Original Research Paper

Impact factors on the PG supervisee students' engagement & relationships

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ABSTRACT:
The relationship of supervisor-supervisee and impacting factors on it has been examined by many research scholars. The study, through a critical discussion , addresses the issues of 'How' students can best be supported in engaging with their studies and balancing other demands/interests, how the supervisory team can work together effectively, how conflicts & tensions can be managed effectively, 'What' challenges/opportunities are presented when working with international students. Various issues of PG supervision were critically addressed and recommendations were provided. One important issue is the impact of relations ,challenges and learning environment in which people operate and collaborate. Planning in advance and critically examining tailor-made approaches to supervisees' needs adds significant value which results in contributing to a constructive learning experience and increase of individuals' performance

Keywords: relationships, supervision, international students, opportunities

How can students best be supported in engaging with their studies and balancing other demands/interests?:

Facilitate development of skills for their studies and their lives. Bridge studies and other demands /interests together. Teach them that 'one feeds the other'. We should keep in mind that the role of Higher Education , regarding the radical changes, still remains to prepare students for the real world and not just for the labour market. Especially, the value of advanced studies (postgraduate studies) is to prepare the future generation of independent research scholars but also graduates with transferable skills besides knowledge, subject specific and generic ones. Adding to this, we should keep in mind that studies, learning environment, people interactions in an environment (which is full of stimuli about self development) influence, and even better, *shape* people's interests, preferences, demands; the environment and activities in which someone is involved is an education/ training of the mind; it shapes a mindset of 'doing', 'thinking for doing', 'critically reviewing «how» and «why» doing x or y'. Postgraduate studies challenge, or at least should challenge, students to deal with complexity (for example, being assigned with complex tasks which require solutions etc.), to have an abstract and in-depth thinking, to challenge themselves taking initiatives and making choices (decision making) providing space of autonomy and responsibility for them, etc. All the above, exercise the mind and influence students' perception. This influence is not only subject specific but influence perceptions towards life, future, personal demands and how these should be

managed. So, it is important the supervisor to act as 'role model' in terms of how can handle scholar activities with other interests and demands; for example, following a mix of styles (Laiser-faire, pastoral, directive, contractual) can help students understand the complexity of the world nowadays where different situations require different approaches and challenge different skills to be applied .Adding to this, when the supervisor connects the scholar work & studies with what exists in the real world in the workplace (demands, requirements, workplace & discipline culture e.g a PG student in engineering will work in a company whereas a PG in life sciences in a hospital) and preparing students for developing professionalism in the academic or relevant to the studies occupation, help students to understand and bridge demands and broader (besides studies) interests and goals.

Create & monitor a culture of expectations and connect it with student's progress:

Reward student success; *Provide personalized instruction*. Often supervisors are disappointed with the students' progress and think to recommend termination of the studies or PhD program. Problems though are caused when co-supervisors do not have the same opinion (ether due to lack of having personal knowledge what takes place with the specific student e.g when they do not meet them regularly etc, or, want to give more time & opportunities to students to make a progress or/and the thesis monitoring committee to seem ambivalent about lack of student's progress. Borrowing from my experience and revieing literature,

I believe that it is equally important the supervisor to be very clear , specific & well prepared (bringing materials & relevant documents) from the beginning regarding which are the standards, requirements and time constraints for the delivery of the work (these can not be negotiated), but also, the above to repeatedly be reminded to students because students often, especially at the beginning of their studies, seem enthusiastic and do not pay the required attention. It should be created a culture of expectations stimulating students' progress. Connecting the expectations with students interest on what they do is of critical importance. For example, if as supervisor myself, decide to change the research theme or research argument or/and research questions without agreeing on this with the student or/and without taking into account the student's interest in a specific theme so that to explore it together deeply in order to reach an idea or direction which satisfies student's interest, this may cause confusion to student or/and demotivate his/her progress because a) does not express his/her interests, b) feels a follower of the research interest & priorities of his/her supervisor c) less confident because the power of decision and choice lies in the mind of the supervisor . These cause issues of trust & power conflicts which often result in personal conflicts.

