, reflecting on their performance, and preparing for any required follow-ups once the viva voce was completed. The use of analytical and literacy skills by these supervisees reflects their ongoing evaluation and reflection. Not focusing on ethical skills in these final stages suggests that the supervisees perceive ethical considerations as relevant only during data collection or proposal development. Accordingly, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.2) indicates that the supervisees took participating roles. The findings related to this category are consistent with the findings of Gronhert et al. (2024) who stress the role of the aforementioned different skills use in determining the effectiveness of the supervision process.

4.1.2.2 Group 02: less effective and less integrated practices. As for the skills employed to overcome the challenges faced in doing the research, the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.3.3) and the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5. 57) indicated that the supervisees employed literacy, research, analytical and ICT skills, only few added ethical skills to these. These supervisees did not use interpersonal skills and/or flexibility because they did not collaborate with their supervisees. They also did not use ethical skills because they believe these skills are limited to acknowledging references and reporting data accurately. Moreover, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.24) and the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.7) revealed that they rarely received feedback; consequently, they incorporated it selectively or did not incorporate it at all. Due the insufficient feedback these supervisees received, the majority of them sought the assistance of external parties. However, three of them were prohibited to seek input from others. This finding has two major implications; the first is related to the supervisors' effort to develop autonomy and self-assessment among their supervisees without being aware that this approach is not always effective. The second implication is related to the supervisors' assistance and support, that is to say, the supervisors could not be more helpful and facilitative.

When it comes to the approaches used by the supervisees for refining their dissertations, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.8) and the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.1) showed that the majority of these supervisees relied on their supervisors for editing. This reflects the supervisees' dependence on the supervisors. Some supervisees engaged in self-editing and proofreading, which highlights a strong inclination towards independent refinement and self-reliance in polishing their work. This method implies that these supervisees have developed sufficient skills to critically evaluate their own writing. However, relying solely on self-editing could limit the scope of feedback and improvement, as self-review might overlook certain errors or areas needing improvement. Some participants sought external assistance for editing and proofreading. This approach can provide the supervisees with fresh perspectives and more objective feedback. However, this strategy raises concerns about whether the supervisees are knowledgeable about the Master's dissertation structure, format, grammar and writing mechanics. These findings are complemented by the findings of the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.1) which reported also the use of AI-assisted tools for writing and refining dissertations. AI tools provide additional support in generating content. This approach indicates an adaptation to evolving writing practices; however, it raises concerns about ethical considerations as it does not guarantee the supervisees undertook the research by themselves. Accordingly, the role distribution during the writing stage, as revealed the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.2) saw a majority of the supervisees leading the process, with a smaller group following. Again, the interview revealed (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.2) that the majority of students suffered from lack of timely feedback and correction at this stage of the supervision process. The supervisees found it difficult to correct the whole dissertation when completed/almost completed. Moreover, they highlighted the difficulty of maintaining a well-structured and coherent writing style. To overcome these hurdles, the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.3) revealed the use of three primary skills. The supervisees referred to collaboration, modelling previous dissertations, and seeking external assistance to address these challenges. The questionnaire findings besides the finding of the first question(Chapter 5, table 5.1) which requires the supervisees to indicate their

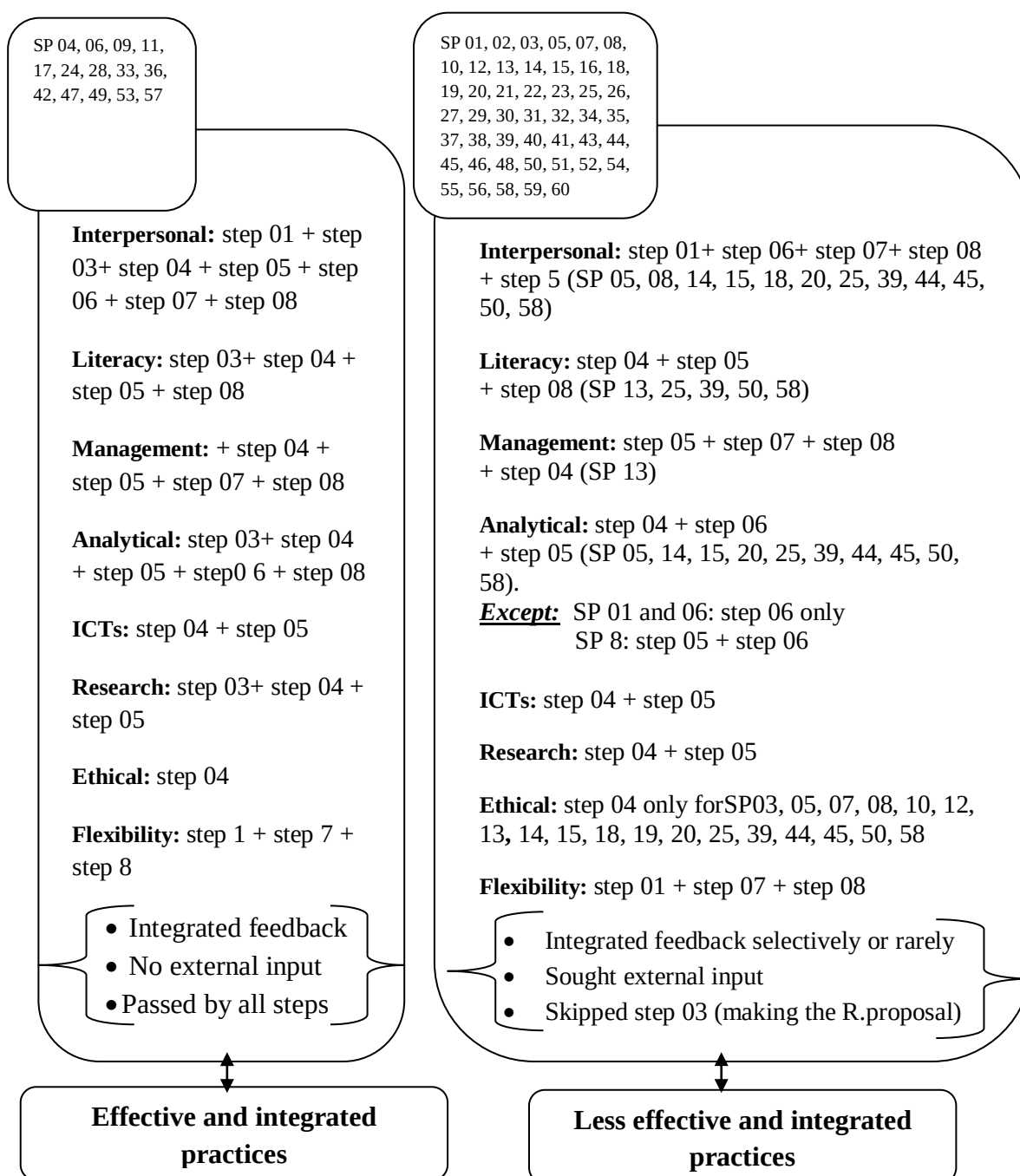
practices in each step of the supervision process and the interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.3) revealed that management, literacy, research and ICTs skills were applied by these supervisees. The minimal use of interpersonal skills by some supervisees indicates that the writing phase was more focused on individual efforts rather than collaborative input. Given the importance of collaboration, feedback and discussion in these phases, this suggests a potential issue in how supervisees engage with their supervisors and how supervisors deal with their supervisees as well.

The interview (Chapter 5, section 5.2.6.2) revealed that the post-viva voce phase was difficult; its challenges included difficulties with implementing the required corrections and handling the administrative tasks. Few participants introduced only some minor corrections to the final version of the dissertation. The reason behind this slight refinement is the supervisees' perception that the dissertation is received as adequate as it is because it was accepted for defence. Besides, they corrected what they could correct independently due to the feedback vagueness leaving the corrections that require the detailed and timely supervisors' guidance. Most participants, on the other hand, submitted their dissertations without introducing any corrections. This practice may originate from two primary reasons. The first relates to the supervisees' perception that the supervision process is complete at the defence stage while the second is related to the lack of feedback and the limited availability of supervisors for final revisions. Moreover, this category of supervisees describes the final submission as torturous because they struggled with paperwork. These findings indicate the necessity for regulating guidance and administrative procedures besides implementing better communication channels after the viva voce to mitigate these difficulties. In the post-viva voce stage, the questionnaire findings besides the finding of the first question related the supervisees' practices in each step (Chapter 5, table 5.1) revealed that flexibility, management, and interpersonal skills were all deemed crucial by the supervisees. This suggests that the supervisees engaged in organizing final submissions, reflecting on their performance, and possibly preparing for any required follow-up once the viva voce was completed. The lack of using analytical and literacy skills by these supervisees reflects their disengagement with the process. Once the viva voce is hold, research-related skills are no longer used. Not focusing on ethical skills

in these final stages suggests that the supervisees are not well aware that ethical considerations extend beyond data collection or proposal development to the post-viva voce stage. Accordingly, the questionnaire (Chapter 5, table 5.2) indicates that the supervisees took leading roles in the final step of the supervision process. Figure 6.2 summarizes the supervisees' practices.

Figure 6.2

Summary of the Supervisees' Practices



In brief, the use of multiple skills during each of the stages of the supervision process allowed the supervisees of category 01 to employ effective practices which rendered the process less challenging especially that they received sufficient feedback and incorporated it effectively. Category 02 supervisees' practices were less effective and less integrated which caused many challenges during the supervision process especially that they rarely received and integrated feedback; therefore, they were in constant search for external input to overcome the challenges.

In the following section, we will infer the answer to the third research question through the discussion of the supervisees' perceptions and practices.

6.1.3 The Relationship between the Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices in the Supervision Process

The data gathered through the discussion of the findings of the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire and interview, the supervisees' practices questionnaire and interview and the analysis of the four supervision related administrative documents revealed that the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and the practices they employed reflects a dynamic interplay. To understand this interplay, we first present the way the supervisees' practices/skills are employed.

