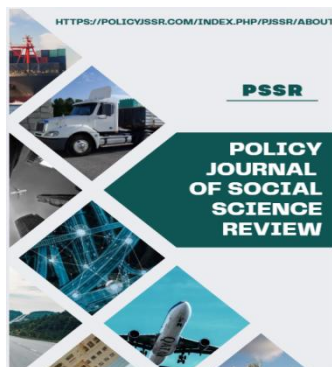




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SUPERVISORS' BEHAVIOR IN STUDENT RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT: GUIDANCE AND OVERSIGHT

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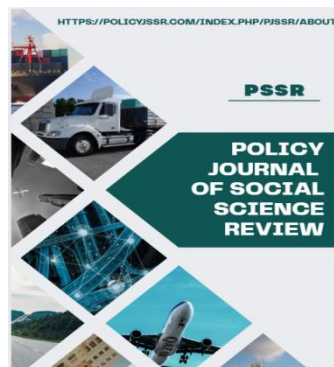
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*Received on 24 Jan, 2026**Accepted on 22 Feb, 2026**Published on 13 March, 2026***Copyright** @Author**Corresponding Author: *****Zainab Ajab Mohideen**

ABSTRACT

This study examines how supervisors' behavior shapes student research engagement, with particular focus on guidance, communication, and oversight practices. Rather than treating supervision as a purely administrative task, this study views it as an interactive process that directly influences students' learning and research development. The findings suggest that supervisors play a dual role: they guide students academically while also ensuring that research is conducted in a responsible and ethical manner. Students benefit most when supervisors provide clear direction, timely feedback, and consistent support throughout the research process. The study further emphasizes that effective supervision is not only dependent on individual effort but also on institutional support. Strengthening mentoring practices and providing professional development opportunities for supervisors can significantly enhance research outcomes. Overall, this study contributes to a clearer understanding of how supervisory behavior can improve both student engagement and research quality.

Keywords: Supervision, Supervisors, Supervisor behavior, Research students, Research engagement



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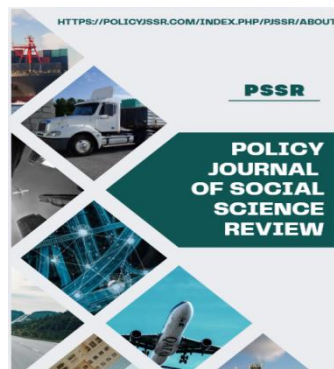
Introduction

A vital component of doctoral study is supervision. Research proved that oversight contributes to the completion of degrees, the duration of time required for candidature, the wellbeing of PhD candidates, their contentment with their entire doctoral experience, and competencies formed over the course of study (Meyer et., al 2005; Case 2008; Pyhältö et al., 2011). Meanwhile, studies suggest that students who work closely with teachers on research projects are also the ones who are most likely to encounter unethical activity stated by (Anderson et al., 1994). However, among the many elements (such as cultural, personal, and environmental) that affect a student's research performance, the function of a doctorate supervisor is crucial ((Bui, 2014; Devine & Hunter, 2017; Peng, 2015). The importance of doctoral supervision is heavily influenced by a broad range of scholarly concerns (Khuram et al., 2023).

Doctoral supervision is essential for facilitating knowledge exchange, encouraging pupils, and supporting them in becoming self sufficient researchers (Halse & Malfroy, 2010). A supervisor arranges PhD students with approach to cultural means, skill and learning prospects (Pearson & Brew 2002; Le et., al 2021). Consequently, (Gong et., al. 2009) assert that scholars are placing greater emphasis on the supervisory function, particularly in relation to supervisory styles.

PhD student supervision is frequently a source of contention for both the PhD candidate and the advisor. PhD advisors are anticipated to serve as mentors, educators, and patrons, among other roles. Each of these functions necessitates distinct skill sets at various stages of a PhD. It is, in fact, a highly emotional process in which both parties have high expectations. Students are frequently confronted with conflicts and are compelled to develop the ability to manage supervisors' emotional states (Johansson et al., 2014).

The supervisory relationship holds significant importance as it delivers a critical avenue for understanding codes of conduct and proper practices. However, there is limited knowledge regarding whether doctoral students and supervisors understand similar ethical concerns that are present in doctoral supervision. The current study aims to examine the extent to which supervisors' and students' perceptions of ethical issues in the natural and behavioral sciences align (Löfström & Pyhältö 2017). The traditional dynamic between a supervisor and their PhD student can be described as one of master apprentice or expert disciple, whereby supervisors have exercised authority over numerous facets (Hemer, 2012). (Hamid & Shah, 2018) emphasized the importance of fostering positive academic relationships between supervisors and research scholars in order to guarantee the successful completion of research projects.



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In summary, this research examines the pivotal role that supervisors play in providing guidance and supervision for student research participation. Through a careful examination of their behaviors; we aim to reveal valuable perspectives that can improve the way mentors operate. Our study helps make students' academic experiences better, creating a more supportive and productive environment for learning. It plays a key role in improving mentor student relationships and boosting how much students learn in academic research.

Problem Statement

This research looks at how supervisors actually shape students' experiences during research projects. The goal is to see what supervisors do that helps students learn, and what might get in the way. Are supervisors really motivating and supporting their students, or are their actions sometimes making things harder? By figuring out which behaviors help and which don't, we can improve the way students are guided through their work. The whole idea is to dig into the realities of supervisor student relationships and find better ways to make the research experience more positive for students.

Study Objectives

1. Examine the Impact of Supervisors' Behavior on Student Research Productivity.
2. Identify Effective Guidance Strategies for Student Researchers.
3. Examine the Role of Communication in Effective Supervision.

Significance of this study

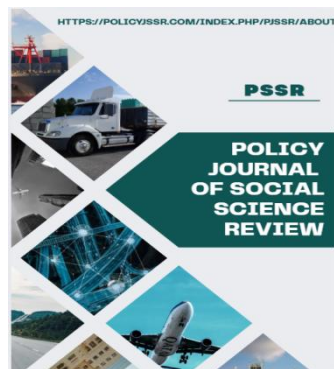
This study matters because it digs into how supervisors and students connect during research projects. By exploring how supervisors guide and monitor students, it sheds light on how these relationships actually work. The findings give us better ways to mentor, build healthy research environments, and help shape future scholars.