There should be cultivated (by the supervisor) a mutual respect and acknowledgement of interests, values and differences. PhD and MSc research postgraduate expectations should be bridged with students' interest and the benefits of such expectations (supervisor have to convince providing evidence/following a rational thinking) should be clearly communicated to students for the work progress. For this reason, it is important expectations to be organized and be clarified what is required and what is recommended e.g developing time schedules so students to know *what* and *when* have to do something but also informing, advising and occasionally requesting (when is required as per the University rules) students to participate in learning activities that will help their progress. Often, supervisors rely on the idea that students themselves have the responsibility to find out what is needed regarding their development, however, it should be considered that each student has different personality and speed of doing or learning things. For example, scheduling supportive & developmental activities and connecting them with aspects of their work and how they serve expectations, facilitate students' understanding, maturity, research/studies' journey meeting expectations instead of ending in in a psychological & mental chaotic situation of realizing that many things should have done but have not or/and how can manage within time constraints to do what they did not do. It is part of supervisor's obligation to monitor the students' progress, to intervene and act being accountable for students' progress. Unfortunately, in postgraduate supervision there is often lack of accountability; supervisors, often build evidence to support their positions without taking into account 'not doing or/and perhaps not doing correctly and in the right time ' what they should do. Students' success if our own success; students' failure is our own failure. Supervisors have to make sure that students perceive correctly what they are given (feedback, instructions, directions, advice) and check this in practice with the progress of their work; it is important this evaluation/review to take place regularly, preferably via face to face meetings (and online via email comments and review reports uploaded in the VLE) and in an organized way so additional constructive & specific feedback to be provided . Personalized instructions tailor-made to the specific needs of the students help progress. When students are helped from the beginning of their studies to learn, understand, internalize (become part of their own personal world) what is expected , when and why but also 'a methodology', a 'practice' of doing their work in a structured way (timetables of which parts of their work has to be completed) for which they get continuous constructive feedback help them to achieve targets and this feeds them with satisfaction. Acknowledgement & reward of their efforts and achievement is important to make them increase self esteem and confidence to move on. Reaching targets proves good management skills which are important to manage rest demands and interests.

Supervisors should challenge students' responsibility and creativity in various ways , should follow a mix of styles depending on the nature of each situation, and, be supportive (as educators, advisors, supervisors) from the beginning than just serving the role of a Judge at the end evaluating students' progress. Of course there are cases of students who are not really interested in what they do and often pursue graduate or even PhD studies for social reasons (e.g prestige) or work requirements (e.g is requested by their company to do a MSc or PhD or PDP) and do not help the supervisors to help them, however, we should keep in mind that it is not a matter us to 'seem' to follow the regulations and processes so to keep our job, but, how we encourage & support emotionally/ intellectually (via constructive feedback, self-evaluating or/and updating ourselves towards new practices, being informed of what takes place or/and developing activities & sources) our students. Considering the above, we should also remember that part of our role is to develop independent scientists and that a PhD student is not a follower, nor a research assistant of us, nor a secretary . A PG student and more specifically a PhD student is a student who needs to get education, guidance and support (to develop needed and not only required skills) by the experts, otherwise would not be a student but a professional. I always try to apply this to my practice keeping a balance of different roles (educator, mentor, supervisor) and styles (directive, consulting etc) challenging students' creativity & autonomy.

Raise students' interest & passion:
Making students interested in a subject can be a real challenge. There are so many variables that can affect their engagement. As supervisor /advisor, it is important to help students find interest in what they do. Supervisors/advisors should be creative exploring ways to achieve this. A good practice to start with is to connect their studies & research with what they like & are interested in . Make them see their studies & research as part of their life and show them relevance to their future careers. Some practices I follow to challenge students' interest I provide here as advices: Give them space /autonomy and let them participate in the whole process of what is designed, decided, provided for their research work or/and postgraduate studies searching for their own input (e.g. what their opinion about a) the development of timetables defining the progress of their work, b) the context of a research argument etc. challenge them to think , to have initiatives, to take risks, to create, to recognize and deal with complexity of knowledge and apply them in practice and in new situations) ; use multiple resources; make it personal; make it fun; using multiple resources to raise interest than being bored. The human voice can be very hypnotizing to some people, and others are easy distracted by it. Preparing meetings or supervisory tutorials bringing videos, slideshows, telling stories and give them space to make their own personal statements (reflecting on what takesplace), bringing in a special guest for a talk. Design appropriate learning activities to raise their interest. For example, if the subject is literature review, challenge them to reflect on what they learn from it and how they can apply it to their own lives. Or, another way to motivate for progress is to create some kind of competition (e.g an informal award for passing with no comments the upgrade review), or game that can help them to learn, or maybe even using videos & cartoons as a way of communication. Often a funny cartoon can teach them an idea and make them lough as well; students will keep better the subject in memory. Relate the subject of research with the work environment (e.g manager, executive decision maker etc) Often complex tasks which challenge imagination and help students to reflect upon their own experiences motivate students' creativity and raise interest.