The supervisees of group 01 (SP 04, 06, 09, 11, 17, 24, 28, 33, 36, 42, 47, 49, 53, and 57) who developed positive perceptions towards the supervision process employed many skills during the different stages of the supervision process. That is, each of them used and integrated each skill at different stages. These supervisees used interpersonal skills during all the steps of the supervision process to collaborate with the supervisors and effectively meet the requirements of each step. As for literacy skills, they made use of them during the research proposal development, the execution of the research, the dissertation writing and refining and after the viva voce. These skills helped them find the relevant literature, critically read and evaluate it then writing the text containing the analyzed content. Analytical skills were also widely used, precisely while making the research proposal, executing the research, writing and refining the dissertation, preparing for the viva voce and after it. Management

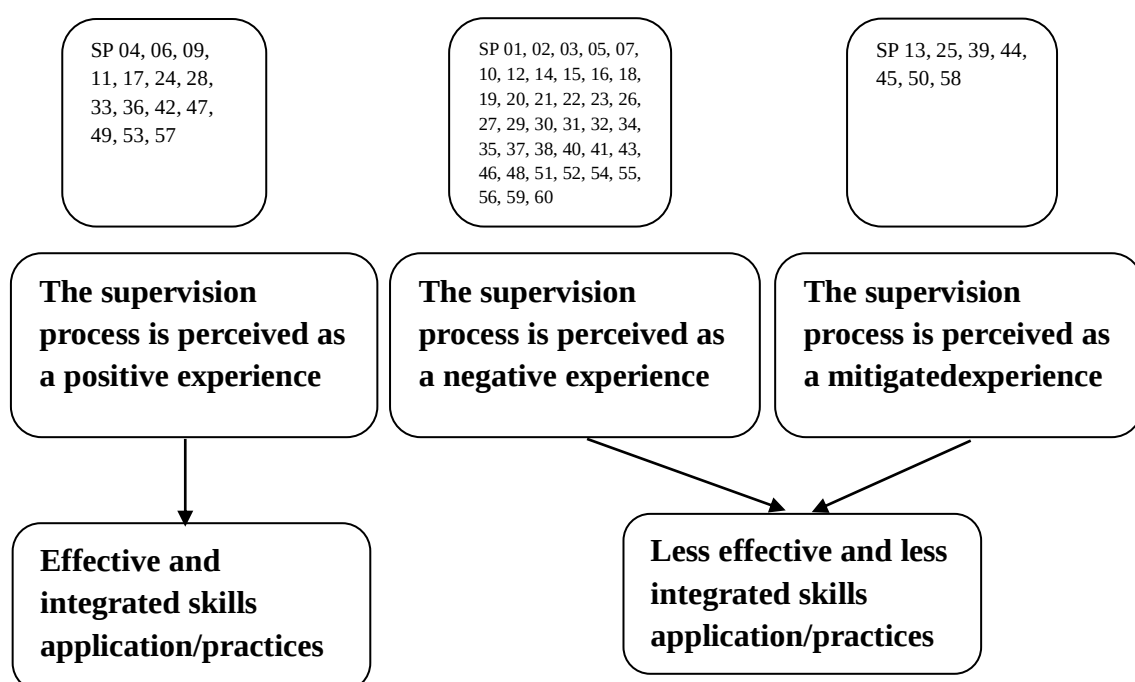
(managerial) skills also were employed during many stages, namely during the research execution, the dissertation writing and refining, the viva voce and after the viva. The supervisees employed these skills to manage completing these steps within the timeframe allocated, to keep the supervisors updated, to handle the challenges and to deal with stress. ICTs skills were used during the research execution and the research writing and refining as they were needed to have access to online libraries and data bases for the literature and to generate data through some apps. Research skills, on the other hand, were also used during the same stages for the same purposes. However, they were also used during the development of the research proposal to narrow down their topics and suggest the research direction. Flexibility was used in working with the supervisor and building a positive relationship with, during and after the viva voce to create a positive rapport and to handle the oral defence and the examination process and the challenges of the final submission. Ethical skills were the least used skills as the supervisees referred to them only during the research execution. The importance of ethics at this stage is undeniable; nonetheless, it is not limited to it.

The supervisees of group 02 (SP 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60) composed of the supervisees who developed either negative or mixed perceptions also employed many skills during the different stages of the supervision process. That is, each of them used and integrated each skill at different stages. However, each of these supervisees employed fewer skills either in one or in many steps of the supervision process. What is specific to these supervisees is that all of them did not go through step 3 (developing the research proposal) which implies that they skipped one of the most important steps during the supervision process which could have impacted the following steps and created some challenges during the supervision process. These supervisees used interpersonal skills in different stages; however, they did not use them during the execution of the research and the dissertation writing stages. As for literacy, research and ICTs skills, they made use of them only during the execution of the research and while writing and refining the text of the dissertation. Analytical skills were also employed by the supervisees while executing the research and preparing for the viva voce only. Furthermore, 10

supervisees (SP 05, 14, 15, 20, 25, 39, 44, 45, 50, and 58) employed them during the writing stage also as the research consists of comparing and contrasting three studies. SP 8 used them during the research writing instead of the research execution. Two supervisees (SP 01 and 06) used them in the preparatory phase only. Management (managerial) skills were also employed during many stages namely during the dissertation writing and refining, the viva voce and after the viva. Additionally, SP 13 used them also during the research execution to manage this stag effectively. Flexibility was used in working with the supervisor, during the viva voce and after the viva voce to collaborate with the supervisor and transition through these stages effectively. Ethical skills were the least used skills as only 18 supervisees out of 46 (SP03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 39, 44, 45, 50, 58) referred to them and only during the research execution. The importance of ethics at this stage is undeniable; nonetheless, it is not limited to it. Therefore, these supervisees need to be more aware of ethical skills and their importance during the different stages of the research process. The following figure visualizes the nature of the nature of this relationship.

Figure 6.3

The Relationship between the Supervisees' Perceptions and their Practices



As reveals figure 6.3, the supervisees who developed positive perceptions about each stage of the supervision process and about the process as a whole applied the skills and practices effectively and in a more integrated way throughout the different stages. That is, they used each skill across different steps which probably enhanced their supervisory experience. On the contrary, the supervisees who developed mixed or negative perceptions employed the practices less effectively and in a less integrative manner as they used only some skills during the different stages. This may imply that these supervisees had a more challenging supervisory experience.

In summary, the supervisees' perceptions often shaped their practices and approaches to the various stages of the supervision process. This connection is grounded in how the supervisees viewed the supervision process, either positive, mixed or negative perceptions, and this, in turn, directly informed their practices. Moreover, the perceived challenges often mirrored the supervisees' overall perceptions of the supervision process and the practices are responses to these perceived challenges, deficiencies and supervision gaps. Hence, we can claim that our findings demonstrate that perceptions inform and are the foundation for practice and a change in the supervisees' perceptions would result in a change in their practices. In the absence of literature specifically addressing the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process, the findings of this study draw upon the frameworks established by Prosser and Trigwell (1999) and Trigwell and Prosser (2020) which studied the relationship between university students' conceptions and their approaches to learning in higher education. Their findings which confirm that the students' conceptions about learning directly influence the learning approach can be extended to the supervision process context. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm the findings of the broader pedagogical research reached by Trigwell and Prosser (2020). Entwistle (2009) further supports this view by showing that the learners' conceptions of learning play a crucial role in shaping the learning approaches they employ. For instance, students who conceive of learning as understanding ideas and applying them critically are more likely to adopt a deep approach characterised by active engagement, integration of knowledge, and reflection. In contrast, those who view learning merely as memorising facts or

reproducing content tend to adopt a surface approach focusing on rote learning and meeting minimum requirements.

In light of these results, a number of pedagogical implications will be discussed in the following section.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications

After exploring the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and their practices, a relationship between these two variables was revealed. The relationship established between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process implies that the supervisees' practices in the supervision process in general and in each step of it in particular are guided by their perceptions of the supervision process and its steps. Hence, in order to adopt effective and integrated practices, the supervisees need to hold positive perceptions, or work to transform negative perceptions into positive ones. Based on these findings, the following pedagogical implications are offered.

4.2.1 A Suggested Framework for Research Supervision Process at Master Level

The literature review identified a lack of detailed and structured theoretical frameworks specifically addressing the supervision process at the Master's Level. The existing frameworks and models tend to focus either on doctoral level or present general guidelines related to research mainly and neglect the specific needs of Master supervisees. To overcome this challenge, the current study introduced an adapted eight-step framework for the supervision process at the Master's level. The first step consists of finding the right supervisor while the second step dictates creating a dissertation supervision code of conduct. The third step is related to the development of the research proposal and is followed by the execution of the research. Producing the dissertation text marks the fifth step whereas refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce make the sixth step. The last two steps are related to the viva voce and post-viva voce phases respectively. We recommend this framework to be followed as a reference for a well organized and rounded supervision process. Accordingly, we offer several other implications based on our adapted framework with the intention of

helping supervisees' develop positive perceptions of the supervision process and enhancing their practices in the English Department at Algiers 2 University.

6.2.2 Reconsidering the Supervisors' Distribution Process

The first step of our theoretical framework suggests that the supervisees choose the supervisor who they believe is compatible to them. As revealed in the results chapter (Chapter 3), the supervisees did not select their supervisors; instead, the supervisees were assigned to the supervisors through the draw system which was perceived negatively by the great majority of the supervisees. The draw system is part of the department's policy in ensuring transparency and fairness in matching the supervisees-supervisors pairs especially when some supervisors are wanted more than others and that the number of the supervisees surpasses the number of the supervisors available. However, this process created discontent among the supervisees and led to negative supervisory relationships. It is therefore recommended that the administration reconsiders the procedures of supervisors-supervisees distribution.

One way to enhance this process is to divide supervisors into categories according to their areas of interest, and then refer to the students' ranking by merit to know which supervisor is going to supervise which supervisee. This approach can be more effective in reducing ulterior negative perceptions as it involves the supervisees in the division process and ensures fairness and transparency. Exhaustively discussed, we recommend dividing the supervisees on supervisors equally so as all supervisor has the same number of supervisees to supervise. Supervisors should be divided on categories according to their preferred areas of research at the beginning of the academic year; an example of this is to group all the supervisors interested in ICTs integration in a category, supervisors interested in educational psychology topics such as anxiety and motivation in a different category, supervisors keen on working on teaching methods/approaches in another category and the list goes on. Later on, the administration informs the supervisees of these categories along with the names of the supervisors included in each one and asks them to select one supervisee to work in pair with, one of the categories of the research areas and to prepare three topics pertaining to three different research categories, their primary topics and two back-up topics.

Afterwards, the administrative members decide upon a day to divide the supervisors and invite the supervisees to attend. The supervisees get grouped according to the categories of the supervisors (the supervisees interested in ICTs integration together, the supervisees interested in educational psychology in another category, the supervisees keen on working on teaching methods/approaches/style in another category etc.). On this day, each supervisee gets the chance to select the supervisor they prefer to work with from the category of their preferred research area. However, the selection is not random as there are a few supervisors to supervise many students; rather it is based on the averages of the supervisees (ranking by merit). That is, the supervisee with the highest average selects first, he announces his topic, the supervisor selected and the name of the colleague he wants to work with. Then the second selects and the third, until all the supervisees make their selections. Once the maximum number of supervisees for one supervisor is reached, their names get dropped out. In case the supervisors of one category have been all chosen while other supervisees still want to work on that category, the supervisees change the category of their research interest and shift to the second or the third back-up topic.

Once this process is completed, the administration informs the supervisors of the supervisees and the topics they will supervise. Later on, the supervisees and the supervisors arrange the first meeting to confirm agreement of working together and to validate/refine the research topic. In case any problem/cancellation appears during the first meeting, both the supervisor and the supervisees have to notify the administration to solve it before posting the final lists. Posting the final list of the supervisees, their supervisors and the research topics marks the end of the process and no modifications can be applied afterwards.

