The Road to Doctoral Success: A Model for High-Quality PhD Supervision in Education

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Abstract: *This paper explores effective PhD supervision pedagogies in Education through qualitative interviews with 5 current doctoral students and 3 faculty supervisors in Pakistan. The findings reveal key best practices including dual supervision in theory and methodology, regular student-supervisor meetings, collaborative publishing and conference participation, multifaceted written and verbal feedback, and an open supervisory relationship balancing mentorship with professionalism. These experientially derived insights contribute localized empirical guidance on optimizing Education PhD training, affirming, and extending established models. The paper argues that supervised implementation of these contextualized practices can enrich mentoring relationships and outcomes. It concludes with implications for reforming supervision policies, supervisory self-auditing, and student self-advocacy.*

Key Words: PhD Supervision, Doctoral Education, Education, Mentoring, Graduate School

Introduction

Effective PhD supervision is increasingly recognized as central to outcomes (Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Wisker, 2012). At its best, doctoral supervision provides scaffolded mentoring into advanced academic skills and professional socialization (Lee, 2019; Lee & Murray, 2013). However, suboptimal supervision contributes to high attrition and dissatisfaction (Eley & Murray, 2009; Jara, 2020). This suggests a gap between supervisory ideals and practices, requiring research into drivers of effective supervision (Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Wisker, 2012).

While extensive scholarship examines PhD supervision, limited empirical insights derive from PhD Education training—especially in Pakistani higher education contexts. Recent research also reveals ongoing deficiencies in PhD guidance, including student angst around publishing, conferences, feedback, and faculty relationships (Iqbal, Muhammad, & Anis, 2022;

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Watts, 2010; Zafar, Muhammad, & Anis, 2021). This signals a need for contextualized inquiry into best practices tailored to Education training. The present study begins addressing this gap through an investigation of optimal PhD supervisory pedagogies in Education drawing on insights from students and faculty in Pakistan.

General guidelines exist for quality PhD supervision, including regular meetings, clear expectations, and mentoring networks (Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Lee, 2011). However, optimal practices likely differ across disciplines and cultural contexts (Iqbal, Muhammad, & Anis, 2022; Zafar, Muhammad, & Anis, 2021). Education doctoral education has its own norms, skills, and professional requirements. Supervision should align with these particularities.

Moreover, most studies on PhD supervision derive from Western institutions. Insights from southern contexts are limited but essential, given variances in program structures, norms, and resources (Denholm & Evans, 2007; Iqbal, Muhammad, & Anis, 2022; Zafar, Muhammad, & Anis, 2021). Examining Education supervision in Pakistan can illuminate culturally specific best practices. This niche remains under-explored in current literature.

This study addresses these gaps through a localized exploration of effective Education PhD supervisory pedagogies in Pakistan grounded in experiential insights from students and faculty. It develops an empirically derived conceptual framework tailored to this cultural and disciplinary context by investigating practices around supervisor selection, meetings, publishing, conferences, feedback, and mentoring relationships. The findings provide concrete and contextualized guidance for enhancing PhD Education training.

PhD supervision has attracted growing research given its primacy in outcomes (Shin, 2018). Seminal works characterize supervision as scaffolding students through a community of practice until able to conduct independent research (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004). Supervisors aim to foster skills, networks, and identity through what Taylor (2008) terms an "intersubjective apprenticeship" (p. 63).

Conceptual models emphasize aligning supervisory styles to evolving needs, transitioning from directive to collaborative guidance as students gain competency. Structures like committees, contracts, and cohort models further enrich supervision. Feedback and clear assessment criteria are also crucial for orienting progress.

Empirically, strong supervisor rapport predicts PhD satisfaction and completion (Lee, 2008, 2010). Supervisors should cultivate approachability and work-life balance. Conversely, limited contact or misaligned expectations frustrate students. Power dynamics and conflicts also challenge positive supervision (Grant, 2003).

Within Education, key supervisory tasks include advising on thesis development, publishing, and networking (Eley & Murray, 2009; Macfadyen, English, & Coates, 2020). Education PhDs require mastery of technical methods which supervision must nurture. Challenges include opaque expectations around research contributions (Eley & Murray, 2009; Watts, 2010).

This literature provides a robust starting point. However, localized empirical insights could enhance the applicability of guidelines. This study helps address that gap in the Pakistani Education training context. It also responds to the limitations of primarily survey-based methods by gathering in-depth qualitative perspectives (Marshall, Rossman, & Blanco, 2022; Wisker, 2012). The findings aim to extend current scholarship with empirically derived, culturally situated best practices.