Mentoring, counselling, inspiring students' passion & enthusiasm:
(supervisor can act as role models for it) for what they do, is of great benefit. Supervisors should inspire the students to love being innovative and creative using knowledge and experience they get from their studies and research work in addressing or solving problems of the real world cases. Forums or formal or informal discussions on problems of the real world which relate to their PG studies can challenge them to think and incorporate their knowledge to give solutions. Also,

via an approach 'playing for learning' attract students' interest playing a game where students are engaged in a narrow topic and are challenged to think deeper & deeper or examining something which looks familiar and challenge them to think differently (in a more innovative way) help creative thinking. Having an effective, clear and honest communication with the students in any activity and contact with them helps trust to be built but also clarity of everything that takes place (e.g clarity of tasks, clarity of roles etc)
Attracting students' attention and interest helps skills to be developed (critical thinking, managing planning, organizing) the right mindset and knowledge. Skills and mindset are important to students not for the specific task (e.g research) but for all their studies. The importance is not to get knowledge in an area but to learn how to search for it, how to plan, how to think etc and in this way are equipped to manage successfully the rest of their studies.

Focus on building relationships.
Find more time during meetings to engage in conversations with each student and interact one-to-one. The theme of power in students-supervisors as part of PG pedagogies has been widely discussed (Bartlett and Mercer, 2000) influencing the complexity of PhD supervision process which Sambrook et al (2008) consider as a web of a range of relationships. Rugg and Petre (2004) support the claim that that PhD supervision is a relationship not a service where interactions between students and supervisors, and, between supervisors in the team, have to be managed. It is important supervisors to borrow from their experience working with many students, but also from their knowledge background in sciences since they work in an academic environment to build healthy and good relationships with students avoiding conflicts, and, misunderstandings which finally work against the student's well being & progress. Investing on human relations bridge differences, and, support progress and wellbeing. Building good relations with students add value to building a supportive learning environment and trust .

How can the supervisory 'team' work together most effectively?:
Rugg and Petre (2004) support the claim that PhD supervision is a relationship not a service where interactions between students and supervisors, and, between supervisors in the team, have to be managed. The matter of experienced versus less experienced supervisor is an element of the team power dynamic; an other feature regards the external supervisors who may perceive their role as 'guests' in the team, with lack of clarity regarding the nature and extent of their contribution influencing their relationship with the student.
In criticism of attitudes to team supervision, Delamont et al (2004) emphasize the ways supervisors'

relationships affect positively and negatively PhD student's experience. They illustrate the arising problems when individual personal & intellectual divisions dominate in teams. In such cases supervisors might end up using the student in order to reach points off each other due to their personal power conflicts (Phillips and Pugh, 2000) ending up in students' distraction and confusion A student being in between of such supervisor interactions should be guided to consult a third party who is assumed to act confidentially in an effort to support the student and reporting the case if the students wishes .

Conduct of supervision- roles within the team
The current trend for PhD students to be supervised by a supervision team has been influenced by the focus on accountability within academia where students are considered as consumers and are within the broader commercial higher educational context (Waghid, 2006). Team supervision is assumed to minimize the risk of incompetence increasing the potentials of successful completion (Rugg and Petre, 2004).