We believe that this process would create less negative perceptions about the supervisors because the supervisees would feel that they were engaged and took part in selecting their supervisors which would help in creating a positive relationship. Besides, it eliminates the possibility that the supervisees choose a supervisor based on his personality or kindness only; rather both the supervisors' and the supervisees' areas of research will be taken into account which would enhance the quality of the research

contrary to the cases where one of them is not working within his preferred area of research. Furthermore, this approach extends to their learning process because it would motivate the supervisees to perform better as they become aware that their marks will be considered in selecting their supervisors which will enhance their performance in their studies and in the supervision process simultaneously.

6.2.3 Creating a Dissertation Supervision Code of Conduct

The results of the present research indicated that the supervisees did not contribute to the creation of the supervisory working contract; rather they were offered a document called the Supervision Agreement Commitment. This administrative document was perceived as deficient in terms of the rules and the details included within it; therefore, they concluded it was unnecessary and did not refer to it. Therefore, the administration is recommended to revise the supervision agreement commitment. Due to the lack of many details regarding the supervision process such as: workload distribution, details about support, expectations of both, agreement about the intrusion of an external party, feedback mechanisms and managing conflicts, it has been decided to develop our own generic supervision commitment agreement. We suggest the creation of another document called the Supervision Process Code of Conduct which includes two parts, the regulatory part represented by the supervision agreement commitment provided by the administration and a part developed collaboratively between the supervisors and the supervisees. These two parts can be developed within the same document in different sections.

The regulatory part is the supervision commitment agreement; it keeps the same content and format provided by the administration and it is offered to all the supervisees and their supervisors. As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5.1, the supervision agreement commitment is made up of three parts. The first part is an agreement document that deals with the duties of the supervisors and the supervisees. The second part is the supervisees' commitment statement which must be signed by both supervisors and supervisees. The final part provides the Master's dissertation work plan template which must be signed by both parties too. We call this part the

regulatory part because it must be approved and signed by all the supervisors and the supervisees and they all submit to it equally.

The suggested second part, on the other hand, is developed during the second meeting through collaboration and shared contribution between the supervisees and their supervisors. This code of conduct is flexible, individualized, and adaptive to each supervisor-supervisees pair. Berlach (2010) highlights the importance of establishing and discussing negotiations amongst the supervisor and the supervisee to ensure development in the research. Following the proposition of Pearson and Kayrooz (2004), our suggested version contains a set of key elements that must be set and agreed upon by both the supervisor and the supervisee. These elements serve as the foundation for effective collaboration that will last long. This is supported by Berlach (2010) who asserts that a collaborative approach to supervision includes a plan of action, depending on the program requirements, created by both parties jointly. The code of conduct produced should be formally signed and respected by both parties, as it governs the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. That is, the administration creates a document which contains the main elements to be agreed upon between the two parties and asks them to fill it according to their preferences. This document must contain the roles of the supervisor and the supervisee, the nature of the relationship, feedback mechanisms, conflicts resolution, workload distribution, supervisory meetings, the intrusion of external parties, the administrative procedures, and flexibility in following and deviating from the rules set (see Appendix J).

Later on, supervisees with their supervisors elaborate on the details of each element, they discuss and agree upon the rights and duties of each one, the supervisor's ways of working and supervising, the frequency and the format of feedback (oral or written, written on an electronic or a paper version), the procedures followed in case conflicts arise, work expected to be brought during each supervisory meeting, the frequency and the duration of the supervision sessions, mutual understanding on the possibility of involving a third party (other teachers and/or colleagues), distributing responsibilities regarding the administrative procedures. At last, there must be an agreement on the extent to which and the circumstances under

which this code of conduct might be breached. It is highly important to communicate the purpose of this document and to raise the supervisees' awareness that they take part in the creation of the code of conduct to have an opportunity to negotiate what suits them. In return, it is also essential for them to understand that there would be consequences of not adhering and failing to comply with the rules included within it.

We assume that when the supervisees contribute in creating the code of conduct, their needs and preferences will be taken into consideration and they will develop positive perceptions towards it because they participated in its development. This participatory approach fosters the supervisees' engagement and increases the sense of inclusivity. Furthermore, the balance between the regulatory and adaptable parts and between involvement and accountability encourages the sense of responsibility while maintaining order.

6.2.4 Supplementing the Master Curriculum with Targeted Modules

The results of the present research revealed that the majority of the supervisees skipped important steps such as the development of the research proposal and after the viva voce phase, employed less effective and integrated practices, and were dissatisfied with the supervisors' feedback, assistance and emotional support. One solution to overcome these challenges is to develop the curriculum by adding supervision preparatory modules. These modules will be mandatory and will start during the fourth semester. Therefore, the supervisees will have to attend these modules besides the supervisory meetings. These modules are: research methodology and the supervisees' toolkit.

The extension of the research methodology course to the fourth semester serves an assistive tool which may reduce the workload of the supervisors by equipping the supervisees with tailored knowledge and skills in a timely and prompt manner. Given that the curriculum restricts the course to the first semester, it provides the supervisees with essential theoretical knowledge but fails to offer the necessary support during the second semester, when they carry out their research. It is worth mentioning that, previously, the Research methodology module used to be extended to the fourth

semester before the curriculum was modified to its current version. Therefore, we suggest revising the curriculum to extend this module for the fourth semester again. When extended to the fourth semester, the content of this course will depend on the immediate needs of the supervisees. For example, during the first sessions, the supervisees will be taught how to make a research proposal and asked to prepare a research proposal about their research topics. Later on, the teacher of this module will assess the research proposals in terms of the components while the supervisor will have to deal with the content most of the time. The research methodology teacher assesses only the structure and the elements included whereas the supervisor assesses the content and the accuracy of data. This complementary relationship between the research methodology teacher and the supervisor will facilitate the tasks of the supervisor and will guide the supervisees in a systematic way.

Another module which can be highly effective in assisting the supervisees and the supervisors during the supervision process when added to the curriculum is supervision skills. There are many resources and skills that the supervisees must know and acquire to be aware of and perform effectively in the supervisory experience. The module equips the supervisees with the necessary knowledge and practice on the supervision process requirements and offers an ongoing learning journey. Specifically, the supervision toolkit teaches the supervisees how to evaluate, analyze and synthesize information, which is a prerequisite in the supervision process such as assessing the reliability of information/sources, concept mapping and comparing and contrasting. Furthermore, it equips them with the academic writing skills such as outlining, drafting and note taking which are the cornerstones of the research supervision process. Additionally, this module ensures time management which helps in striking a balance between the supervisees' responsibilities and the deadlines; this can be attained through setting SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals and creating timelines. In the supervision process context, the teacher can ask the supervisees to make a timeline for the supervision process and assign a goal to each period of the process. Besides, it enhances self-regulation to maintain the supervisees' motivation and consistency in their performance. For instance, when the supervisees acquire/develop self-regulation in this module, they can maintain motivation and

manage their performance independently and effectively. This in return reduces the need for the supervisors' constant oversight and control; instead the supervisors will allocate less time to remedial guidance and concentrate on efficient supervision. Equally important to mention, the supervision toolkit needs to improve the supervisees' interpersonal skills and flexibility as the supervisory relationship depends on these two skills. This can be achieved through group discussions and debates, active listening activities, problem-solving and conflicts resolution tasks in a contextualized manner. For example, the teacher provides a scene in which a conflict arises between a supervisor and supervisee and asks them what they would do/ how they would manage to overcome the conflict if it happened to them and discusses their reactions in terms of positive and negative consequences.

As the name denotes, preparatory modules prepare the supervisees and enhance their readiness to apply what they learnt and put it into practice. We consider that reinforcing the curriculum with these two preparatory modules/courses will not only yield favourable outcomes on the supervisees' perceptions, performance and academic growth but it will also create a conducive environment for the supervisors to focus on their core tasks namely guiding and directing the supervisees. Otherwise, the supervisors will have to fulfil many roles, besides all their other roles, and this becomes too demanding for them and creates role overload.

6.2.5 Creating an Institutional Supervision Portfolio/E-portfolio

The findings of the research instruments highlighted that there was an inconsistency between the supervisees' supervisory experiences. While some supervisees benefited from a collaborative supervisor who is easy to work with, flexible and facilitates the process, provides timely, frequent and directional feedback, tailored and effective assistance and motivating emotional support, others struggled with authoritarian supervisors who provided critical and dismissive feedback, impractical assistance and hindering emotional support. In between these two categories, other supervisees benefited from flexible, facilitative and motivating supervisors; however, they struggled with vague feedback and impractical assistance. Hence, the supervisees formed different types of perceptions about the supervision

process, positive, negative and mixed which guided and informed their practices to be effective and integrated through all the steps of the supervision process or to be less effective and integrated. To address these concerns and improve the supervisory experience and its outcomes, the institutions are recommended to implement a supervision portfolio so that all the three parties (i.e., the supervisees, the supervisors and the administration) keep track of the supervision process.

Although the English Department provides a practical document entitled ‘Supervision Report Form’ (see Appendix K) to record the supervision sessions, we believe that this document focuses mainly on documenting the frequency of meetings. It does not extend to reflect the quality and effectiveness of the supervisory meetings. Hence we suggest a portfolio which enhances the report’s depth and serves as a reflective and constructive tool (see Appendix L).

The portfolio consists of a comprehensive collection of documents, each of which represents one month of supervisory work and meetings from the supervisees and the supervisors’ perspectives separately. That is, once a month of supervision ends, supervisees and supervisors document the elements/ideas that were discussed/dealt with during that month separately and send a version to the administration or to the pedagogical committee of supervision. The reporting interval can be shortened to be weekly; however, we believe that filling the document monthly is more appropriate to give sufficient time for skills development and/or performance enhancement. We recommend also for this portfolio to be electronic (an e-portfolio) to be easily accessible, well organized, to allow update and review anytime and from any device before sending it to the administration.

In terms of its content, the same document is given to the supervisees and the supervisors; it should start with an opening statement which introduces the purpose of the document, followed by report data, the supervisees’ reflection or the supervisors’ reflection (depending on the one filling it), meetings summary, progress overview, goals for the next month, suggestions for improvement or additional remarks. The supervisors’/supervisees’ information and report date are important to keep track of the right supervisor/supervisee pair during the different months. The

supervisors’/supervisees’ reflection space is included to give them the space to express their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the roles, practices, meetings (the supervisees’ questions for the supervisors and the supervisor’s responsiveness for the supervisees), workload (doing the expected work for the supervisees and correcting the work for the supervisors), feedback and assistance (for supervisees) and their incorporation (for supervisors). The supervisors and the supervisees can expand on these depending on their experience and needs.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the meetings summary provides supervisors and supervisees with a repository of the elements dealt with and keep track of their work. It also serves as a plan upon which they can decide upon upcoming phases and elements. Lastly, it provides evidence to the administration that the supervision process complies with the academic standards and policies. This relates to the inclusion of the progress overview, this implies declaring the milestones reached over the past month; it can be also represented in the form of a percentage of progress status. This element ensures keeping the supervision process within the timeframe allocated to it. Additionally, setting goals for the following period/month is also important in directing the process, maintaining focus and mutual understanding between the supervisor and the supervisee and increases the supervisees’ time and self management skills and their commitment to attain the objectives set before the next report. The last section is devoted to any suggestions for improving the supervising process for this supervisor-supervisee pair and/or for any additional information one of them wants to highlight.