Literature Review

Good supervision really matters when it comes to helping postgraduate students make real, lasting contributions in their fields. The relationship between supervisor and student, the style the supervisor takes, and how they communicate all of that plays a huge role. These things are at the heart of good research and real mentorship. They help students find their own voice and push the boundaries in their work (Hemer, 2012). Ali and Sanauddin (2019) argue that the supervisor's job is to guide students as they build the skills and knowledge they need to do solid research.

Concerning the psychological preferences and well being of their subordinates, a supportive supervisor refers to relationship based behavior (Devine & Hunter, 2017; Fan et al., 2019). Thus, the primary goal of relation oriented conduct is to improve the relationship by identification, cooperation, and assistance (Gruzdev et al., 2020).

According to (Mouton, 2001), postgraduate research supervision involves four key roles: guiding, advising,



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nurturing relationships, and ensuring quality. Feedback, both in quality and quantity, is crucial in each role. As (Lee, 2007) suggests, constructive feedback promotes collaboration and helps students develop autonomy in their learning journey.

Highlighted by (Thompson et al., 2005), one of the most important components of good supervision is having supervisors available for both academic and individual support. Research students should expect their supervisors to provide them with resources, time, information, guidelines, assistance, and encouragement when writing their theses, as noted by (Bitchener et al., 2011); (Engebretson et al., 2008).

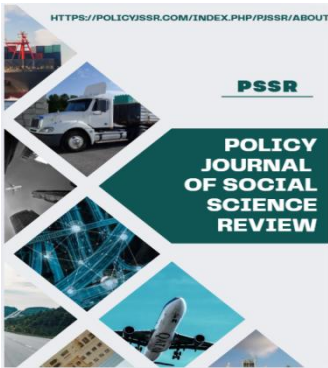
The ability to recognize ethical issues and find sustainable, ethical solutions to them can be developed through supervision. Some of the problems are inherent in the way that research is conducted; they have to do with how researchers handle research subjects, get or negotiate informed consent, protect participant anonymity, and keep data private. But connections with coworkers, sponsors, and other stakeholders, as well as authorship recognition, can potentially raise ethical concerns. The primary focus of this paper is on ethical concerns related to these external factors. Several ethical challenges, including unable and inadequate supervision, supervisor abandonment, supervisor views being obstructed, abusive and exploitative supervision, multiple relationships, encouragement to commit fraud, and

authorship issues, have been documented by previous study (Goodyear et al., 1992; Mahmud & Bretag 2013).

Supervisory relationship suitable can be utilized to investigate the dynamics of supervisory relationships that influence the nature of ethical issues encountered and the methods used to resolve them. It has been demonstrated that doctorate students' experiences and process completion are impacted by the alignment or lack thereof between them and their work environment (Golde 2005; Löfström, & Pyhältö 2017).

A competent and experienced supervisor and a less experienced supervisee engage in a teaching and learning relationship through traditional methods of supervision. In addition to supervising the supervisee's work, the supervisor is in charge of training research techniques.

This approach to supervision sets up a clear hierarchy. The supervisor takes the lead, acting as the expert who teaches research skills and advises the supervisee on how to handle their assignments ethically and effectively (Ganzer, 2007). Stepping back, the literature provides a close look at how supervisors behave when guiding student research, pulling back the curtain on the nuanced push and pull between oversight and support. Previous studies show just how much supervisors shape students' research experiences. Researchers have looked at all kinds of supervisory approaches from building a safe, supportive environment to finding the right balance between giving direction and allowing



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independence. This groundwork is the launching pad for our own study, which will dig into the specific actions and strategies that actually strengthen the student supervisor relationship in research. The review lays the foundation for a deeper investigation aimed at improving both the quality and effectiveness of student research, all under the careful eye of a supervisor.

Research Gap

Researchers know supervisors play a big role in how engaged students are with their research. But there's still a lot we don't know about the strategies that actually make guidance effective. Most studies barely touch on how supervision affects students emotionally or psychologically, and not many look at how technology changes the dynamic. On top of that, hardly anyone has

Result and Discussion Population

Gender	No of Respondents	Frequency
Male	155	72.10%
Female	60	27.90%

Table No. 1 Gender wise Response

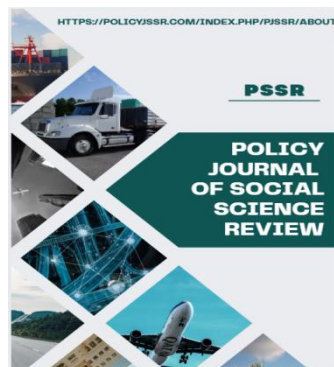
This section looks at the gender breakdown of the respondents. Out of everyone who took part, 155 were men, making up about 72% of the group. On

studied how a supervisor's cultural competence matters for students from different backgrounds. Filling these gaps will help supervisors and schools support student researchers in a more meaningful way.

Data Analysis

In this study, researchers wanted to see how supervisors actually worked with their students during research projects. They focused on the amount of guidance supervisors gave and how much they kept tabs on the students' progress. After going through survey responses, patterns started to appear. Some supervisors dove right in, giving lots of advice and checking in often, while others stood back and let students handle things on their own. These results really show just how differently supervisors choose to support their students' research.

the other hand, there were 60 women, which is roughly 28%. So, men made up most of the respondents, while women were a noticeably smaller portion.



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Age	No of Respondents	Frequency
20 25	59	27.44%
26 30	20	9.30%
31 35	32	14.88%
36 40	34	15.81%
Above 40	70	32.56%

Table No. 2 Age wise Response

The data shows a pretty wide range of ages among respondents. Most participants 32.56%, or 70 people were over 40. The next largest group was ages 20 to 25, making up 27.44% (59 people). The 31 to 35 and 36 to 40 age brackets had a similar turnout, with 32 and 34

people each, which comes to about 14 15% each. The smallest group was those aged 26 to 30, only 20 participants or 9.3% of the total. Overall, this gives a good sense of the age breakdown in the sample.

University Sector	No of Respondents	Frequency
Private University	104	48.37%
Public University	111	51.63%

Table No. 3 University sector wise Response

This study zeroes in on where responses come from specifically, which university sectors people represent. Out of everyone who took part, 111 came from public universities. That's about 52% of all respondents. The other 104, just under

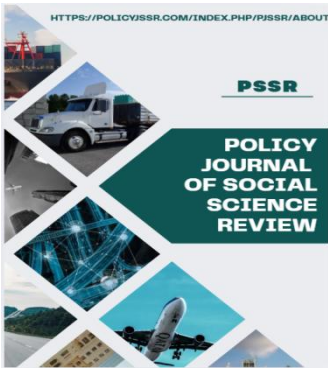
48%, were from private universities. So both groups are pretty well balanced. This breakdown gives a clear picture of the study's participants, highlighting a good mix between public and private university backgrounds.