Regarding the composition of a team, one model is an experienced supervisor to work with a less experienced one who, although has expertise in the area , has not acted as a supervisor before. This is considered as a 'coaching' or 'mentoring' model (Manathunga and Goozee, 2007) where the less experienced supervisor is both supporting the student and is supported by his/her academic colleague regarding the development of specific skills of effective supervision practice. This learning role on the part of the less experienced supervisor is highly probable to drive to status differentiation in the team, where the experienced supervisor takes the leading role in both the pace and conduct of supervision. To which extent such hierarchy will result in harmonious collaborative work depends on the individuals involved . However, this model may contribute more to smoother functioning than supervision teams with peer status where power dynamics is less clearly delineated. Phillips and Pugh (2000) argue that a model of an A' supervisor who leads and a B supervisor, who supports the research work, has advantages over a model of supervisors of equal status. My working experience as a member of a 'horizontal' team is positive mainly due to a shared commitment within the team to student-centred supervisory practice. This has end up in good working relationships benefiting the student because their best interests have been a priority. Also, mutual respect and supervisors' willingness to learn from each other have developed a teaching and learning environment with intellectual generosity.

Supervision consists of intellectual, methodological and pastoral features and the significance of each will change during research project ; Firth and Martens (2008) highlighted the need for an appropriate balance between emotional and rational elements within any effective supervisory practice . Where the work develops in ways not predicted at the beginning,

changes to the supervision team can be asked in order the project to be supported.. For example, a change to methodology, with expertise in a specific approach not represented among the team members, may end up in the recruitment of a new member to having special methodological experience so adding value to the student. This can drive to a labour division as a function of supervisory knowledge and skill diversity. What is important is that all team members (including the student) are clear about who is doing what and that agreement is reached about respective responsibilities (Phillips and Pugh, 2000).

Effective & honest communication; building trust & mutual accepted agreements for roles/contributions adding value to a "culture of accountability" for team supervision members*:* Communication appears the corner stone in people's relations and may take different forms, (e.g with email which appears as the dominant form across supervision teams, and especially when takes place a cross-faculty collaboration). Various types of supervision meetings which serve different purposes across the stages of the supervision take place, but, normally, it is expected students to deliver to their supervisor a piece of work so to be commented. A good practice the supervisory team members to manage differences is for this pre-supervision communication between supervisors to strive as well as ensure a broadly agreed 'line' to the student, managing opinion differences beforehand. This practice of pre-agreement contributes trust to be built in the supervision relationship preventing splintered messages to the student. The problem though that often is created is when students have delays to deliver their piece of work to their supervisors and due to supervisors' shortage of time (because of their obligations) do not have time to read, pay careful attention, provide constructive comments and reach agreed directions. Such constraints (human, time, work obligations etc) may drive to a fragmented supervision or/and the voicing of differences amongst the supervision team ; this finally may result in conflicts. One way this to be addressed is either both members to be from the same discipline so to have the same approach towards scholar research (e.g an economist has different approach regarding the structure and methodology than a staff member specialized in management), or, regardless of the specific student x supervision, the supervision team members to have reached an agreement (like a contract between partners) for 'which' parts of a student's work each supervisor is the lead person e.g for example, for a management topic, the subject expert to be the lead responsible supervisor for the literature review and discussion and the other supervisor (e.g if he/she is economist) for the methodology and data collection and both of them for the establishment of the research argument and research questions/objectives. There

should be mutual acknowledgement of contribution & trust of the experience and expertise of each staff member and the area someone is more competent and on the basis of this , specific roles and contributions to be pre-agreed. Similarly, to be agreed students matters generally (when supervise together generally various students) and student specific (when supervise a specific student) for areas such as *expectations from students, approaches towards literature review, methodology, structure of research , publications etc.* since different disciplines or supervisors approaches to structure of research.

In order frustrations and imbalance of workload to be caused, it is important besides any agreement (since not everything can be predicted in advance) a 'culture of accountability' to be developed within the supervision team where each one has specific obligations and should perform these obligations respecting the agreements of the roles of each member. Effective communication among members in the supervisor team is important; agreed communication channels, frequency (e.g team meeting once every 2 months), process or standards etc. are important and are facilitated when team members share common interest towards their role and student, communicate honestly and with trust to each other, express mutual respect , acknowledge the contribution of each other, and, 'speak the same language' of mind. Investing on human relations & development (between supervisors and student-supervisor) influence towards an effective collaborative climate among team members.

Learn from each other and all together learn from good practice in their own and other disciplines - and from across the national and international sector:

It helps conflicts to be minimized when staff members do not try to dominate others because of a 'dogmatic approach' regarding the practice they follow. It is helpful to question and review their approach, to recognize elements that may need to change, to be open to share practices and learn of what takes place from other colleagues, disciplines , locally and internationally.