Overall, we believe that the e-portfolios will be of great help for the supervisees, the supervisors and the administration. It assists the supervisees and the supervisors in maintaining focus and structure by reflecting on their performances while it helps the administration track the progress of the supervision process and finds the reasons in case of conflicts or dissatisfaction and to ensure consistency in the supervisees’ supervisory experiences. We also believe that such a document enhances the overall supervision process by eliminating the negative perceptions and encouraging effective practices.

6.2.6 Balancing Group Supervision and Tailored and Continuous Feedback, Assistance and Emotional support

The results of the present research indicated that many supervisees struggled with lack of their supervisors' feedback, assistance and emotional support throughout the different stages of the supervision process. This lack can be attributed to many reasons which can be related to the supervisors and/or the supervisees. The supervisor-related factors include workload and time constraints as the supervisors have to fulfil many roles namely: teachers, guides, evaluators, facilitators, classroom managers, role models and curriculum developers, besides supervising students and bearing administrative and their own research responsibilities. These competing demands can prevent the supervisors from offering the required level of feedback, assistance and emotional support. The supervisees, on the other hand, also contribute through a range of factors that could hinder the supervisors' ability to provide targeted feedback, assistance and emotional support. When supervisees lack the necessary engagement that leads to effective supervision, it becomes difficult for supervisors to analyze their needs as disengaged supervisees do not ask for help or clarification, do not ask questions and do not communicate their struggles or needs which creates gaps in their understanding and leaves the supervisors unaware of them. These supervisors and supervisees' related barriers can be overcome through the balance between group supervision and tailored supervision.

In group supervision, supervisees who are under the supervision of the same supervisor can have some supervision sessions all together. These supervisory sessions tackle the essentials of the supervision process such as the elements of the research proposal and how to conduct a literature review to name a few examples. This approach is efficient as it allows supervisors to address common concerns, provide collective feedback, assistance and support and clarify shared ambiguities and challenges for all the supervisees at the same time. Furthermore, supervisees will have the chance to gain insights from the others' questions, insights and comments. Group supervision is highly recommended as it reduces the repetitive workload for the supervisors and ensures that the supervisees are benefiting from a more structured and consistent

supervision which reduces the supervisees' feelings of dissatisfaction. The supervision process becomes more effective when this approach is complemented by tailored and continuous feedback, assistance and emotional support provided during the individualized supervisory meetings.

As for the individualized supervisory sessions, supervisors are required to provide supervisees with tailored and ongoing feedback, assistance and emotional support. When supervisors provide personalized guidance and support, it shows their deep understanding of the supervisees' work, progress, challenges and needs. Therefore, they provide the 'what to be enhanced' aspect. However, this aspect is not sufficient, as the results of the present research revealed, supervisees need to know also the 'how to enhance it' aspect. Supervisees' need to know the elements and aspects that require improvement, but they also need practical feedback and assistance on how to reach improvement. Moreover, the supervisors need to provide timely feedback and assistance and avoid any delays as this directly impacts their motivation and performance. Offering prompt feedback and assistance helps supervisees identify areas of improvement and correct mistakes early which prevent them from carrying mistakes and misconceptions into the following stages. When the mistakes persist, supervisees invest considerable time and effort in vain.

On the same line of thoughts, when supervisees do not receive timely feedback and practical assistance, their levels of frustration and anxiety increase as they feel the pressure to address the issues within tight deadlines. If too much time passes before receiving feedback, supervisees may feel a sense of neglect and may forget the rationale behind certain choices or the context of inclusion/exclusion of elements. This can lead them to feel high stress because they will have to act upon the feedback and to modify a lot within limited time. Similarly, when supervisees do not receive practical assistance, they feel uncertainty about how to proceed with their work. This may diminish their motivation and lower their confidence in their abilities. Over time, the psychological malaise caused by the lack of prompt and ongoing feedback, practical assistance and emotional support can affect the supervisees' academic performance and their general well-being.

Briefly put, we strongly recommend balancing group and individualized supervision for an efficient supervision process. When supervisors provide group supervision, they provide feedback and assistance which cover the general topics and concerns and avoid repeating tasks. The general feedback and assistance get narrowed down in the individual supervision sessions where supervisees receive timely and ongoing feedback, practical assistance and emotional support tailored to their needs. This balanced approach ensures an effective and efficient supervision process that takes into consideration all the parties involved in it (i.e., the supervisors and the supervisees).

6.2.7 Training Programs

To enhance the quality of the supervision process, it is necessary to raise the supervisors' and the supervisees' awareness about the supervision process. The supervisors need to understand the effect of their practices/performance on their supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process while the supervisees' need to understand the effect of their perceptions on their practices/performance in the supervision process. This level of awareness can be achieved through training programs delivered for both.

6.2.7.1 Training Programs for Supervisors to Understand the Influence of their Actions on their Supervisees' Perceptions. It is recommended that Master supervisors undertake a training programme on the importance of their performance in shaping their supervisees' perceptions. Such programs should start with making supervisors aware of How to supervise as the importance and impact of their supervisory input and practice is determining factor of the success of the supervision process. Moreover, they need to understand that supervisees' perceptions are based supervisors' performance and in turn guide and inform their practices in the supervision process. It should be delivered and presented by colleagues who are experienced supervisors, academic experts in the supervision research area and psychologists to provide a holistic understanding for supervisors.

Experienced supervisors, drawing from their experience in supervising Master students for years, provide real word examples on the impact of their actions on their supervisees' perceptions and offer shortcuts to the best practices according to them. The presence of academic experts adds significance and reliability to this training as supervisors can benefit from their theoretical and empirical research on the extent to which supervisors' actions influence the perceptions they form about the supervision process. Psychologists also have their important role in such training especially in the areas of emotional support and interpersonal dynamics. Psychologists can provide insights into the psychological issues supervisees may face such as anxiety or personality conflicts, and help them overcome such barriers. Moreover, they can train supervisors to understand non-verbal cues such as facial expression, tone of voice and body language of their supervisees and how their supervisees would interpret their supervisors' non-verbal cues. All in all, psychologists can help supervisors develop emotional intelligence which allows them to understand their own and their supervisees' emotions and how to provide effective support to overcome the psychological hindrances. Once this is achieved, supervisors may perform their roles/tasks more effectively, which leads supervisees to develop positive perceptions.

Regarding the frequency of the training, we believe that it would be more effective if it is held with supervisors as part of their continuous professional development (CPD) before, during and after the supervision process. The pre-supervision training ensures that supervisors are equipped with the necessary knowledge and strategies on the importance of their performance in shaping supervisees' perceptions before starting the supervision process. Later on, supervisors benefit from this training as a follow-up training when the supervision process has advanced (after few months) to provide supervisors with an opportunity to refresh and update their knowledge. It also allows them to reflect about their approach and adjust it and to collaboratively overcome challenges depending on the feedback they receive during this training. After the supervision process, this training is held again as part of the supervisors' reflective practice. The rationale behind this timing is to provide supervisors with an opportunity to evaluate their overall performance and its effect on

their supervisees' academic outcomes. This final training will inform supervisors' future performance.

6.2.7.2 Training and Workshops for Supervisees on the influence of their Perceptions on their Practices. It is recommended that supervisees undertake a training which tackles the common beliefs and perceptions about the supervision process and their impact on their practices. This training should be delivered by experienced supervisors who can provide authentic examples from their experience as supervisors early in the beginning of the supervision process. Afterwards, workshops, which are less theoretical and take shorter time compared to training, should be scheduled to elicit the supervisees' perceptions, raise awareness of them, connect them to their practices and understand that supervisees with different perceptions approach their supervisory experience differently and achieve different outcomes.

In the following section we will present the limitations of the study and offer further research suggestions to address them in future research.

6.3 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

This study has provided insights into the Master supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process however, it is essential to acknowledge its inevitable limitations to provide recommendations and guide future research. Despite the effort invested in this research work to reach rigorous results, many factors may have influenced the findings. Identifying the limitations caused by these factors allows for a more comprehensive understanding of these findings and ensures that the conclusions drawn are interpreted with appropriate caution.

To start with, the body of the existing literature remains sparse and lacks comprehensive studies tackling the Master supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and their practices during it, which caused us many challenges in discussing our findings with reference to earlier research on the same topic. In particular, most of the literature deals with the supervision process at PhD level only, which urged us to adapt PhD supervision to fit Master supervision. Moreover, the perceptions and the practices of supervisees were not addressed in one same study; rather they were

addressed separately. In fact, we could find only one study that tackles Master supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and three which tackle Master supervisees' practices in the supervision process (Chapter 2, section 2.5). Therefore, we recommend that future research considers this shortcoming and delves into this significant topic.

A different limitation is related to the study's limited context and the extent to which the sample is representative. The findings of this research cannot be generalized because they are confined to an exiguous size of the sample made up of supervisees at Algiers 2 University. Therefore, the data reported by the small number of supervisees majoring in didactics in the English Department at Algiers 2 University only cannot be representative of all Algerian universities, all the departments and Master supervisees. Hence, there is a need to carry out further research in the future to replicate this research in a different setting with a larger sample of Master supervisees belonging to different universities to reach conclusions that are more generalizable, valid and reliable.

Moreover, another deficiency is related to this research perspective as it investigated the topic from the supervisees' perspectives only. Future research could benefit from incorporating the supervisors' perspective to complement the findings of the practices. Including both supervisors and supervisees could offer a holistic understanding through the dual perspective which adds to the validity and the reliability of the data.

Another shortcoming is related to the focus of study. Our research focused on the Master supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process. In doing so, we disregarded other pertinent characteristics that could have influenced the perceptions and/or the practices such as the supervisees' gender, age and level. Thus, we aspire for this exploratory study to set the groundwork for future research to examine these factors and analyse their effect.

Conclusion and Research Contribution

In this chapter, we discussed the research findings which were analyzed and presented in chapter 3 in relation to the research questions and the limited literature. Furthermore, we provided the pedagogical implications of the research by providing the practical implementation of the research findings to improve the supervision process for the English language Master supervisees majoring in Didactics at Algiers 2 University by understanding their perceptions and practices. Lastly, we acknowledged our research limitations and provided recommendations for future research.

In order to answer the first research question and explore the Master supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process, we depended on the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire, the supervisees' perceptions semi-structured interview and the analysis of four supervision related administrative documents. The data collected through these instruments was summarized and collectively discussed to reveal that the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process can be either entirely positive or negative or mixed. The supervisees develop positive perceptions when they develop a positive relationship with the supervisor who is facilitative, motivating and provides effective assistance and timely and directional feedback. The supervisees may form negative perceptions when they develop a negative relationship with the supervisor who is authoritarian, inflexible and hindering, provides impractical assistance and provides critical and dismissive feedback. The supervisees may also develop mixed perceptions, positive during some steps and negative during others; these supervisees develop a positive relationship with the supervisor who is facilitative and motivating; however, he provides impractical assistance and vague feedback.