Level of Study	No of Respondents	Frequency
MS/M.Phil	141	65.58%
PhD	74	34.42%

Table No. 4 Level of study wise Response

The analysis takes a close look at respondents' academic backgrounds. Out of the whole group, 141 people about 66% had earned an MS or M.Phil degree. The remaining 74 respondents, which is roughly 34%, were in PhD programs. So,

there are more MS/M.Phil students in the mix than PhD students. This breakdown helps set the stage for the research, showing the range of education and experience among the people involved.



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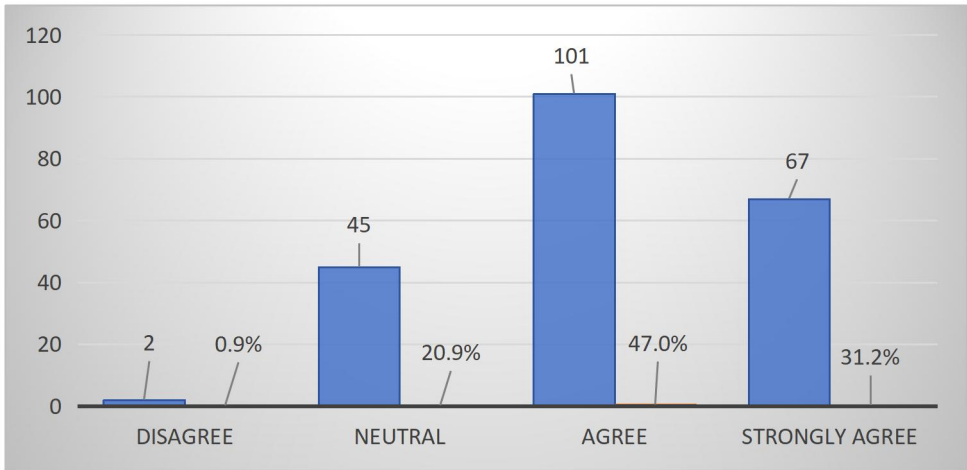


Figure 1. Supervisor provides clear expectations in research work
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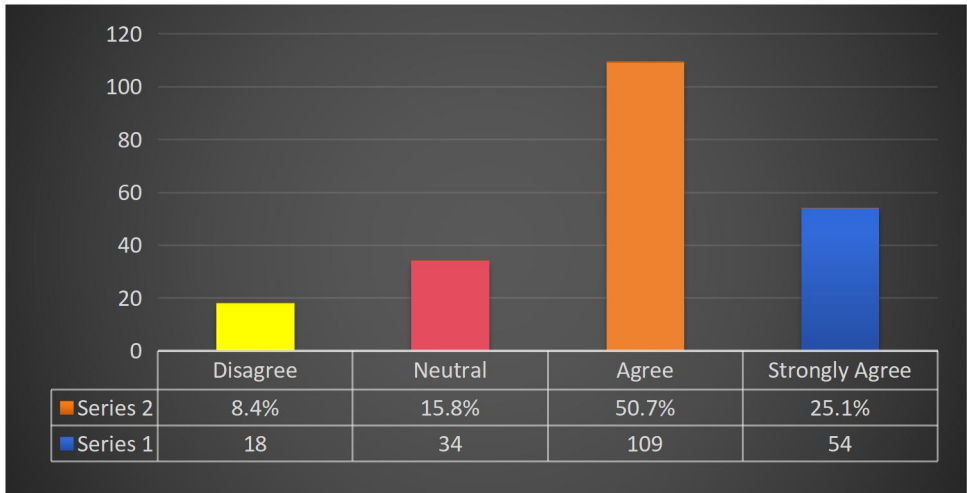
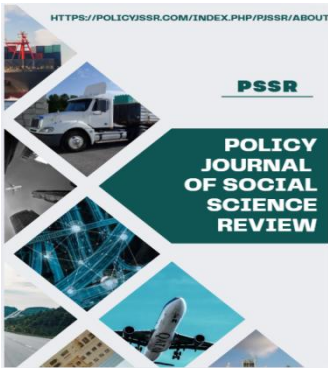


Figure 2. Supervisor's Easy Accessibility
Data interpretation for the item "My supervisor is easily accessible when I need assistance" shows that a significant number of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed. In particular, 109 respondents or 50.7% of the total agreed with the statement, and 54 respondents or 25.1% of the total strongly agreed. Furthermore, 34 respondents or 15.8% of the total did

not express an opinion on this issue. But 8% of the respondents, or 18 people, disagreed with the statement. The majority of respondents to this survey appear to view their supervisors as approachable and easily accessible when help is needed, which shows that there is a supportive and approachable relationship between the supervisor and the student.



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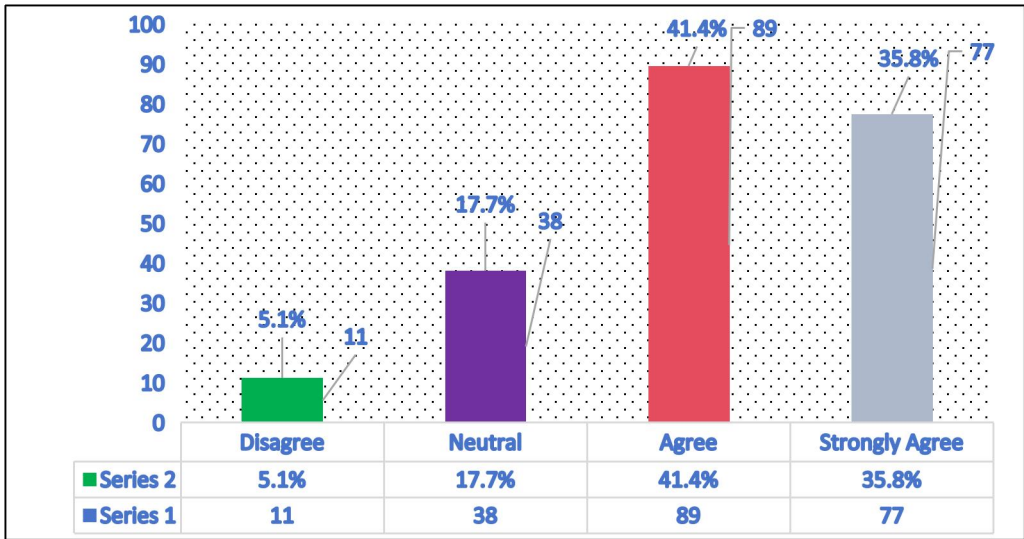