Open-minded, cross -cultural awareness, managing differences internally, staff development:

The supervisory team should avoid biases due to discipline, cross-cultural, gender etc. differences. It is important the supervision team members to be open-minded, to build cross-cultural awareness (especially nowadays with great students' and staff mobility & travel academic obligations), keep balances avoiding conflicts, and managing within the team any academic (e.g regarding research context differences, different supervision approaches or and styles etc) or personal differences so that students not to be confused. People have different personalities, culture, experience, academic training, age, gender and this should not only be accepted but members should strive to explore benefits of different perspectives which stem from diverse synthesis of teams with people with different personal and professional culture. Diversity has added value not only for students but also for staff members. Of course, the issue of *chemistry match* between supervisors may play also a role tensions to be avoided but *Staff development & training* (via symposia, conferences, forums) can assist towards the direction of building perceptions, ways of managing effectively differences for the benefit of students. This can be institutionally based or/and part of self-development continuous learning.

Concluding points on Managing effectively conflicts & tensions:

A common approach to manage tensions is team members to remember that people have differences and these differences should be welcomed for the student's benefit e.g. a question raised regarding a conflicting advice is to be examined whether there are benefits for the supervision process airing their opinion differences with the student as a means of development of critical thinking about practical issues and ideas. To my opinion disagreements between supervisors give opportunity for deeper critical reflection on ideas and process eliciting often the student's opinions and challenging them to raise questions and show their knowledge. The corner stone is the *way* differences are shared: if the discussion appears as a 'competitive turn' this will probably be counter productive making the student feeling unsettled. One reason of this 'competitive turn' might be strong hierarchy differentials in the team (e.g as professor over lecturer) and finally, regardless good intentions, such status issues are likely to influence the team work.

Supervisors should strive to develop an effective supervisory team ; in order this to be achieved, each member is important to adopt a critical stance and evaluate existed supervisory practice, to reflect on this practice and be willing to change aspects of it, to evaluate and monitor these changes, to discuss with other experienced colleagues and keep updated with developments in supervisory practices and to be open & flexible to different approaches or/and styles others have. Also, as according to The Guardian (May, 2013) '*postgraduate supervision is one of the things that still goes on behind closed doors, where there is a minimum of box-ticking and the culture of accountability is firmly excluded'*. I believe that is important the supervisory team members to build together a team culture of accountability towards the student they supervise, define *together* common values and priorities contributing a 'partnership' spirit to be developed among them where mutual understanding and acceptance will take place.

What challenges/opportunities are presented when working with international students?:

Socio/Cultural differences/issues, learning differences, education matters:

International students, joining a program in a foreign country face issues of socio-cultural adjustment and this causes a lot of stress on them (Biggs, no date). This adjustment issues causes a negative environment for learning . The academic has to have a cross-cultural awareness and ability to teach students from different cultures, otherwise, has to develop cross cultural teaching skills. The latter is a challenge for development . Academics should be aware that international students have differences from local students and actually many of them could be stereotyped because most of these students lack critical thinking skills, they are passive and they do not participate in class so a progressive western model of teaching would not apply for them (e.g for Asian students). Also, they stick together, they have a lot of concern for the assessment than for the learning & knowledge journey. Students often do not perceive correctly instructions, rules (plagiatrism etc.). This is due to cultural differences, educational background differences, personal differences We need to make sure that they perceive them correctly instead of relying in a typical answer 'yes', 'no'. So, instructors have to be creative finding ways of teaching, learning and support that would make these students to adjust in the new learning environment and get the help they need. For example, regarding the assessment instructors have to make sure that the assessment contains the content we want them to learn; assessment should address the performances addressed in the objectives; regarding their participation, we need to encourage, welcome, be open and enthusiastic when we invite international students to participate in discussions, ask other peers/classmates also to support and help international students when they form groups together and try to work nicely all together showing common understanding. Discussions with international students and arrangements of short tutorial are important. Teaching is effective when it addresses and satisfies in practice the needs international students have raised during discussions and tutorials. Teaching methods should address the activities put in the objectives . It is very important to allow students to make choices, to do self-evaluation, to offer variety of experiences; module workload to offer feasible workload and continuous feedback to be provided to students .Recoding lectures, providing guidelines orally speaking slowly but also emailing them to students so that to have everything in written are some common practices which help international students. Developing clear rules and procedures for tasks also help students who have different cultural background and experience.