In order to answer the second research question, and explore the Master supervisees' practices in the supervision process, we depended on the supervisees' practices questionnaire, the supervisees' practices semi-structured interview and the analysis of four supervision related administrative documents. The data gathered through these research tools was summarized and in an integrative manner discussed to reveal that the supervisees' practices in the supervision process can be either employed effectively and in an integrative manner or employed less effectively and in

a less integrative manner. Some supervisees used many skills during each of the supervision process steps and used the same skill throughout varied steps while other supervisees used fewer skills in each of the supervision process steps and did not use the same skills throughout varied steps.

In order to answer the third research question about the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process, we referred to the data gathered about perceptions and practices and to our inference abilities. The perceptions seem to inform, guide and to be the foundation of the practices. The supervisees who develop positive perceptions employ skills effectively and in an integrative manner; while the supervisees who develop negative or mixed perceptions use skills less effectively and in a less integrative manner.

Our research findings aspire to contribute to the existing knowledge and wider field of research supervision process by exploring the Master supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process and examining the nature of the relationship between these perceptions and the practices.

To start with, the supervisees' perspective has been under researched in supervision-related studies, especially at the Master level, where it is even scarcer. Therefore, this study contributes to filling this research gap by providing an understanding of the supervision process from the Master supervisees' perspective. Additionally, this research aspires to serve as a foundation for future studies in similar educational contexts especially in the Algerian context as it provides an adapted theoretical framework for the Master supervision process which has been lacking in the existing research.

This study is also hoped to inform and guide the institutions' policy, the supervisees' perceptions and the supervisees and the supervisors' practices in the supervision process. This, in turn, is hoped to enhance the supervision quality and promote a productive environment which leads to better academic outcomes for Master students. Furthermore, it is hoped to improve the quality of Master research supervision and raise the supervisees' and the supervisors' awareness through

shedding light on the different stages/steps making the supervision process and the interrelatedness between them. It details the extent to which the supervisees' perceptions of each step are shaped by their supervisors' performance, and to the extent to which their practices in that step are guided by their perceptions.

Moreover, it also emphasizes the need for the English Department at Algiers 2 University to reconsider the supervisors' assignment procedures and revise the supervision agreement commitment document which proved to be ineffective as the supervisees did not contribute to them. Besides, this research work highlights the necessity of creating e-portfolios to keep track of the supervision process by the involved parties (the supervisees, the supervisors and the administration) and training the supervisees and the supervisors early in the beginning of the process by experts to help each understand their roles and duties and minimize challenges and issues.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The General Conclusion

For the majority of students, the Master's dissertation serves as a foundational stage in which they embark on research for the first time. This transitional phase from coursework to research often shapes the way they perceive the supervisory experience. The motivation for this research originated from the scarcity of literature on the Master supervision process, especially studies that investigate the students' perspective. The lack of systematic research instigated our interest to explore the Master dissertation supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process.

The literature review provides an overview of the existing literature (both theoretical and empirical) relevant to our research topic. Given our focus on examining the supervisees' perceptions and practices within the supervision process, we provide a theoretical background. We situated our research topic within the broader context of higher education. Then we defined and highlighted the importance of key concepts such as supervision, process, and supervision process and analyzed various supervision styles tackling their strengths and limitations. We then delved into the components of the supervision process, evaluating their applicability and relevance to the Master-level supervision process which led us to an exploration of the supervisors' and the supervisees' roles. Following this, the major factors influencing the supervision process, including contingency factors, the supervisees' perceptions, and the supervisor-supervisee relationship, were critically examined. Perceptions were also discussed tackling the students' perceptions and their measurement. A section on the optimal supervisory practices followed; it divides practices into transferable skills, research skills, and ethical skills which are crucial for providing effective academic guidance. The current challenges facing Master supervision, ranging from supporting autonomy to managing diverse supervisee needs, were discussed. Lastly, we presented findings from the previous studies, highlighted their insights and limitations, and thus identified the gaps in the literature.

The review of the literature revealed the scarcity of research on the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process especially at Master level, which highlighted the need for in-depth investigation on the topic. Hence, this doctoral

research aimed at exploring the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and their practices during its different stages. Additionally, this study investigated the potential relationship between the Master supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process. To attain these objectives, three research questions were generated: 1) what are Master students' perceptions about the supervision process? 2) What are Master students' practices in the supervision process? 3) What is the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process?

To answer the research questions, an exploratory research was conducted in the English Department at Algiers 2 University. The population of the study consisted of 371 Master 2 students majoring in didactics. 60 students were selected from the population through convenience sampling procedures to answer the questionnaires while 20 supervisees were purposively selected to take part in semi-structured follow-up interviews. Precisely, the data was elicited from the participants through the supervisees' perceptions and practices questionnaires, the supervisees' perceptions and practices interview and the analysis of four administrative supervision-related documents. All the aforementioned tools were based on our adapted supervision process model constituted of eight main steps (working with the supervisor, creating the supervision agreement commitment, developing the research proposal, executing the research, producing the dissertation text, refining the dissertation and preparing for the viva voce, the viva voce, post-viva voce stage) and were used to investigate the supervisees' perceptions and practices and, thus, answer the first and the second research questions while the third research question related to the relationship between the perceptions and the practices was inferential in nature.

For the data collection procedures, the research started by administering the supervisees' perceptions questionnaire followed by the supervisees' practices questionnaire. These two questionnaires intended to explore the supervisees' awareness and understanding of the supervision process following our adapted eight steps Master supervision framework, their perceptions of these steps and their practices throughout the different stages of this process. The questionnaires were

followed by semi-structured interviews to collect deeper insights from the supervisees' by delving into the details of their supervisory experience. Once the questionnaires and the interviews findings were revealed, we decided to triangulate data and cross-check it through analyzing the following documents provided by the administration of the department: the Supervision Commitment Agreement, General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines, Viva Voce Examination Guidelines and Oral Presentation Outline. The document analysis enabled us to situate the supervisees' responses about the supervision process perceptions and practices into a greater context by delving into the department's guidelines and policies, exploring the extent to which the supervisees' responses comply with what is officially prescribed and comparing the department's documents against the international academic standards.

The findings of the study revealed that a positive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is essential. The more the supervisor is perceived by the supervisees as cooperative, facilitative, motivating and flexible, the easier the supervision process becomes which leads the supervisees to appreciate and develop positive perceptions about it. Conversely, the more the supervisor is perceived by the supervisees as authoritarian, inflexible and hindering the harder the process becomes which leads the supervisees to criticize and develop negative perceptions about it. Moreover, the quality of the assistance and feedback provided exceeds the importance of the type of the supervisory relationship. Even if the relationship is positive and the supervisor is facilitative and motivating, without effective, timely, directional and tailored feedback and assistance, the supervision process becomes challenging.

Furthermore, the supervisees' who developed positive perceptions regarding the supervision process used multiple skills during each of the stages of the supervision process allowing them to employ effective practices which rendered the process less challenging especially that they received sufficient feedback and incorporated it effectively. In contrast, the supervisees who developed negative perceptions regarding the supervision process applied diverse skills during the different stages of the supervision process. However, their application was not integrated as many skills should have been used across the different stages. This implies that these supervisees'

practices were less effective and less integrated which caused many challenges during the supervision process especially that they rarely received and integrated feedback and they were in constant search for external input to overcome the challenges.

These findings enabled us to infer the relationship between the supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process. Simply put, the supervisees' perceptions often shaped their practices and approaches to the various stages of the supervision process. This relationship is based on the supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process, either positive, mixed or negative perceptions, and this, in turn, directly informed and guided their practices. Additionally, the perceived challenges often mirrored the supervisees' overall perceptions of the supervision process and the practices are responses to these perceived challenges, deficiencies and supervision gaps. That is, a change in the supervisees' perceptions would result in a change in their practices.

In light of findings obtained, we offered a number of pedagogical implications with the intention of promoting positive perceptions of the supervision process and enhancing the supervisees' practices. It was recommended that the supervisors' distribution process should be reconsidered in a way that includes the supervisees by dividing the supervisors into categories according to their research interest, and then referring to the ranking by merit in each category to know which supervisor is going to supervise which supervisee. This approach is believed to be effective in reducing ulterior negative perceptions as it involves the supervisees in the division process while keeping fairness and transparency. Moreover, in order to create a positive, motivating and productive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, we suggested creating a dissertation supervision code of conduct. The Supervision Process Code of Conduct should include two parts, the regulatory part represented by the supervision agreement commitment provided by the administration and an adaptable part developed collaboratively between the supervisors and the supervisees. The adaptable part is the outcome of the shared contribution between the supervisees and their supervisors. This code of conduct is flexible, individualized, and adaptive to each supervisor-supervisees pairs. It includes details related to the supervisory meetings and

feedback mechanisms (timing, frequency, and format), roles, workload, conflicts resolution, the intrusion of external parties, the administrative procedures and the circumstances of breaching it. Furthermore, we recommended developing the curriculum by adding a supervision preparatory module to overcome the challenges the supervisees face such as skipping important steps, employing less effective and integrated practices, and being dissatisfied with the supervisors' feedback, assistance and emotional support. These modules consist of extending the research methodology modules to the second semester to help alleviate the workload of the supervisors by equipping the supervisees with tailored knowledge and skills in a timely and prompt manner and the inclusion of a supervision skills module to equip the supervisees with the necessary knowledge on the supervision process requirements and practice and to offer an ongoing learning and implementation of the skills and competence to effectively manage it. Additionally, to reduce the revealed inconsistency between the supervisees' supervisory experiences, it was recommended to create an institutional supervision portfolio/e-portfolio. It consists of a comprehensive collection of documents, each of which represents one month of supervisory work and meetings from the supervisees and the supervisors' perspectives separately to help the supervisees, the supervisors and the administration. It can assist the supervisees and the supervisors in maintaining focus and structure by reflecting on their performances while it helps the administration track the progress of the supervision process and finds the reasons in case of conflicts or dissatisfaction and to ensure consistency in the supervisees' supervisory experiences. The same document is given to the supervisees and the supervisors; it should start with an opening statement which introduces the purpose of the document, followed by report data, the supervisees' reflection or the supervisors' reflection (depending on the one filling it), meetings summary, progress overview, goals for the next month, suggestions for improvement or additional remarks. Besides, the supervisees' struggled with lack of their supervisors' feedback, assistance and emotional support throughout the different stages of the supervision process. To overcome this lack which can be attributed to many reasons that can be related to the supervisors and/or the supervisees, we suggested to strike a balance between group supervision and tailored and continuous feedback, assistance and

emotional support. In group supervision, the supervisors provide feedback and assistance which cover the general topics and concerns and avoid repeating tasks. The general feedback and assistance get narrowed down in the individual supervision sessions where the supervisees receive timely and ongoing feedback, practical assistance and emotional support tailored to their needs. Finally, yet importantly, it was recommended that the supervisors and the supervisees should benefit from short yet focused training programs. The supervisors need to understand the effect of their practices/performance on their supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process while the supervisees' need to understand their perceptions and their effect on their practices/performance in the supervision process.