Figure 3. Supervisor’s prompt response to emails & messages

Most participants think their superiors are responsive. Specifically, 89 respondents (41.4%) agreed with the statement, while 35.8% of respondents (77 respondents) strongly agreed. In addition, 38 participants or 17.7% of the sample did not offer any opinions. A

smaller percentage of responders, 11, or 5.1%, disagreed with the assertion. The majority of respondents believe their supervisors reply to emails or messages, which is a positive aspect of the supervisor student support system, according to these statistics.

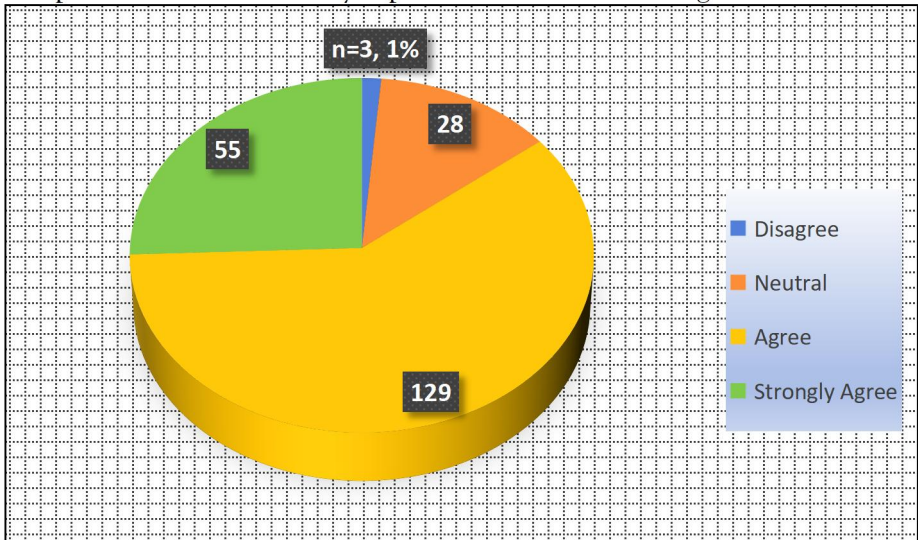
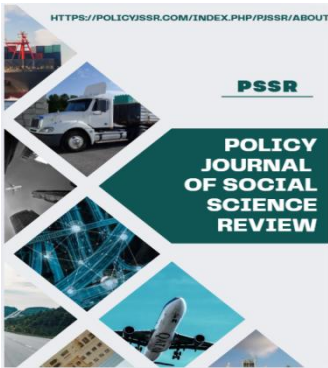


Figure 4. Constructive Feedback by Supervisor on Research Progress



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According to the data interpretation, respondents generally have a positive opinion of the statement "My supervisor provides constructive feedback on my research progress." To be more specific, 129 respondents or 60.0% of the sample agreed with the statement, and 55 respondents or 25.6% strongly agreed with it. Out of the whole group, 28

people, or 13%, said they felt neutral. Only 3 respondents about 1.4% disagreed with the statement. Most people clearly feel positive about the advice and support they get from their supervisors. The numbers show that a large majority believe their supervisors give them helpful feedback on their research progress.

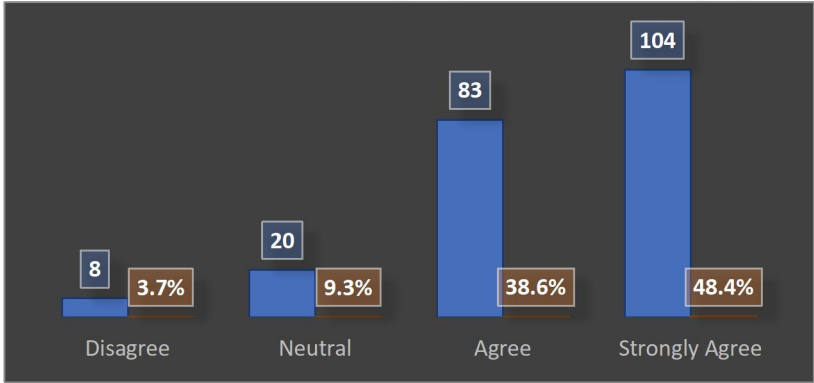
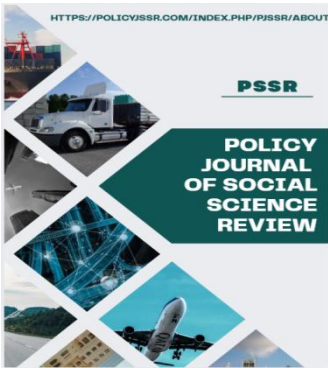


Figure 5. Supervisor’s feedback helps to improve the quality of work

When it comes to the statement, "Supervisor’s feedback helps to improve the quality of work," the responses were even more positive. Almost half, 104 respondents (48.4%), strongly agreed. Another 83 people (38.6%) agreed. There were 20 who felt neutral (9.3%), and just 8 (3.7%) who disagreed. So, most respondents see their supervisor’s

feedback as key to improving their work. People feel that feedback from supervisors really helps guide and shape their research. In the end, all this points to how important constructive feedback is in the supervisor student relationship, especially when it comes to academic and research growth



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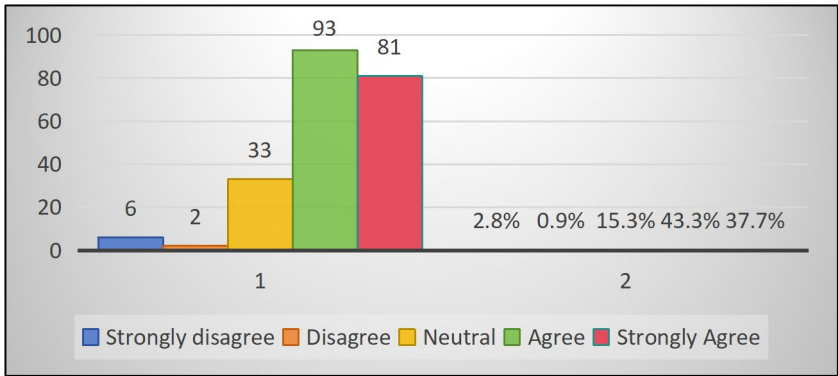


Figure 6. Supervisors encourages to explore new ideas

Figure 6. Out of all the respondents, 81 people (37.7%) said they strongly agreed with the statement, and another 93 (43.3%) agreed. Thirty three respondents (15.3%) felt neutral. Only 2 people (0.9%) disagreed, and just 6 (2.8%) strongly disagreed.

try new ideas. That’s a big deal. This kind of backing creates a space where students can be creative and curious without feeling shut down. And when you look at it from a research angle, that kind of support is huge for driving innovation and helping people grow intellectually.

