

# Building a Postgraduate Supervision Model for Student Success in South Africa: How Masters and Doctoral Students' Experiences can Assist?

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**Abstract:** A critical gap exists in South African higher education research on postgraduate supervision models. Research emphasis is placed in administrative aspects over the supervision praxis for student throughput. This paper investigates an effective postgraduate supervision model in South Africa to enhance student success. The literature underscores the need for an approach that balances the teaching and the supervising of research. Supervision is a supportive and collaborative journey between the student and the supervisor. However, there are complexities of postgraduate supervision pedagogy that are hardly explored in South Africa - the quality of supervision, time-to-degree, throughput rates, and perceived organisational support. Therefore, inadequate understanding of the elements constitutes supervision relationships issues for masters and doctoral students. Current practice falls short of addressing supervision praxis which necessitated this study to explore a tailored model of supervision. Therefore, how can experiences of masters, doctoral candidates and graduates assist to explain and propose an optimal postgraduate research supervision model that best supports the student success rates in South African universities? As a constructivist designed study, a quantitative digital survey and a snowball sampling method were used targeting masters and doctoral candidates and graduates across private and public universities in South Africa. An online survey was designed and administered using Microsoft Forms to over 500 participants. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted measuring position in percentile rankings. Results elucidate the nature and main feature of postgraduate supervisory relationships in South Africa. We found that a postgraduate research supervision model can be tailored to the South African context, and we contribute to the development of postgraduate supervision model as pedagogical tool related to metacognitive strategies and humanising pedagogy for research supervisors and students.

**Keywords:** Cohort model, Humanising education, Humanising pedagogy, Postgraduate supervision model, South Africa, Student success

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## 1. Introduction

Postgraduate supervision faces diverse challenges and strategies, varying between masters and doctoral levels. Evolving supervisory roles and administrative challenges impact supervision practices in postgraduate education. This paper investigates supervision models to enhance postgraduate success rates in South Africa. It examines the dynamics between supervisors and students using empirical evidence to develop a conducive supervision model for South Africa. Our findings aim to improve strategies for academic supervisors guiding postgraduate students. The paper includes a background on postgraduate supervision, contextual analysis, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, results, findings discussion, and conclusion. The next section is the background.

## 2. Background to the Study

Goolam Mohamedbhai (2022) indicates that South Africa aimed to increase PhD graduates to 100 per million by 2030 from 28. By 2017, progress was evident with 54 PhD graduates per million and 3,057 annually. Research on postgraduate supervision in South Africa highlights the lingering effects of apartheid's "legacy of disempowerment and dehumanisation" (Zinn & Rodgers, 2012) experienced by postgraduate students. However, the quality assessment of supervision remains unclear, and there is no effective supervision model. Madondo (2021) explores the use of pedagogical knowledge in postgraduate supervision within South African business management education, concluding that teaching research methodology and supervising research are interconnected yet distinct, forming opposite ends of a continuum. This divide hinders postgraduate research success. Madondo (2021) proposes a balanced supervision strategy incorporating both teaching research methodology and supervising research to achieve the goal of 100 PhD graduates per million by 2030. McCallin and Nayar (2012) identified changes in postgraduate research programme funding and delivery that influence university supervision practices in New Zealand. They emphasise the importance of faculty development, supervision pedagogy, supervision models, and supervisor education in establishing a knowledge economy. A comprehensive supervision model can thus enhance postgraduate education. Additionally, Chugh, Macht, and Harreveld (2022) examined supervisors' feedback to postgraduate students. In the context of online supervision,