This study has provided insights into the Master supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process; however, it is essential to acknowledge its inevitable limitations such as: the lack of comprehensive studies tackling the Master supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process and their practices during it, the study's limited context and the representativeness of the sample which hindered reaching conclusions that are generalizable. Our research focused on the Master supervisees' perceptions and practices in the supervision process from the supervisees' perspective only. In doing so, we also disregarded other pertinent characteristics that could have influenced the perceptions and/or the practices such as the supervisees' gender, age and level.

Drawing on these limitations, we invite prospective researchers who intend to replicate this study to consider delving into this significant topic. We also invite them to replicate this research in a different setting with a larger sample of Master supervisees belonging to different universities and departments. Besides, including both supervisors' and supervisees' perspectives could offer a holistic understanding through the dual perspective which adds to the validity and the reliability of the data to reach conclusions that are more generalizable, valid and reliable.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Supervision Commitment Agreement Provided by the Department

University of Algiers 2
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English
Master in Anglo-Saxon Studies (Literature & Civilisation)
Master in Didactics of Foreign Languages



SUPERVISION COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

This document serves as a commitment/agreement between:

The supervisor Mr/Ms:

And the supervisee(s) Mr/Ms:

Mr/Ms:

Regarding the supervision/writing of a Master's dissertation.

I-The Supervisors' Duties:

- 1- Hold at least 04 face-to-face supervision sessions. (Please notify the student at least 48 hours prior to any absence or cancellation.)
- 2- Give advice about how to narrow down the topic.
- 3- Explain the research methodology and discuss hypotheses with the student.
- 4- Provide detailed and regular feedback about the student's work to allow time for corrections. and comment on the students work
- 5- Notify (via email / written correspondence) the supervisee and the Master's Committee about any issue related to supervision.
- 6- Assess the final draft of the dissertation and write a detailed report approving of the work's submission (please note that this report must be submitted at the Master's Committee office, 2nd floor).

II- The Supervisee(s)' Duties

- 1- Keep to the agreed plan for the dissertation (**see p.03 for the dissertation work plan**).
- 2- Send the supervisor regular work and make the supervisor's suggested corrections in time.
- 3- Finalise the dissertation in cooperation with the supervisor and hand it **within the deadline set- by the department**.
- 4- Keep the supervisor informed/ up to date about the progress of the work
- 5- Respect meetings' dates with the supervisor. (Please notify the supervisor at least 48 hours prior to any absence or cancellation.)

I, _____ (the _____ student's _____ name(s))
.....,

Am committed to show respect for my supervisor and all members of the university community—their lives, property, and environment—and shall, by no means, manifest inappropriate or disrespectful behavior towards the academic staff, even after graduating.

I acknowledge the fact that disciplinary sanctions will be taken against me according to the rules and regulations of the university.

The undersigned hereby confirm that they know their respective rights and obligations in connection with the supervision in the Department of English.

Date:

Supervisor's signature:

Supervisee's signature:

Master's Dissertation Work Plan

Full Name : **Card Number**

Full Name : **Card Number**

Supervisor:

Specialty:

Dissertation Title (tentative):

.....
.....

Corpus (literary works/articles) :

1.
2.
3.

Critical Approach/Theories (Supervisors in didactics of foreign languages **SOULD NOT** complete this section as the research is of the secondary type) :

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Keywords (4-5):

Problematic (one sentence):

.....

Main Question (Supervisors in didactics of foreign languages **SHOULD NOT** complete this section as the research is of the secondary type):

.....

Objectives:

4.
5.
6.

Rationale (why is your research important?):

1.
2.
3.

Organization (chapters):

1.
2.
3.

Supervisor's Signature :

Supervisee's signature :

Appendix B: General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines

UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS 2
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



General Dissertation Standards and Supervision Process Guidelines

Specialism: Didactics of Foreign Languages

The following guidelines have to be followed and respected by all Master 2 supervisees:

Detailed format of Master 2 dissertations for the academic year 2023-2024

The research work to be submitted by Master 2 students in Semester 4 would be a “dissertation” of **15 to 20 pages maximum** (starting from the first page of the introduction up to the last page of the conclusion) which would be written **in pairs**.

The pages preceding the introduction of the dissertation (i.e. the preliminary pages) should be numbered using Roman numbers (i, ii, iii, etc.). Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) should be used to number the rest of the pages (including the references, and the appendices, if any).

For the font and size of the dissertation, the standard font “Times New Roman” as well as **1.5** spacing must be used throughout the paper in size **13**. This is also applied for headings

-For **paragraph alignment**, align the text to the left and to the right (full justification)

-For paragraph indentation, indent the first line of every paragraph except the abstract which should be in one block

-For **Headings**, 4 levels maximum are allowed. They must be in bold and labeled with numbers, and all content words must be capitalized. All headings should be flush left except level 1 heading (of chapters); these are centered.

Short quotes (less than 40 words- approximately 3 lines) should be integrated to the main text of the dissertation. For long quotes (exceeding 40 words), however, simple spacing (**1**) and size **12** would be used with indentations on both right and left sides of the quote.

The margins of the text should be as follows: **2.5** cm at the top, at the bottom, and on the right side, and 3cm on the left side of the page (for the binding).

The format of this year’s dissertation, which is **a secondary research**, would include the following:

Front page
Board of Examiners
Declaration
Dedication
Acknowledgements
Abstract (and key words): One page maximum
List of tables
List of figures
List of acronyms and abbreviations
Contents

Front Page

Board of Examiners should be added in the front page

Abstract

It should include three important points and in the following order:

- _ Statement of the research problem
- _ Type of research
- _ Major findings

General Introduction

-It would include: background of the study, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, significance of the research, and structure of the dissertation. These different sections should appear without titles.

No research questions should be included as the work is a secondary research which does not involve any fieldwork.

Part One: Theoretical Background

This would comprise:

An introduction and a conclusion (these need to be labeled).

Definitions of key words and concepts

Presentation of theoretical frameworks, models, hypotheses, theories.

Presentation of opposing points of view

N.B Transitions should be inserted at the end of each section.

Part Two: Review of Empirical Studies

This would include:

- An introduction and a conclusion (these need to be labeled).

-A critical review of no less than 03 studies from different geographical (different countries) and pedagogical contexts.

The choice of articles should be based on the following criteria:

The articles should be relevant to EFL didactics

The articles should deal with the same topic.

The articles should be relevant to the topic of the dissertation. d. The articles should deal with empirical studies

e. The pedagogical context (e.g. primary school, secondary school, university...etc) should be the same in the studies to be compared.

An overview of the studies in terms of their **methodology** and **more importantly their findings**. The overview of the methodology should focus on the context of the study, participants, and research instruments rather than on detailed procedures of data collection and data analysis. The review should be very brief avoiding details about the findings which are dealt with in the other sections.

A comparison and contrast of the findings of the different studies

- A discussion of the different findings in relation to concepts and theories developed in the theoretical background. The discussion is to be supported with arguments and counter arguments to render the work critical. The **discussion** should end up with a **synthesis** in which students answer the research problem of their work according to the results of the empirical studies reviewed.

Note:

-The minimum requirement is that students compare and contrast the studies. Students who possess analytical and critical thinking are expected to present arguments and counterarguments.

-For the first part of the dissertation (Theoretical background), students can select studies published in articles, books, Magister and PhD dissertations. They are required to use seminal and scientific references that fulfill the scientific standards of reliability and validity. For the second part (Empirical studies), students are required to select 03 articles from different geographical and academic contexts..

-Students are encouraged to use Algerian studies if available.

- The articles should be cited in the table of contents and in the rest of the dissertation by mentioning the authors' names without using the letters A, B, C and without titles of the articles(e.g., Brown's (1982) article)

General Conclusion

It should summarize the content of the dissertation.

It would **NOT** include pedagogical implications **NOR** suggestions for further research.

- It should include the following:

_Statement of the problem

_Brief summary of major points of chapter one

_Summary of findings

References

There would be no separation between primary, secondary, and electronic sources. The references should be listed in alphabetical order according to APA style (7th Edition).

Appendices

-These would include any lengthy supplementary documents that cannot be inserted in the body of the dissertation.

Abstract in Arabic

The abstract would include a summary of the research, including its title and keywords, in Arabic.

Additional requirements from the students:

In addition to three hard copies of their dissertation, students are required to submit with each a CD that includes **their dissertation in Word file**.

Important notes:

- 1- The research topic must be related to EFL teaching issues to ensure relevance and coherence with the Master specialism; namely, Didactics of Foreign Languages.
- 2- Supervisees who integrate the supervision process at the end (a few weeks before dissertation submission deadline) would be penalized. **Reports of supervision meetings** would be submitted by the supervisors to the administration. Students should be responsible for their work.
- 3- Students who do not respond to their supervisors' invitations for face-to-face or online supervision sessions would be warned. They must understand that any irregularity in the submission of due work to their supervisors during the supervision process would affect their final mark negatively.
- 4- **The supervisors should answer to supervisee's emails** (to establish contact and have feedback on submitted work) to avoid misunderstandings. If the first contact between the supervisor and supervisees is not established beyond a month, the administration should be warned in time. The dissertation should be well supervised and validated by the supervisors before final submission.
- 5- The standard format of the style (APA 7th ed) and other norms are appended to this document.
- 6- The possibility/obligation to hold vivas will be communicated in due time, following the Ministry of Higher Education directions.

The Pedagogical Committee of Supervisors

Appendix C: Oral Presentation Outline Provided by the Department

University of Algiers 2

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English



Specialism: Didactics of Foreign Languages

June 2024

Oral Presentation Outline

1-Introduction

-It should briefly include:

The background of the study, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, significance of the research, and structure of the dissertation.

2-Theoretical Background

It should include:

Presentation of theoretical frameworks, models, and theories.

Presentation of opposing points of view (depending on the topic of research)

3- Review of the Empirical Studies

This part includes:

- A brief overview of the research studies (methodology and findings), comparison and contrast of the studies, a brief discussion.

4-Conclusion

It should summarize the content of the dissertation.

Appendix D: Viva Voce Examination Guidelines Provided by the Department

University of Algiers 2

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English



Specialism: Didactics of Foreign Languages

June 2024

Viva Voce Examination Guidelines

- 1 -All viva voce examinations will take place in **close sessions**. No one may attend the viva voce examination except for the candidates and the examiners.
- 2- The duration of the viva voce examination is **30 minutes** including 10 **minutes** of students' **oral presentation**.
- 3- Students are not expected to give a PowerPoint presentation to avoid unexpected technical problems that might produce delays.
- 4 -Students have the possibility to give a **poster presentation**.
- 5-Students are requested to submit an **outline of the oral presentation** to the examiners the day of the viva voce.
- 6-Members of the jury are expected to ask **Two questions** during the discussion time. It is advised to prepare a **Third back-up question** in case the discussion time ends earlier.
- 7- It is important that chairs ensure **good time management** and make sure that **Three signatures** appear on each of the candidate's Viva voce PV.