So, most people felt their supervisors actually support them when they want to

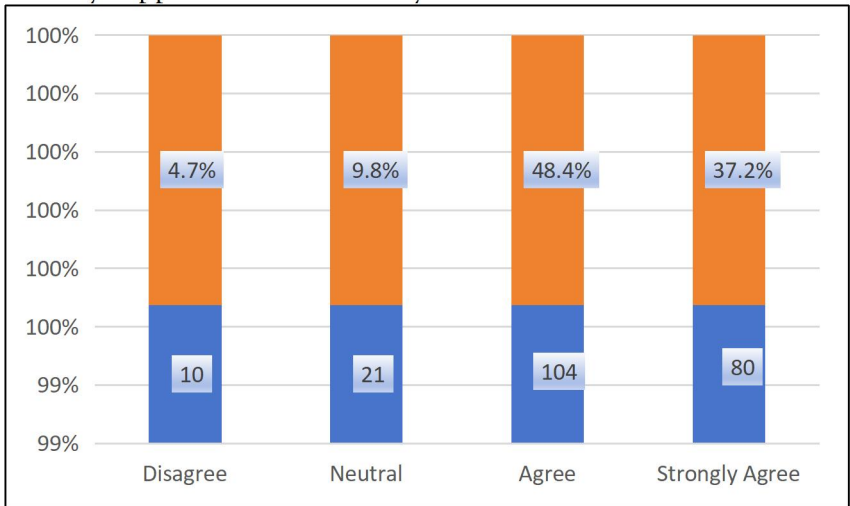
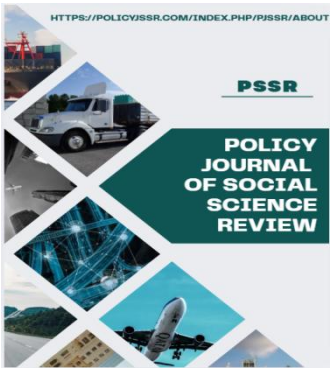


Figure 7. Supervisor motivates to overcome the challenges in research

The respondents were asked about Supervisor motivation regarding overcome the challenges in research. 80 respondents, representing 37.2% of the total, strongly agreed with the statement,

while 104 respondents, comprising 48.4%, agreed. Additionally, 21 respondents, constituting 9.8% of the total, remained neutral on this matter. A smaller proportion, 10 respondents or



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4.7%, disagreed. According to these results, a substantial number of respondents believe that their supervisors inspire them to overcome challenges in their research. Basically, these results show supervisors aren't just there to oversee – they really do have students'

backs. Their support helps students stick with their research, tackle problems, and stay motivated. All of this points to positive supervision methods, which clearly make a difference to the student experience.

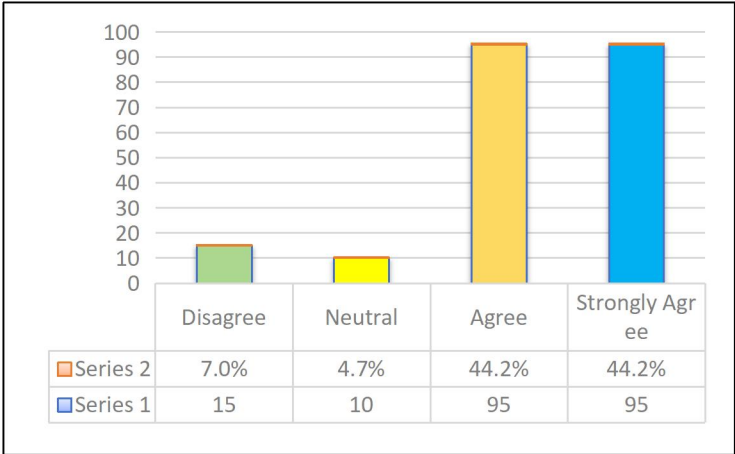
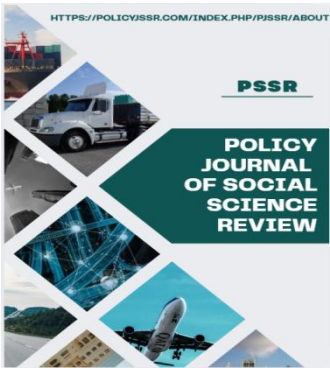


Figure 8. Supervisor Communicates Respectfully and Professionally

According to **Figure 8**. Total of 95 respondents, representing 44.2%, strongly agreed with the statement, while an equal number of 95 respondents, comprising another 44.2%, agreed. Additionally, 10 respondents, constituting 4.7% of the total, remained neutral on this matter. A smaller proportion, 15 respondents or 7.0%, disagreed. The findings represent that a large percentage of respondents believe their supervisors to be courteous and

professional in their communication. Lots of the people in the study said they definitely or mostly agreed that their supervisors are professional and speak to students with respect. This is really important for building a work environment where students are supported, feel valued, and are treated well by those in charge. Overall, it's good for the relationship, how a student and supervisor get along with each other.