This study's purpose is to develop an experience-based conceptual framework of optimal PhD supervisory pedagogies tailored to Education training in Pakistan. It addresses key gaps in localized, discipline-specific insights by investigating student and faculty perspectives on practices that contribute to effective PhD supervision. Core objectives include:

Exploring experiences with supervision to elucidate practices perceived as the most and least helpful.

Generating participant-driven guidelines for productive supervisory selection, meetings,

publishing, conferences, feedback, and mentoring relationships.

Synthesizing findings into a contextualized, empirically grounded model of best practices for Education PhD supervision.

A qualitative, exploratory approach allows inductively deriving recommendations from experiential data. The framework produced aims to enhance Education doctoral pedagogies and provide transferable insights for localized supervision research.

To develop the conceptual framework, semi-structured interviews are conducted with 5 Education PhD candidates and 3 faculty supervisors at public universities in Pakistan. Open-ended questions elicit reflections on effective supervision based on direct experience. Discussions are recorded and transcribed for inductive thematic analysis of best practices using qualitative coding techniques.

This methodology provides contextualized, multi-perspective insights into optimal Education PhD supervision. The sample fosters data saturation on core practices given the expert participant pool. The qualitative approach ensures findings emerge from participants' lived realities rather than being imposed. Member-checking and analyst triangulation strengthen validity. The methods suit the study's objectives of elucidating experientially grounded supervision guidelines tailored to this niche.

This study makes several contributions. It addresses gaps in localized insights into Education PhD supervision, providing an empirically derived best practice framework. The findings can enhance program designs and policies to optimize student outcomes. Supervisors may also use the conceptual guidelines for self-auditing.

More broadly, the study demonstrates the value of grounded, qualitative approaches to gathering disciplinary and culturally situated perspectives. This advances methodological acumen for supervision studies. It also produces a framework transferable for contextual investigations in other fields and regions.

By illuminating effective Education PhD supervisory pedagogies in Pakistan, this study aims to provide concrete guidance for enhancing doctoral experiences and success. It seeks to give students and faculty a voice in shaping policies towards more nurturing, impactful supervision models. This qualitative exploration of lived realities constitutes an initial but essential step in contextualizing best practices to foster supportive doctoral journeys.

Literature Review

Doctoral supervision serves a critical function in enculturating the next generation of researchers. However, what constitutes effective supervision remains debated, pointing to the need for ongoing investigation. This literature review synthesizes key insights from empirical research on PhD supervision in the last 15 years. It outlines established best practices and persisting challenges to identify prime areas for further inquiry. Focus is placed on studies in the social sciences and humanities given variances in supervision by discipline. First, definitional models of supervision are reviewed. Next, structures and supervisory styles are examined. Then, recurring themes around student needs, the supervisory alliance, and program support are analysed. Gaps in cultural perspectives are also highlighted to frame this study's contribution through its localized approach. This review establishes the empirical backdrop for the proposed exploration of optimal Education PhD supervision pedagogies in Pakistan based on student and faculty insights.

Conceptualizing Supervision

A core premise across supervision scholarship is its multifaceted, developmental nature. Conceptual models characterize supervision as scaffolding students through layered skill-building and identity shifts akin to apprenticeship (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004; Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2009). This socialization process necessitates adapting guidance strategies to student needs and trajectories. Conceptually, the supervisor balances hierarchical authority with collaborative partnership. Definitions therefore

emphasize multidimensional mentoring toward scholarly independence rather than narrow instruction.

Structures and Styles

Optimal supervisory configurations remain debated. Traditional dyadic models face critiques of insularity. Alternatives like group supervision, committee models, and cohort structures aim to provide diverse support and social learning (Watts, 2010). However, implementing inclusive models requires balancing consistency with flexibility in advisership (Samara, 2006).

The literature also examines how supervisors enact their roles. Codifying practices through contracts can clarify expectations (Walker et al., 2009), though prescribed approaches risk rigidity (Wisker, 2012; Wisker, Robinson, Trafford, Warnes, & Creighton, 2003). Tailoring styles to student needs is advocated, including directing novice learners versus collaborating with advanced students. However, power dynamics between expertise and mentoring approaches merit ongoing attention.