Appendix E: The Supervisees' Perceptions Questionnaire



University of Algiers 2 – Abou El Kacem Saadallah

Department of English

Code :

Supervisees' Perceptions of the Supervision Process Questionnaire

Dear participants,

You are kindly invited to fill out the following questionnaire related to a Doctoral research work. It aims at exploring Master 2 supervisees' perceptions of the Master supervision process. Your collaboration is crucial and will be highly appreciated. Please tick appropriate box (es) or write full statements where necessary. Be assured that all responses will be treated confidentially and anonymously. If you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact me.

Section 01: General Information about the Supervision Journey

- 1- Gender: a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐
- 2- Age Group: a) 20 -25 ☐ b) 26 – 30 ☐ c) 31 - 35 ☐ d) +36 ☐
- 3- Were you informed about the supervision process in the Research Methodology course?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 4- On a scale from 1 to 5, to which extent were you familiar with the following supervision process steps before starting your research? (1= Unfamiliar, 2= Slightly familiar, 3= moderately familiar, 4= very familiar, 5= extremely familiar)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Finding the right supervisor					
Creating a supervision commitment agreement					
Making a research proposal					
Executing the research					
Producing the dissertation text					
Refining the dissertation and preparing for Viva Voce					
Viva Voce					
Post-viva Voce					

5- How did you find the dissertation supervision process?

- a) Very difficult ☐ b) Difficult ☐ c) Somewhat difficult ☐ d) Easy ☐

6- How often did you meet your supervisor during the supervision process?

- a) always ☐ b) often ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) Rarely ☐

7- On average, how long did each meeting last? _____

Section 02: Finding the Right Supervisor

8- On a scale from 1 to 5, rate how important is each of the following qualities by ticking (✓) the right column: (1 = Not Important At All, 2= Slightly Important, 3= Neutral, 4= Important, 5= highly important)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
How important was it for you to have good chemistry with your supervisor?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor has relevant experience in the field you're studying or working in?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor shares similar visions as yours?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor is approachable and supportive?					
How important was it for you to have compatible personality traits with your supervisor?					
How important was it for you to have a work style that aligns with your supervisor's for effective collaboration?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor demonstrates professionalism in their appearance and demeanour?					
How important was it for you to have a supervisor who is enthusiastic to work with you?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor demonstrates curiosity about your previous experiences and achievements?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor inquires about your expectations and goals for the supervision process?					
How important was it for you that your supervisor creates a welcoming, friendly, and supportive atmosphere?					

9- Did you appreciate the implementation of the draw in assigning supervisors?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

10- Would you have preferred to choose your supervisor?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

11- Did you meet any challenges/difficulties in working with your supervisor?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

12- Is a positive relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee important in the supervision process?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 03: Creating a Supervision Commitment Agreement

13- In your opinion, is it important to develop a well-defined and individualized supervision commitment agreement for a supervision experience?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

14- Tick (✓) the elements you think should be included within the Supervision Commitment Agreement

Supervisees Roles		Responsibilities of the supervisor	
Supervisory meetings schedule		Meetings formats	
Feedback Mechanisms		Communication protocols	
Workload Distribution		Administrative Matters	
Dealing with Conflicts		Intrusion of a Third Party	

15- Did you take part in the making of the rules included?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

16- Were you satisfied with the working contract provided by the administration?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

17- What supervisees' duties were included in the supervision commitment agreement?

18- Were you satisfied with the roles assigned to you through the supervision commitment agreement?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

19- Did you face any challenges in complying with the supervision commitment agreement?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 04: Making a Research Proposal

20- On a scale from 1 to 5, rate how important is each of the following items by ticking (✓) the right column: (1 = Not Important At All, 2= Slightly Important, 3= Neutral, 4= Important, 5= highly important)

Elements	1	2	3	4	5
Timeline					

Background of the study					
Significance of the study					
Research objectives					
A synopsis of literature					
Resources					

21- Was this step (making a research proposal) advantageous?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

22- Did you face any challenges in making your research proposal?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

23- Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

24- Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by the supervisor about the research proposal?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

25- Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 05: Executing the Research

26- On a scale from 1 to 5, to which extent were you familiar with the following research process steps? (1= Unfamiliar, 2= Slightly familiar, 3= moderately familiar, 4= very familiar, 5= extremely familiar)

Secondary Research Steps	1	2	3	4	5
Selecting 03 articles					
Developing the theoretical background					
Presenting an overview of the articles					
Critically reviewing the articles (comparing and contrasting)					
Discussing the findings					

27- Were you flexible in following and deviating from the initial research proposal?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

28- Did you face any challenges in executing your research?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

29- Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

- b) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

30- Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by your supervisor about the execution of research?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

31- Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee in executing the research?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 06: Producing the Dissertation Text

32- Did you face any challenges in writing your dissertation?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

33- Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

34- Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by your supervisor on the dissertation writing?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

35- Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 07: Refining the Dissertation and Preparing the Viva Voce

36- Did you face any challenges in refining your research?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

37- How did you perceive the feedback given by the supervisor? you took it as:

- a) A way to improve the quality of your work.
- b) A complement alongside your own judgment.
- c) An external input and did not rely on it

38- Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

39- Were you satisfied with the assessment and feedback provided by your supervisor on refining the dissertation?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

40- Did you face any challenges in preparing for the viva voce?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

41- Was the supervisor's feedback necessary in your preparation?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

42- Did you receive enough assistance from your supervisor in this step?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

43- Was this preparatory phase advantageous for you?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

44- Were you satisfied with your performance at this stage of the supervision process?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 08: Viva Voce

45- Did you face any challenges during the viva voce?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

46- What expectations did you have regarding the types of questions that would be asked during the viva voce?

47- What concerns, if any, did you have about the viva voce examination process?

48- Were you satisfied with your supervisor's role during the viva voce?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

49- Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee at this stage of the supervision process?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

50- Was the viva voce beneficial for you?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section 09: Post-viva Voce

51- What were your perceptions about post-viva voce phase?

52- Do you believe you adequately fulfilled your duties as a supervisee after the viva voce?

b) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

53- Did you face any administrative challenges in this phase?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

54- How did the viva voce influence the outcome of your dissertation?

Thank you very much for your collaboration ☺

Appendix F: The Supervisees' Practices Questionnaire



University of Algiers 2 – Abou El Kacem Saadallah

Department of English

Code :

Supervisees' Practices in the Supervision Process Questionnaire

Dear participants,

You are kindly invited to fill out the following questionnaire related to a Doctoral research work. It aims at exploring Master 2 supervisees' practices in the Master supervision process. Your collaboration is crucial and will be highly appreciated. Please tick appropriate box (es) or write full statements where necessary. Be assured that all responses will be treated confidentially and anonymously. If you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact me.

- 1- Fill in this table to refer to the types of skills you employed in your supervision process: A= management skills, B= literacy skills, C= interpersonal skills, D= analytical skills, E= ICTs skills, F= flexibility, G= research skills, H= ethical skills

Supervision Steps	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Finding the right supervisor								
Creating the supervision commitment agreement								
Making the research proposal								
Executing the research								
Producing the dissertation text								
Refining the dissertation and preparing for Viva Voce								
Viva Voce								
Post-viva Voce								

- 2- How do you describe your role in each of the following stages?

Supervision Steps	Leading	Participating	Following
The first meeting with the supervisor			
Creating the supervision commitment agreement			
Making the research proposal			
Executing the research			
Writing and Refining the research			
Preparing for the viva voce			
The viva voce			
Post-viva voce			

3- What did you do during the first meeting? *You may choose more than one option*

- a) Discussed in general the supervision process
- b) Discussed the content of the dissertation
- c) Discussed the research methodology

Other (please specify) _____

4- Are you satisfied with your performance during the first meeting?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

5- What did you do during the creation of the supervision commitment agreement?

- a) You concentrated on communicating your needs and expectations
- b) You concentrated on formalizing the document
- c) You concentrated on negotiating terms
- d) You did not participate in the creation of the document

Other (please specify) _____

6- What did you do during the development of the research proposal? *You may choose more than one option*

- a) You reviewed research proposals/similar research and got inspired from
- b) You relied on your understanding of the research proposal and its components
- c) You collaborated with the supervisor

Other (please specify) _____

7- What did you do during the execution of the research?

8- What did you do during the dissertation refinement stage?

- a) You used outlines and structured writing sessions.
- b) You relied on self-editing and proofreading.

Other (please specify) _____

9- Did you seek input from peers or other supervisors to enhance your dissertation before submission?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

10- If yes, did you consult with your supervisor before doing so?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

11- What did you do during the preparation for the viva voce? *You may choose more than one option*

- a) You simulated viva voce sessions
- b) You revised the dissertation chapters
- c) You wrote practice responses
- d) You prepared a detailed outline
- e) You prepared visuals

Other (please specify) _____

12- Did you seek input from peers or other supervisors to enhance your performance before the viva voce?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

13- If yes, did you consult with your supervisor before doing so?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

14- What did you do during the viva voce?

15- What did you do after the viva voce?

- a) You introduced the required corrections before the final submission
- b) You introduced only some minor corrections
- c) You submitted without changing

16- Throughout the whole supervision process, did you adhere to the ethical skills?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

17- If yes, please explain how _____

18- Throughout the whole supervision process:

- a) You managed your time well
- b) You did not manage your time well but you were within the deadlines
- c) You asked for deadlines extensions

19- Throughout the whole supervision process and during supervisory meetings:

- a) You used to take notes of the supervisor's feedback
- b) You used to record the supervisor's speech
- c) You used to listen to what the supervisor said

Other (please specify) _____

20- Throughout the whole supervision process, have you used ICTs?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

21- Please explain why /why not _____

22- Throughout the whole supervision process:

- a) You used to send work regularly to your supervisor
- b) You used to wait for the supervisor to ask you to send work

23- Throughout the whole supervision process, how did you face challenges?

- a) You used to find solutions independently
- b) You used to collaborate with the supervisor
- c) You used to ask help from colleagues or other supervisors

Other (please specify) _____

24- How often did you take into consideration/incorporate your supervisor's feedback.

- a) always ☐
- b) often ☐
- c) Sometimes ☐
- d) Rarely ☐

25- Are you satisfied with your overall performance during the supervision process?

- b) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

26- If no, what would you do differently? _____

Thank you very much for your collaboration ☺

Appendix G: The Interviews Consent Form

Consent Form

Description and purpose of the consent form

This consent form seeks to extend an invitation to Master 2 didactics supervisees in the Department of English Language at Algiers 2 University to take part in a study investigating the Master supervisees' perceptions and their practices in the supervision process. This study is significant because it contributes to a deeper understanding of the supervision process from the supervisees' perspective. Therefore, it will increase awareness among students, supervisors and the institution staff. We anticipate that this exploratory research will enable us to make recommendations that can lead to more effective supervision, better supervisory relationship and improve supervision quality and outcomes for both supervisees and supervisors.

The purpose of this permission form is to ensure that the participants understand the purpose of their involvement in the research and that they are in agreement with the terms of their participation. We sincerely hope that you would agree to willingly participate in this study as the data you supply will be extremely beneficial to us.