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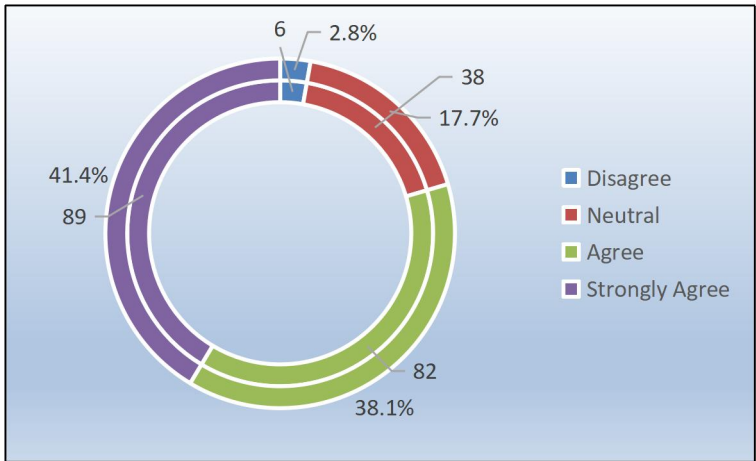
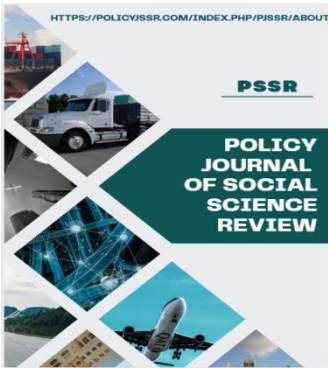


Figure 9. Supervisor actively listen to my concerns and ideas

From all the answers given (there were 89, which is 41.4% of the people asked), a lot of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. In fact, 82 (or 38.1%) simply agreed. Almost 18% of the 38 people taking part in the study were undecided. A very small number, 6 people (2.8%), said they didn't agree. Because of this, we can say that a lot of respondents do think their bosses really listen to what they think and what worries them. The fact that so many agreed or strongly agreed

means students feel their feedback and ideas are heard, and supervisors are open to them. And something like this is really important for a workplace that's open, based on people working together, where students feel valued and are able to say what's on their minds, including their concerns. In general, it has a good impact on the interpersonal dynamics and communication dynamics between the supervisor and the student.



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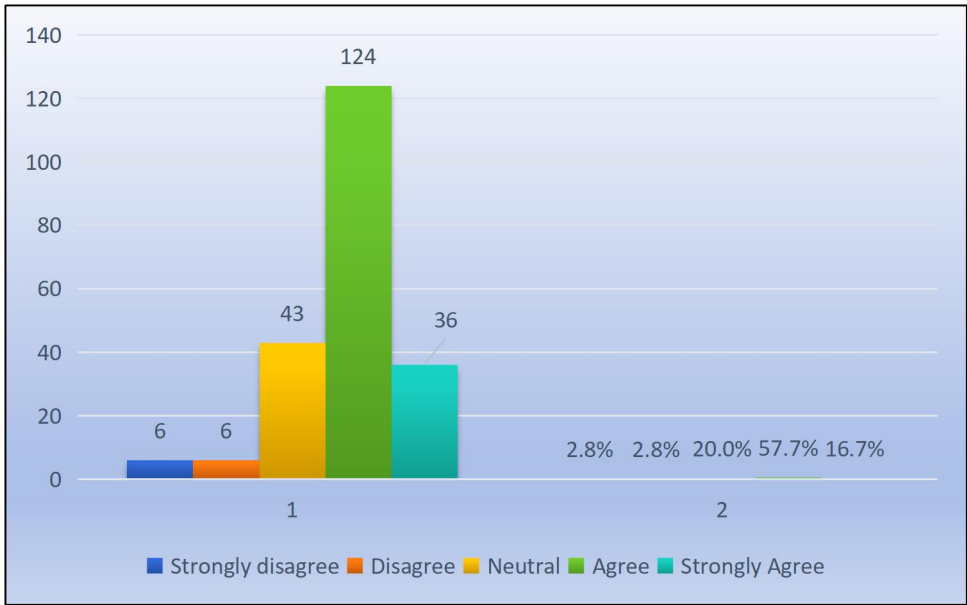
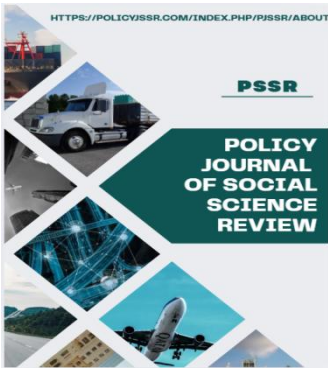


Figure 10. Overall satisfaction on working with Supervisor

The study of the responses showed that 124 respondents (57.7%) of the total, agreed with their satisfaction level, while 36 respondents, containing 16.7%, strongly agreed. Also, 43 respondents, founding 20.0% of the total, remained neutral on this regard. A smaller proportion, 6 respondents each or 2.8%, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Based on these results, it can be concluded that a significant portion of respondents are happy with their interactions with their supervisors. Given their assistance, direction, and general interaction with

their students, supervisors are generally seen favorably, based on the large number of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In order to create a fruitful and encouraging research atmosphere where students feel appreciated and inspired to pursue their academic and research objectives, this perspective is essential. Overall, it speaks well of the relationship between the supervisor and the student and how it affects the academic experiences and results of the students.



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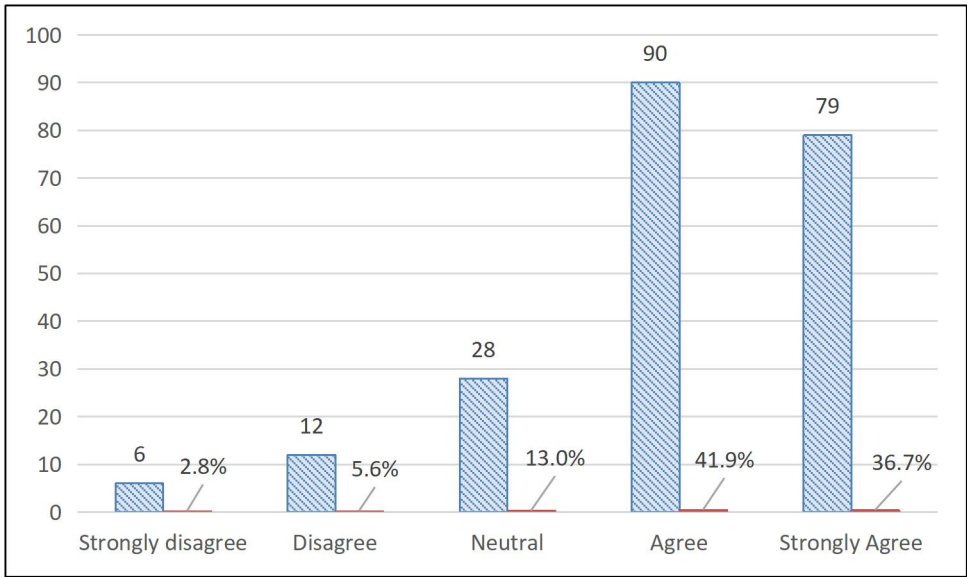
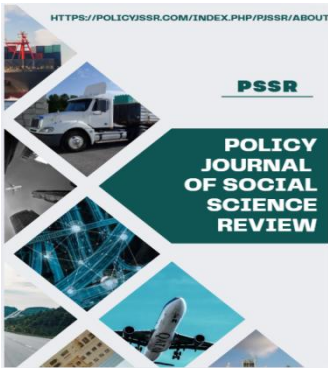