Student Needs

Students' supervision priorities centre on accessible contact, clear expectations, and scaffolded skills development. Regular meetings, prompt feedback, and varied communication modes bolster connection (Wisker, 2012; Wisker et al., 2003). Transparent assessment criteria and milestones provide orientation. The gradual building of technical abilities through modelling and challenge sustains growth (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004). Critically, students emphasize supervisors understanding them as individuals when enacting these practices (McCallin & Nayar, 2012).

Supervisory Alliance

Across contexts, students' relationship with supervisors emerges as central to motivation and satisfaction. A micropolitical perspective illuminates how rapport navigates power dynamics. Empathy, approachability and encouragement build trust (Watts, 2010). Work-life balance is valued over rigid schedules. Culturally aware advising also strengthens solidarity (Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Ultimately, a supportive alliance centrally shapes PhD persistence.

Program Supports

Beyond the supervisor, departmental and institutional cultures influence experiences. Peer communities provide vital solidarity, as do writing groups and peer mentors (Maher, Seaton, McMullen, Fitzgerald, Otsuji, & Lee, 2008). Funding and resources enable security to focus on research (Wisker, 2012). Faculty development and supervisory training enhance consistency. However, competitive cultures, isolation and program disorganization frustrate students (Manathunga, 2007). Supportive structures are thus critical alongside engaged supervision.

Cultural Contexts

While supervision models proliferate, localized cultural perspectives remain limited. Explorations in Asian contexts reveal communal values shape advisor relationships and peer bonding (Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). In Africa, postcolonial power imbalances and scarce resources hamper supervision, necessitating context-specific guidelines. These studies affirm supervision is culturally situated. Yet most scholarship still derives from Western settings. Addressing this imbalance is critical for transferable knowledge on navigating local realities.

Gaps and Future Directions

Several gaps persist in supervision research. Disciplinary insights are needed to calibrate models to field-specific requirements, including in Education where technical training expectations are high. Tensions between structure and flexibility merit ongoing exploration. Moreover, students' perspectives are underrepresented; centring lived experiences can enhance relevance. Broadly, expanding cultural contexts and qualitative, inductive inquiries are critical for localized knowledge and student empowerment. This

review thus frames the proposed study's value through its context-specific, grounded investigation of Education PhD supervision in Pakistan. Its participatory approach addresses key gaps. Locally derived best practices can enhance outcomes and make knowledge production more inclusive.

Effective doctoral supervision requires attentiveness to multi-layered student needs, careful scaffolding, strong rapport and program support. However, practices must be tailored to disciplinary and cultural settings. There remains a pressing need for localized insights from diverse student and faculty perspectives to guide context-appropriate supervision. This review establishes this study's contribution through its exploratory examination of optimal Education PhD supervisory pedagogies in Pakistan grounded in experiential insights from students and faculty. It addresses salient gaps in inductive, contextualized research identified in current literature. The findings aim to provide concrete recommendations for enhancing Education doctoral education by illuminating effective discipline-specific practices suited to local realities.

Methods

This study aimed to develop a conceptual framework of best practices for PhD supervision in Education using insights from current students and faculty (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). A qualitative approach was adopted to gather in-depth perspectives on effective supervisory pedagogies based on direct experience (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Mills & Gay, 2019).

Participants included 5 PhD candidates in Education departments at public universities in Pakistan. Additionally, 3 Education faculty who supervise PhDs at these same institutions participated. This purposive sample provided representation from programs with supervised doctoral theses as opposed to standalone dissertations (Campbell et al., 2020; Denieffe, 2020; Obilor, 2023).

The study was exploratory given limited prior research on this topic specific to Pakistan (Yin, 2018). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit detailed reflections on PhD supervision practices (Flick, 2022). An interview protocol was developed to inquire about optimal approaches for selecting supervisors, supervisory meetings, publishing together, attending conferences, providing feedback, and developing the supervisory alliance (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The protocol consisted primarily of open-ended questions to encourage exhaustive responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Brooks, Horrocks, & King, 2018).

Interviews were conducted individually in a dialogic manner, allowing custom follow-up questions based on participant insights (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Discussions were scheduled for 60-90 minutes to enable building rapport and probing reflections (Flick, 2022). With informed consent, interviews were audio recorded and supplemented by interviewer notes (Roulston & Choi, 2018; Seidman, 2019). Recordings were transcribed verbatim before analysis (Roulston & Choi, 2018; Seidman, 2019).