Please note that your responses are to be kept confidential and anonymous because they will be accessed on by the researchers and used solely for research purposes. You will be referred to using pseudonyms when your responses are directly quoted.

You can ask the researchers any question you might have about this study

Thank you very much for your cooperation. 😊

Appendix H: The Supervisees' Perceptions Interview



University of Algiers 2 – Abou El Kacem Saadallah

Department of English

Code :

Supervisees' Perceptions of the Supervision Process Interview

Dear Interviewees,

Thank you for participating in this study. As previously mentioned, the aim of this research is to investigate Master's supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process. During our interview, we will discuss your experiences with supervision, including how you perceive the different supervision process steps.

Please remember that your insights are crucial, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will greatly contribute to achieving the objectives of this study.

If you have any questions before we begin the interview, please feel free to ask.

- 1- Could you elaborate on the level of your satisfaction regarding your supervisor's assistance, support, assessment and feedback throughout the supervision process?
- 2- In your opinion, what could be enhanced in the supervisory experience you had?
- 3- Could you describe how your supervisory relationship with your supervisor was?
- 4- In your opinion, what could be enhanced to make this relationship more productive?
- 5- What importance the supervision commitment agreement had in your supervision experience?
- 6- How did you take part in the development of supervision commitment agreement?
- 7- How was making the research proposal advantageous?
- 8- Could you elaborate on the necessity of feedback in this stage and how you perceived and implemented it?
- 9- Could you describe your approach to organizing your thoughts and preparing responses to potential viva voce questions?
- 10- How do you perceive seeking help from colleagues or other supervisors during the different stages of the supervision process especially in the preparatory phase?

- 11- Could you explain the advantages the preparatory phase brought you?
 - 12- Could you elaborate on the administrative procedures challenges you met?
 - 13- Could you elaborate on your level of satisfaction with the role you played in the different stages of the supervision process?
 - 14- Overall, how do you describe your supervisory experience with reference to your initial perceptions and expectations?
-

Is there any additional information you wish to provide?

Thank you once more for your time and joint effort.😊

Appendix I: The Supervisees' Practices Interview



University of Algiers 2 – Abou El Kacem Saadallah

Department of English

Code :

Supervisees' Practices in the Supervision Process Interview

Dear Interviewees,

Thank you for participating in this study. As previously mentioned, the aim of this research is to investigate Master's supervisees' practices in the supervision process. During our interview, we will discuss your experiences with supervision, including how you perceive the different supervision process steps.

Please remember that your insights are crucial, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will greatly contribute to achieving the objectives of this study.

If you have any questions before we begin the interview, please feel free to ask.

-
- 1- What challenges did you face in working with your supervisor?
 - 2- What strategies/skills did you use to overcome these challenges?
 - 3- What challenges did you face in making the research proposal?
 - 4- What strategies/skills did you use to overcome these challenges?
 - 5- Could you describe the approach you used to execute the research? Please illustrate
 - 6- What challenges did you face in executing the research?
 - 7- What strategies/skills did you use to overcome these challenges?
 - 8- Could you describe the approach you used to write the dissertation? Please illustrate
 - 9- What challenges did you face in writing and refining your dissertation?
 - 10- What strategies/skills did you use to overcome these challenges?
 - 11- Could you describe the approach you used to prepare for the viva voce? Please illustrate

- 12- What challenges did you face in the pre, while and post viva voce phase?
- 13- What strategies/skills did you use to overcome these challenges?
- 14- How did you incorporate/react to your supervisors' feedback throughout the supervision process?
- 15- How did you seek help from colleagues or other supervisors?
- 16- How do you evaluate your general performance throughout the supervision journey?
- 17- What are the skills you needed the most to enhance your performance throughout the supervision process?

Thank you once more for your time and joint effort.😊

Appendix J: A Suggestion of a Code of Conduct

The supervisory Code of Conduct	
The supervisees' roles:	The supervisors' roles:
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
Feedback (frequency + format)	
.....	
Conflicts resolution:	
.....	
Workload distribution:	
.....	
Supervisory meetings (frequency + duration+ format):	
.....	
The intrusion of external parties:	
.....	
The administrative procedures:	
.....	
Cirumstances of breaching this code of conduct:	
.....	
The supervisor:	The supervisees:
	

Appendix K: Supervision Report Form Provided by the Department

University of Algiers 2
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English



Master in Anglo-Saxon Studies
(Literature and Civilisation)
Master in Didactics of Foreign Languages

SUPERVISION REPORT FORM (2024-2025)

Supervisor's Name: Specialty:
Student's Name: Card Number:
Student's Name: Card Number:
Title of Dissertation:

Date	Online/ Onsite	Work Done	Due Work	Supervisor's Comments	Signature (Supervisor and student)

Appendix L: A Suggestion of an Institutional Supervision Portfolio

The supervision Reflective Tool

This document is part of a supervision portfolio designed to keep track of the supervision process with the intention of enhancing the effectiveness of the supervision process. Through the systematic documentation of the supervision process, both the supervisee and the supervisor get a clear idea about the progress while the administration makes sure both parties benefits from their rights and fulfil their duties as required. You are kindly asked to fill in this form carefully and accurately.

The supervisee's (the supervisor's) name: **Month:**

The supervisees' (supervisors') reflection.....

.....

.....

Meetings summary.....

.....

.....

Progress overview.....

.....

.....

Goals for the next month.....

.....

.....

Suggestions for improvement or additional remarks.....

.....

.....

الملخص

تُتيح عملية تأطير مذكرات الماستر للطلبة المؤطرين إتمام أبحاثهم بنجاح تحت إشراف مؤطر أكاديمي. وخلال هذه العملية، يُطوّر الطلبة المؤطرون تصوّرات مختلفة، مما يؤدي إلى تجارب متباينة. تبحث هذه الأطروحة في هذه التباينات من خلال استكشاف تصوّرات وممارسات الطلبة المؤطرين في ماستر التعليمية بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الجزائر 2. كما تسلط الضوء على العلاقة بين التصوّرات التي يُكوّنها الطلبة المؤطرون حول عملية التأطير الأكاديمي وممارساتهم أثناء هذه العملية. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تم اعتماد تصميم استكشافي متزامن-متداخل، من خلال استخدام ثلاث أدوات لجمع البيانات: استبيانات وُزّعت على 60 طالبًا تم اختيارهم بناءً على العينة العرضية، ومقابلات أُجريت مع 20 طالبًا تم اختيارهم بطريقة العينة الهادفة، بالإضافة إلى تحليل أربع وثائق إدارية ذات صلة بعملية التأطير. واسترشادًا بالدراسات السابقة، تم تطوير إطار مُعدّل مكوّن من ثماني مراحل يشرح عملية التأطير على مستوى الماستر، ابتداءً من العمل مع المؤطر المعيّن وصولاً إلى مرحلة ما بعد المناقشة الشفوية. وقد تم تنظيم أدوات البحث بما يتماشى مع هذا الإطار. خضعت البيانات الكمية لتحليل عددي، في حين تم إخضاع البيانات النوعية لتحليل المضمون. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن الطلبة المؤطرين كوّنوا تصوّرات إيجابية وسلبية ومختلطة حول مختلف مراحل عملية التأطير. وتعتمد طبيعة هذه التصوّرات بشكل كبير على نوع العلاقة بين المؤطر والطالب المؤطر. علاوة على ذلك، تبيّن أن جودة الدعم والتغذية الراجعة التي يقدّمها المؤطرون تفوق في أهميتها نوع العلاقة التأطيرية بحد ذاتها. كما كشفت النتائج أن الطلبة الذين كوّنوا تصوّرات إيجابية استخدموا مهارات متعددة في جميع المراحل، مما جعل ممارساتهم فعالة ومتكاملة. في المقابل، فإن الطلبة المؤطرين الذين كوّنوا تصوّرات سلبية أو مختلطة استخدموا مهارات أقل، مما جعل ممارساتهم أقل تكاملاً ارتباط قوية بين تصوّرات الطلبة المؤطرين وممارساتهم، حيث إن. وفعالية. وتشير هذه النتائج إلى وجود علاقة التصوّرات التي كوّنها كانت بمثابة مرشد لممارساتهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، عملية الإشراف على مستوى الماستر، التصورات، الممارسات الطلبة المؤطرون، المؤطرون، جامعة الجزائر 2

Résumé

L'encadrement des mémoires de Master permet aux étudiants encadrés de mener à bien leurs recherches sous la direction d'un encadrant. Au cours de ce processus, les étudiants développent des perceptions variées, ce qui conduit à des expériences diverses. Cette recherche doctorale examine ces variations en explorant les perceptions et les pratiques des étudiants du Master Didactique au sein du Département d'Anglais de l'Université d'Alger 2. Elle vise également la relation entre les perceptions identifiées et les pratiques. A cette fin, un design exploratoire de type imbriqué simultanée a été adopté, utilisant trois outils d'investigation : des questionnaires administrés à 60 étudiants choisis selon un échantillonnage de convenance, des entretiens menés avec 20 étudiants sélectionnés par échantillonnage raisonné, et l'analyse de quatre documents administratifs. À partir de la littérature existante, un cadre en huit étapes a été élaboré pour décrire en détail le processus d'encadrement au niveau Master, allant de la collaboration avec l'encadrant assigné jusqu'à la phase post-soutenance. Les instruments de recherche ont été structurés en fonction de ce cadre. Les données quantitatives ont été soumises à une analyse statistique, tandis que les données qualitatives ont fait l'objet d'une analyse de contenu. Les résultats de cette étude ont révélé que les étudiants supervisés avaient des perceptions tant positives, négatives que mixtes concernant les différentes étapes du processus de supervision. Le type de perception est fortement influencé par la nature de la relation entre l'encadrant et l'encadré. De plus, la qualité de l'encadrement et la rétroaction de l'encadrant dépasse souvent l'importance du type de relation. Par ailleurs, les étudiants ayant développé des perceptions positives ont su mobiliser une variété de pratiques tout au long du processus, rendant leurs pratiques efficaces et intégrées. À l'inverse, ceux ayant développé des perceptions négatives ou mixtes ont moins utilisé ces compétences, rendant leurs pratiques moins intégrées et moins efficaces. Les résultats indiquent aussi une forte corrélation entre les perceptions et les pratiques suggérant que les perceptions des encadrés influencent directement leurs pratiques.

Mots-clés: anglais comme langue étrangère, processus d'encadrement du mémoire de Master, perceptions, pratiques, étudiants encadrés, encadrants, Université d'Alger 2

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
ABOULKACEM SAADALLAH UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS 2
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**Investigating Supervisees' Perceptions and Practices in the
Supervision Process: The case of Master 2 Students in the
English Department, University of Algiers 2**

دراسة تصورات و ممارسات الطلاب الباحثين في سياق عملية الإشراف الأكاديمي: دراسة
حالة طلبة الماستر بجامعة الجزائر 2 – قسم اللغة الانجليزية

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate
LMD in Didactics of English**

Submitted by:

Ms. Chaima BEKKI

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Academic Year: 2024 – 2025