Figure 11. Supervisor's behavior positively impacts research productivity

An inquiry was made to find out that 90 respondents (or 41.9%) of the total agreed with the statement, while 79 respondents (or 36.7%) of the total strongly agreed. Moreover, 28 individuals, making up 13.0% of the sample population, chose the neutral response. On the other hand, only a small proportion of the sample population 12 individuals, which is equivalent to 5.6% disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, only six individuals, which make up 2.8% of the total sample, strongly disagreed with the statement

under discussion. The data presented above reveal that most respondents agree that the actions of their supervisors contribute to boosting the productivity of their research work. It can be observed that supervisors are considered vital in ensuring that a productive research atmosphere is established, considering the high number of respondents who responded affirmatively to the statement. This implies that supervisors play a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency of supervision practices, which boost research productivity.



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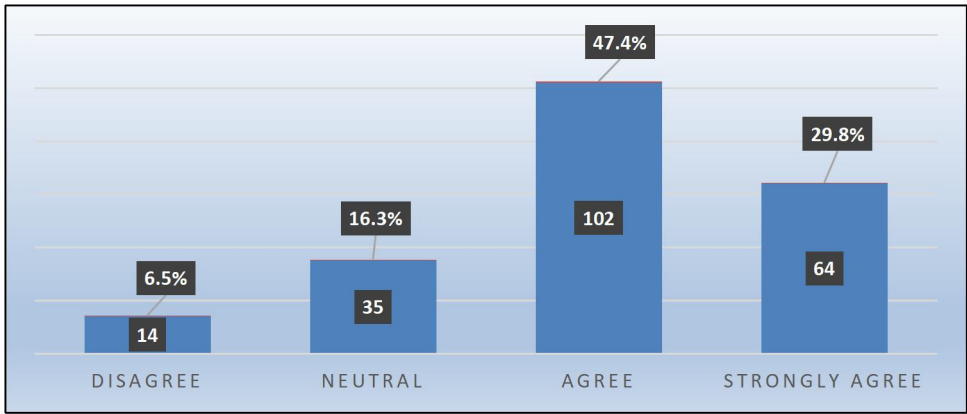
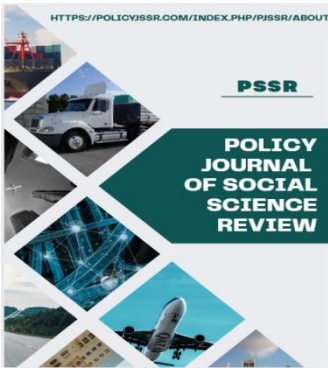


Figure 12. Supervisor's support personal and professional development

There were some questions concerning the level of support provided by Supervisor's regarding personal and professional development during research. 102 students (or 47.4% of the total respondents), answered "Agree" for this question, whereas 64 respondents (29.8% of the total), gave an answer of "Strongly Agree". In addition, there was a total of 35 respondents (16.3% of the total respondents), who chose "Neutral" option while answering this question, while only 14 respondents (6.5% of the total

respondents) chose to give an answer of "Disagree". According to these findings, the vast majority of the respondents perceive their Supervisors as encouraging individuals for the growth of their professional and personal capacities when doing research. It is evident from the high percentage of the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses that Supervisors are perceived to help students in developing their research skills and talents.



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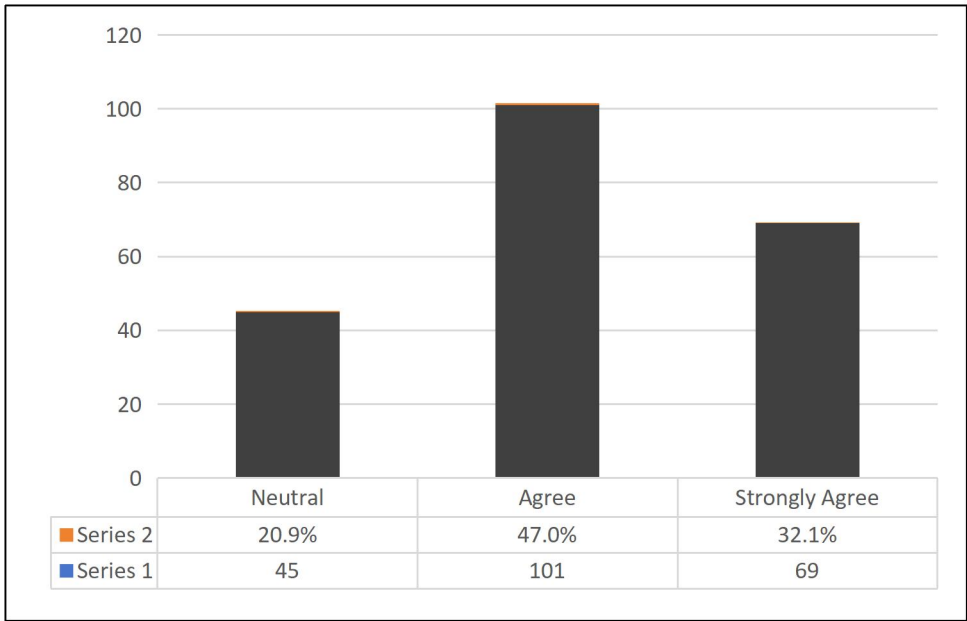
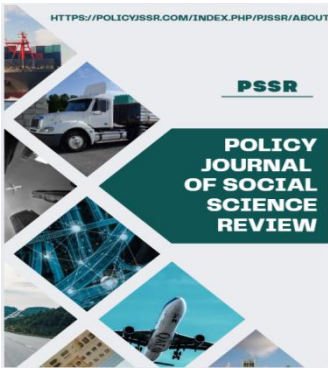


Figure 13. Supervisor's Guidance has been effective in advancing research

From the data provided above, it shows that the perceptions held by the respondents about the role of supervisor's advice in promoting research projects are generally positive. In this regard, 101 (47.0% of the total) respondents agreed while another 69 (32.1% of the total) agreed with the statement to a high extent. Another 45 (20.9% of the total) respondents did not have any opinion about this particular

issue. Therefore, from the above figures, it can be seen that most of the respondents have the belief that supervisor's advice has been very helpful in promoting their research. Since most individuals have the perception that this is the case, then it means that the presence of a mentor or support network is important for conducting research work.