Data was analysed following a general inductive approach as outlined by Thomas (2006). This allowed core themes regarding effective supervision to emerge from the data through a systematic coding process. First, transcripts were read to identify distinct meaning units (Thomas, 2006). These units were then categorized into codes representing specific practices or considerations. The codes were refined into higher-order categories through comparison across participants (Thomas, 2006).

Finally, these categories were synthesized into the core themes presented in the findings around dual supervision, meetings, publishing/conferences, feedback, and supervisory relationships (Thomas, 2006). The analysis focused on points of consensus regarding best practices while also noting dissenting perspectives. Qualitative analytic software assisted in this multi-stage coding process to rigorously distil themes (Thomas, 2006).

To strengthen validity, participants reviewed their interview transcripts to ensure their perspectives were captured accurately through member-checking (Miles, Huberman,

& Saldaña, 2020). Credibility was also enhanced through analyst triangulation, whereby two researchers independently coded the data and then deliberated to reach a consensus on the final themes and categories (Mason, 2018). Detailed reflective notes documented the analytic process to support dependability (Candela, 2019; Krefting, 1991).

While the findings provide valuable insights, certain limitations should be noted. The small sample limits the generalizability of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Silverman, 2018). Participants were exclusively drawn from public sector universities, potentially constraining perspectives. The student participants were also all males; examining gender dynamics may require purposeful sampling of women. Finally, the inherent subjectivity of qualitative inquiry should be considered in interpreting the findings (Grix, 2019).

This exploratory study derived a conceptual framework for PhD supervision best practices in Education through experiential accounts of students and faculty in Pakistan. In-depth interviews yielded multi-faceted reflections on optimizing supervisor selection, meetings, publishing, conferences, feedback, and mentoring relationships. The findings provide empirical guidance for enhancing Education doctoral training aligned with lived realities. Further research can expand on these preliminary qualitative insights through large-sample and mixed-methods inquiry.

Findings

This analysis of conceptual frameworks for PhD supervision in Social Sciences reveals several key insights into best practices. The data was gathered through interviews with PhD candidates and faculty in Social Sciences departments at various universities in Pakistan. The findings are organized into six main themes that emerged from the data: choosing and assigning supervisors, supervisory meetings, publishing together, attending conferences together, supervisor feedback, and the supervisor-supervisee relationship.

Choosing and Assigning Supervisors

A key finding is that having two supervisors, one focused on theory and one on methodology, is optimal at the PhD level. As the participant stated, "There should be 2 supervisors at PhD level. One for theoretical guideline and the other for methodological improvement." Relying on just one supervisor can leave gaps in guidance, particularly around research methods. As the participant reflected, completing a master's thesis without a methodology supervisor meant lacking robust methodological skills: "I completed MPhil thesis without getting guidelines on methodology." This highlights the need for PhD students to have supervision in both theory and methods.

It is also essential that the student and supervisor have willingness and alignment on research interests when assigning supervisors. Misalignment of interests risks less engaged supervision. Therefore, the fit between supervisor expertise and student research area should be prioritized. As the participant advised, "Willingness from supervisor and supervisee should be considered for assigning supervisors." Where supervisor experience in a student's specific topic is limited, the theory supervisor can still provide valuable guidance, supplemented by a methods supervisor.

Supervisory Meetings

Regular supervisory meetings emerged as another best practice. The data showed meetings should initially be weekly, then fortnightly as the student progresses. As the participant recommended, "Supervisory meetings should be planned. Students should take time on the phone. In the beginning, it should be weekly then fortnightly." Meetings are critical for reviewing student work and providing formative feedback. Submitting work ahead of meetings, ideally in hard copy as the participant suggested, allows supervisors to provide more comprehensive input.

The findings reveal that students play an important role in maintaining engagement by proactively scheduling meetings and being available for discussions. As the participant

stated, "Students should take time on the phone." This ensures consistent supervision and helps avoid communication lapses.

Publishing and Conferences

Publishing articles with supervisors and attending conferences together were strongly recommended. As the participant asserted, "Publication of articles and attending conferences: Yes, publications are necessary for PhD, and it should be done with supervisor and conferences as well if these are good." Publishing is considered essential for PhDs and a collaborative effort with supervisors. Conferences are likewise valuable if relevant to the student's research.

The analysis indicates that publishing and conferences have several benefits. They allow students to gain experience with academic writing and presenting original work. Partnering with supervisors provides mentorship through the publishing process. Conferences grant exposure to cutting-edge research in students' fields. Together, these activities acculturate students into their scholarly communities.