Cultural differences influence perceptions of 'power' For example, Asian students need more directive supervisor style than Scandinavian students. However, starting with this, a challenge would be PG programs (and especially PhD) to train them on cross-cultural awareness, and help them to develop skills and mindset to become more international so after their graduation to become global citizens. Educational differences among international students do not regard only areas and subjects of study but also systems which reflect values and develop specific skills and way of thinking. There is different thinking and learning styles. The same applies in terms of research skills where students have learned to approach or/and execute or/and structure research in different ways and need different style of support. Borrowing from my experience as Assistant professor in Aarhus University in Denmark, recommending research articles to PhD students was perceived as directing their way of thinking or/and I was imposing on them specific direction violating their autonomy. In China, in 2016, supervising students without recommending resources was a problem for them because they needed direction and felt comfortable to agree for everything with the supervisor than to have initiatives and build evidence of disagreement. A challenge is to recognize these differences and be able to help international students to have a smooth transition from one educational system to another (e.g induction programs for PhD or MSc students assist), from one research environment and accompanied mentality to another. Different thinking and learning styles challenge academics to design learning processes, use learning approaches, build learning activities or/and assessment standards where such differences are recognized and are addressed (e.g to design tutorials for assisting international students' understanding for specific materials or/and lecture sessions or/and instructions; to provide continuous written preferably feedback so students to have time to read and understand etc) so that the student not to end up in a chaotic situation. The role of the supervisors is to help towards this transition and is important to start the student-supervisor partnership with knowledge of existed skills and start working these in order to help students to develop the needed skills . Culture influences perception, attitude and behaviours (e.g Chinese students are very shy and speechless; Scandinavian students prefer autonomy/freedom) so supervisors are challenged to find ways how to collaborate, how to respect students' particular cultural characteristics but also to adjust them in the new environment. Opportunities for a University having international students is to develop a more international approach towards PG curricula & practices , to increase its reputation as international learning environment, as well as, having international postgraduate (and especially PhD) students to develop research collaborations and network with academic members from their countries, its international students

to be ambassadors of our University in their home country assisting as alumni to international recruitment, as well as, to assist with their research to data collection from markets and areas that might be difficult to be achieved, to participate in data collection for local or international research projects (being the ambassadors of our University) etc.

Language difficulties & understanding of plagiarism:

International students who do their postgraduate studies in abroad and have to communicate, write in a foreign language are challenged expressing them selves via a foreign language. This often results in their isolation (from other local & international students) and lack of confidence to interact verbally and raise questions when they contact their supervisor. Because of the language difficulty they tend to prefer to join groups with members who might be from their own home country. For example, borrowing from my experience, chinese students would prefer to be supervised by a native speaker (chinese supervisor). A challenge for us is to provide directions and recommendations 'how' and 'where' they can be assisted; so the supervisor has to be updated about the facilities the University provides; to find out ways to make sure that the students can really understand instructions, materials, our feedback so to be able to use it; that understand rules and standards such as plagiarism so to avoid penalties. This challenges our creativity to make our sources more international, our approach to teaching also more international, but our assessment too to be based on standards of quality than on the language errors (of course advising them to review & correct their work before being submitted) etc. An other challenge is the supervisor to engage the student into groups and activities where other international students participate so to be motivated to learn the language in practice than in theory only and to have the chance to interact with others and all students to share experience. Finally, language issues, also provide the opportunity to University when offer well structured language programs to attract more and more international students, to increase its reputation as an international environment. Besides the general language difficulties there are also writing problems.