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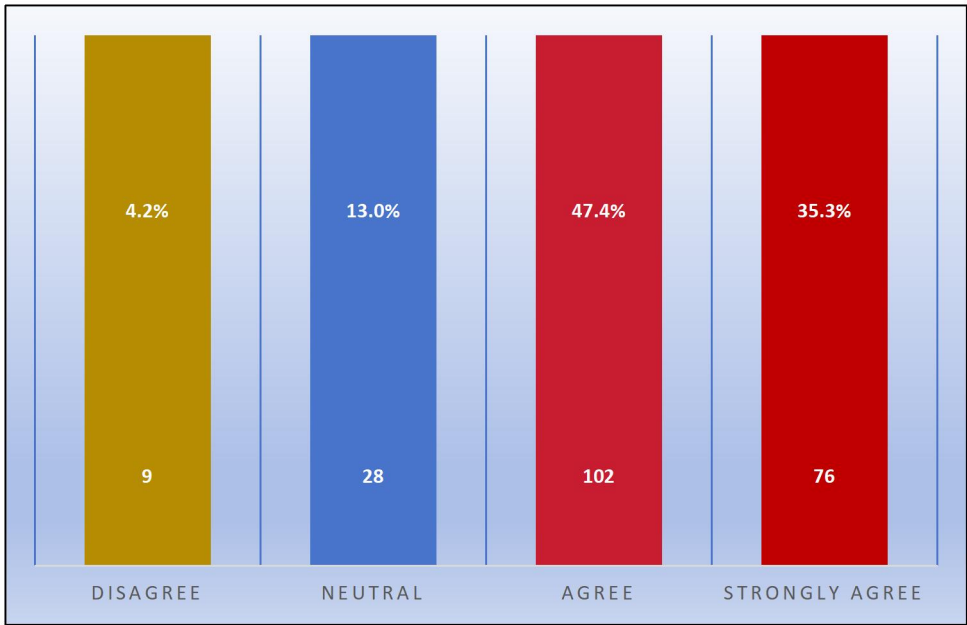
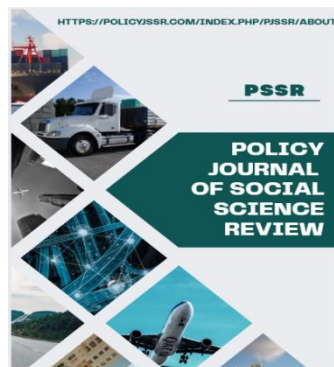


Figure 14. Supervisor's recommendations to other students

These findings illustrate that there is a great tendency amongst the respondents to refer their supervisor to other students as an advisor in their research. A total of 102 respondents (47.4%) agreed to this statement, and 76 respondents (35.3%) of the total strongly agreed to the same. Additionally, only 9 respondents (4.2%) were of the opinion that they disagreed with this statement, while 28 respondents (13%) of the total were neutral towards this statement. It can be seen from the findings that the respondents have a high level of satisfaction in their supervisor and confidence that their supervisor has the ability to provide them with good research advice. The significant number of respondents agreeing and strongly agreeing with the above stated statement depicts the worth and quality of their supervisor's advice to them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper discusses the dynamics that influence the research process through the analysis of how supervisors behave when their students take part in research activities. One of the main points discussed in the paper is the role played by the supervisor as a mentor and teacher. Successful student research relies entirely on how well the supervisor offers help to the student. Creating a scholarly and intellectual environment is highly valued in this study. The capacity for critical thinking and doing research is greatly improved when supervisors engage actively with their students, giving guidance but not restricting innovation. Secondly, this research shows how important oversight is for maintaining the credibility of the research undertaking. The role of the supervisors



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in overseeing the research is critical since they are supposed to ensure that the research undertaken adheres to academic brilliance and ethics. Academic ethics form part of the structure of oversight and guiding research. From the results generated from the research, it is evident that institutions should accord priority to competent oversight. Some of the measures that can be taken include ensuring effective mentoring, creating a culture of collaboration among others.

In conclusion, by demonstrating the important role played by supervision in the current status of research work, this study contributes to the comprehension of the supervisor student relationship. We provide the necessary conditions for creating an inspiring, stimulating, and ethically positive research atmosphere that will shape the future academic community and increase knowledge through the interplay of supervision and guidance.

Recommendations

1. Establish open communication channels between supervisors and students.
2. Provide cultural competency training for the supervisor in order to establish an inclusive environment for conducting research.
3. Use technology to provide adequate supervision despite being remote.
4. Students should be encouraged through the supervisory process to develop autonomy and self sufficiency.
5. Ethical guidelines for supervision must be adhered to.

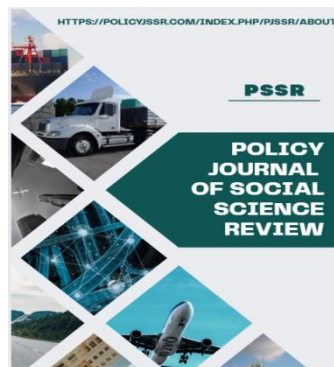
. Offer resources for emotional support to address the psychological aspects of research engagement.

. Facilitate cross disciplinary collaboration to enrich the research experience.

. Establish mentorship networks within institutions for knowledge sharing and effective supervisory practices.

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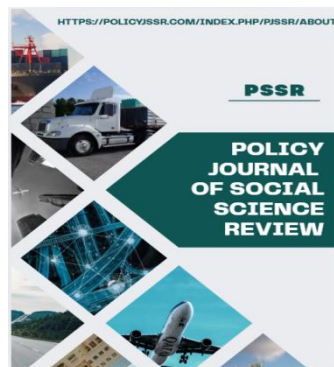


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