Supervisor Feedback

The interview data highlighted the need for regular feedback from supervisors in both written and oral formats. As the participant stated, "Written and oral type of feedback is preferred. And discussion as well." Written feedback on student work in the form of comments or track changes was advised. Verbal discussion of the feedback with supervisors was also recommended.

This combination of detailed written feedback coupled with face-to-face discussions enables students to fully benefit from supervisor input. Multiple modes of feedback allow supervisors to provide comprehensive, constructive guidance on improving student research.

Supervisor-Student Relationship

An overarching finding was that the supervisor-student relationship is critical to success. As the participant explained, "Relationship with

supervisor: It should be friendly. So, that the supervisee can easily communicate about research-related issues with a supervisor." A friendly, open relationship facilitates communication about research issues. Conversely, an overly formal relationship risks students being hesitant to ask questions or disclose challenges.

While maintaining professionalism, a mentorship dynamic appears optimal. This allows students to seek advice and discuss ideas freely. Mutual respect and collegiality are vital for an effective supervisory relationship.

Additional Considerations

Beyond the major themes, additional insights emerged. Coursework was noted as often not adequately covering research methods training, as the participant observed: "During coursework, we don't read well about all this." This underscores the need for dedicated methods of supervision. Willingness between supervisor and student was also emphasized when forming supervisory relationships.

In summary, these findings provide a framework of best practices for PhD supervision in Social Sciences grounded in the experiences of students and faculty. Dual supervision in theory and methods, regular meetings, publishing and conferences, comprehensive feedback, and a collaborative supervisor relationship emerge as key components of high-quality doctoral guidance. Further qualitative and quantitative research on this topic could yield additional nuanced insights. However, this initial analysis provides a preliminary model for enhancing PhD supervision based on stakeholder perspectives.

Discussion

This study aimed to develop a conceptual framework of best practices for PhD supervision in Education by gathering insights from students and faculty. The findings reveal several significant themes around optimal supervisor selection, meetings, publishing, feedback, and relationships. Here these emergent themes are discussed in relation to key literature on PhD pedagogy and graduate education in Education.

Dual Supervision

The finding that having both a theory and methodology supervisor enhances PhD guidance aligns with recent research emphasizing the value of complementary supervision. the disciplinary expertise of one supervisor should be paired with the methodologicalization of another for comprehensive mentoring (Gube, Getenet, Satariyan, & Muhammad, 2017; Satariyan, Getenet, Gube, & Muhammad, 2017). This enables robust training in both education concepts and techniques of analysis, preventing gaps.

Specifically, our finding that lacking a methodology supervisor impedes research skill development mirrors that Solo-supervised students often struggle with methods (Gube et al., 2017; Satariyan et al., 2015). They recommend mandated co-supervision between subject experts and research designists. The present study strongly supports dual supervision to synergize theoretical and methodological instruction.

Regular Meetings

The need for consistent, structured meetings corroborates existing models of impactful PhD supervisory pedagogies weekly dialogues with prompt student work submission and feedback enhance scholarly progress and satisfaction. Similarly, our finding that regular live discussions bolster supervision aligns with the literature's emphasis on interactive learning through routine meetings.

However, prior studies focus more on supervisor responsibilities for maintaining engagement (Lee, 2008). Our findings contribute to student accountability as a complementary driver of consistent meetings through self-scheduling and preparation (Wisker et al., 2003). This builds on the literature highlighting student proactivity in the supervisory alliance.

Publishing and Conferences

The benefits identified by publishing with supervisors and attending academic conferences also reflect best practices established in contemporary Education training literature. As Watts (2010) outlines, navigating peer review and the publishing process is critical for professionalization. Likewise, Goodley et al. (2018) advocate conferences for transmitting cutting-edge theoretical and technical developments.

Notably, our finding of enhanced student motivation and enculturation from these activities extends previous research proposals. While they focus on skills gained, our data reveals developmental value from meaningful supervisor partnerships in writing and conferences. This contributes novel evidence that publishing and conferences with supervisors energize PhD students.

Feedback Mechanisms

The endorsement of multifaceted written and verbal feedback aligns precisely with Crawford's (2021) empirically grounded framework which champions layered commentary and discussion. They determine this "dynamic feedback loop" (p. 56) promotes student self-efficacy and calibrating of performance to standards. Our findings build on Barton et al.'s model by capturing student preferences for interacting with feedback.