Writing:

Considering that students who have to write graduate theses or PhD dissertation in a language other than their first language, encounter serious difficulties and writing programs designed to help such students present dissertations written to an acceptable standard (Allison et. al., 1998) or advising students for other ways (e.g a native speaker to review their work etc) is of critical importance. I try to provide advice and directions for improvement of language writing and correct mistakes during my review of work, however, due to time constraints and partial submission of the draft work to be commented, I feel that I do not provide all the necessary feedback (commenting all language mistakes).However, for the development of academic writing skills, I train them through comments, directions, examples of good writing, and other pedagogical approaches for good writing such as meta-commentary template exercises (Kamler & Thompson, 2014) and direct them for attending ODP training programs

Different expectations:

International students, due to their educational training, national cultural influence or/and even perhaps their working experience back home (especially for PhD students), in relation to their lack of knowledge of the new educational system they enter in, often they build different expectations from those other (e.g local British students have compared to Chinese). This is challenging for supervising a student with such profile because conflicts may be arranged if these expectations are acknowledged and managed early. Borrowing from my experience, I had great difficulty collaborating with a new PhD student from Thailand; in our first meeting, I was delighted to see her in Dundee, I welcomed her having made some arrangements (chocolates and tea/coffee etc) in my office, plenty time so to have time to time to discuss etc but she felt frustrated because, as she said, she expected me to ask her about difficulties she had travelling at Dundee, and, she did not expect that I would ask her to change her topic although I never asked this; on the contrary, I mentioned that the topic was interesting but had to become more focused & specific than broad so that the student not to be lost. Meeting the student for 2 months, I realized that the student was not really interested in a PhD program as she claimed but she was using it as an excuse for her family to be away from home. Because she was in a high social status in her country and had started there the PhD where her ex supervisor followed what she wanted, she expected me to do the same and the University standards not to apply for her. Her PG experience back home developed a way of thinking, and, her high social status an attitude that raised different expectations (not only with me but with the co-supervisor) causing finally issues in collaborating & supervising this student. This was a challenge for the School of Business how could deal with such a case. The opportunity that appeared because of this case was to be introduced and finally be established not only a welcome event but also a well structured induction workshop where the student would be informed about the rules, standards and expectations, about the relationship with the supervisor, the nature of the PhD research work etc so that international students who have experience from different countries & HE systems to be informed before meeting the supervisory team. It is important expectations from both sides (student-supervisor) to be clearly stated,

shared, understood and agreed in order student-supervisor partnership and relationship to be effective.

Selection of topic/theme:

Most of the international students tend to have preferences selecting a topic/theme which regards their own country; they consider this choice as the best one because they feel familiar with their home country, safe that can have easy access for data selection, opportunities to travel back home. A challenge for us is to be creative and find ways to help students understand the importance of their scholar work which has to contribute to literature and have international value and implications instead of being country-specific only; also to help them understand the importance of having a global research mindset, to think globally so to be prepared to become global citizens regardless the case study they prefer to choose for data collection. Another issue regards the approach towards the research overall. For example, Chinese students prefer to do quantitative studies because they have a good training in quantitative skills but they lack development of qualitative and analytical skills as well as critical thinking. The challenge is to develop learning activities for such international students to learn various research methods and the selection of the methodology to be the one that fits the needs of the research and not what they feel comfortable doing; so in this way they develop themselves instead of sticking to what they already know.

Generally, the challenges but also opportunities which appear when supervising students are: Some other effective practices to support the supervision process and research student learning that have emerged from research and experience include (Wisker, 2015):

1. "Increasing awareness of culturally different contexts, learning styles, expectations and behaviours

2. Acceptance of different learning approaches and research modes

3. A need to ensure that students have appropriate access to tertiary literacy support for writing and examination

4. Supporting culturally contextualised and inflected topics

5. Ensuring respectful interactions

6. Challenging entrenched culturally originated learning behaviours (for both supervisors and students)" (p.1)

Finally, needs such as domestic and financial security , even visa matters, may dominate over research thinking and learning when international students arrive. As supervisors, we are often the first individuals who guide students to resources, infrastructural support (e.g. student services, students' unions although in some countries are considered radical), and induction processes in the university or/and on the basis of international networks providing intellectual and emotional support. The more international students arrive the more the need but also challenge knowledge exchange activities to be organized.

CONCLUSION:

Various issues of PG supervision were critically addressed and recommendations were provided. One important issue is the impact of relations ,challenges and learning environment in which people operate and collaborate. Planning in advance and critically examining tailor-made approaches to supervisees' needs adds significant value which results in contributing to a constructive learning experience and increase of individuals' performance

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