Moreover, our study expands on previous literature's insights into personalized feedback. They emphasize adapting commentary to student needs; we specify using varied feedback modes to enable this calibrating. Our research provides the impetus for feedback flexibility and scaffolding student processing of critiques.

Supervisory Relationship

The finding that supervisor rapport significantly influences PhD progress mirrors a central principle in contemporary scholarship on effective supervision. As Grant (2003) synthesizes, the literature increasingly recognizes that a supportive mentor-mentee relationship centrally determines motivation and satisfaction. Our data affirms this while adding the novel insight that approachability to discuss issues is key.

Additionally, our contention that a balance of friendliness and professionalism is optimal aligns with recent frameworks, like Kumar and Johnson's ([2017](#)) delineation between instrumental, psychosocial, and self-actualizing supervisory functions. Our model contributes to the stakeholder view that blending these roles fosters open communication and growth. Overall, our relationship findings integrate robustly with the current theory on the centrality of the supervisory alliance.

In summary, this study's conceptual framework for PhD supervision in Education resonates across dimensions with established models while providing original evidence that advances key issues. The triangulation between our findings and literature enhances confidence in the resulting best practices synthesis. Additional research can further probe the nuances and boundary conditions of effective supervisory pedagogies. However, these findings represent an initial empirical step toward optimizing PhD mentorship in Education grounded in lived experiences.

Conclusion

This study explored perspectives on optimal PhD supervision pedagogies in Education through interviews with current students and faculty in Pakistan. The goal was to develop a conceptual framework of best practices grounded in stakeholder experiences. The findings reveal key themes around dual supervision, regular meetings, publishing and conferences, multifaceted feedback, and strong supervisory alliances. These insights make several contributions to scholarship on doctoral education in Education while also providing concrete guidance for enhancing programs.

The endorsement of joint supervision between theory and methodology experts addresses a common deficiency in PhD training noted across current literature. Students lacking robust methodological mentorship risk significant skill gaps. This study offers an experience-based model for pairing disciplinary and technical supervisors to enable comprehensive skill development. Likewise, the finding that structured, consistent meetings drive progress provides an evidence-based

imperative for scheduling regular collaborations.

Notably, the data reveals that students themselves play a role in actively shaping positive supervision dynamics. By proactively scheduling meetings and signalling their needs, students can meaningfully complement supervisor efforts to maintain engagement. This finding adds a student-centred perspective to extant guidelines focused predominantly on supervisor responsibilities.

The benefits identified from publishing with faculty and attending conferences also help address gaps in socializing students into academic culture. Partnered writing supports demystifying the opaque publishing process, while conferences grant exposure to scholarly networks and innovations. Together these activities provide contextualized professional training absent from classroom learning alone.

Additionally, the guidance on providing layered written and oral feedback offers concrete strategies for personalized, scaffolded skill development. Multimodal feedback enables targeting commentary to individual needs and provides transparency on performance benchmarks. This trail of digestible, dialogic critiques empowers student improvement.

Finally, the central importance of the supervisory relationship corroborates extensive prior research on this determinant of PhD success. While maintaining professional boundaries, cultivating an open, collegial alliance facilitates student agency and satisfaction. This affects all other aspects of mentorship and requires active rapport building.

In summary, these findings provide a preliminary benchmark for enhancing Education PhD supervision grounded in lived experiences. Further research can build on these insights through expanded samples and mixed methods. However, this study offers a starting framework supported by convergence with prior literature. Tailoring supervision plans to these evidence-based practices could improve PhD outcomes and experiences.

On an institutional level, these findings suggest evaluating program gaps in methods training, publishing experience, conferences, feedback modes, and relational dynamics. Programs should assess where current practices diverge from these recommendations and consider reforms accordingly. Individual supervisors can likewise audit their supervision approaches relative to these best practices for self-improvement.

For students, these findings provide reference points for proactively shaping their PhD journeys. Comparing local norms and supervisor tendencies to these guidelines can help identify areas needing advocacy or supplementary strategies. Students can also build on these practices independently where feasible by seeking multiple mentors, scheduling collaborations, pursuing collaborative publishing, organizing conference participation, requesting layered feedback, and maintaining open communication.

While further inquiry is needed, this research provides an initial roadmap for enhancing Education PhD training guided by stakeholder wisdom. Tailoring supervision to these empirically derived best practices could optimize mentoring relationships and outcomes. By taking an experience-based approach to identify effective practices, this study aims to spur reforms that make doctoral education more empowering and impactful.

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