feedback processes often involve diverse professional, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, ongoing research into improving supervision feedback practices is crucial in the globalised and technologically mediated research education landscape. In South African universities, various supervision challenges impact postgraduate students' experiences, including supervision quality, time-to-degree, throughput rates, supervisor effectiveness, and organisational support (Chireshe, 2012; Holtman & Mukwada, 2014; Cekiso et al., 2019; Wadesango & Machingambi, 2011; Wanyama & Eyamu, 2021). Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) emphasise the importance of effective communication, mutual respect, and guidance in fostering productive supervision relationships. Supervisors need the necessary skills and knowledge to support students effectively. Chireshe (2012) highlights that successful supervision involves communication, guidance, and mentorship. Holtman and Mukwada (2014) discuss the impact of supervision quality on time-to-degree and throughput rates, emphasising the need for improved practices. Cekiso et al. (2019) explore students' perceptions of supervisor support, noting the benefits of strong supervisor-student relationships. Wanyama and Eyamu (2021) examine the role of institutional support in influencing student experiences and completion rates, advocating for a supportive environment to enhance the research journey.

Postgraduate supervision is vital for creating knowledge, fostering a knowledgeable society, and supporting knowledge-based economies. Postgraduate students and their supervisors are central to this process. Master's and doctoral students rely heavily on supportive supervision for their success. However, there are few theoretical models explaining postgraduate supervision as a pedagogic tool in South Africa. Existing theories are rarely applied to real supervision challenges faced by students and supervisors. This study examines postgraduate students' experiences with their supervisors in the South African context addressing both theoretical and practical knowledge gaps. It proposes a tailored postgraduate supervision model for South African universities and provides theoretical insights and practical evidence to support future postgraduate education and supervision as a humanising pedagogy in South African higher education. The next section analyses the context in which postgraduate supervision is practised.

### **3. Contextual Analysis**

Zinn and Rodger (2012) argue that South Africa's legacy of disempowerment and dehumanisation, especially in education, urgently needs repair. Despite progress towards democracy, higher education remains a battleground for building voices, agency, and community. Traditional one-on-one supervision perpetuates power imbalances and disempowerment in postgraduate education. South Africa's low annual PhD graduation rates reflect this ongoing struggle (Zinn & Rodger, 2012; Goolam Mohamedbhai, 2022). The CHE's Briefly Speaking No.25 (September 2023) highlights the need for a research-rich culture in postgraduate education. Traditional one-on-one supervision is insufficient for fostering this culture. The National Development Plan 2030 calls for innovative strategies to enhance doctoral production amid higher education transformation (Motshoane & McKenna, 2021). High student-to-supervisor ratios and uneven workload distribution strain academic responsibilities and achieving expected doctoral production (CHE, 2023). The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework recognises the specialised and demanding nature of postgraduate supervision (Motshoane & McKenna, 2021; Connell & Manathunga, 2012; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2011). Current supervision frameworks focus on monitoring progress and timely completion but lack flexible supportive workload models (CHE, 2023). Despite institutional reforms, apartheid's legacy continues to create disparities in resource allocation and support across universities (Zinn & Rodger, 2012; Motshoane & McKenna, 2021; Bunting, 2002; CHE, 2000). This legacy affects supervision development initiatives, highlighting the need for institutional support to empower emerging supervisors (Motshoane & McKenna, 2021; CHE, 2023). The CHE (2023) recognises that there are innovative supervision models such as cohort approaches and interdisciplinary teams. These models support diverse research and reduce power imbalances between supervisors and students. They provide varied expertise and comprehensive guidance addressing historical inequities and fostering a vibrant postgraduate research environment in line with global standards. The next section is a review of literature on postgraduate supervision.

### **4. Literature Review**

This reviewing of literature draws from a thematic analysis approach leading to sufficient explanation of the reality in postgraduate supervision.

#### **4.1 Relationships, Barriers and Cultural Dynamics**

Postgraduate supervision demands intensive academic relationships. Adedokun and Oyetunde-Joshua (2024) emphasise the importance of one-on-one relationships between the role of supervisors and the students. Thus,

while the supervisors' roles are vital in supporting students, they must be examined from the students' perspectives (Adedokun & Oyetunde-Joshua, 2024). Understanding students' experiences is essential for improving supervisory practices. The intensive supervision relationship can offer tailored support and mentorship, yet it also requires significant personal and academic investment from both parties. Mncina, Letsie, Nkhi, and Mofana (2024) highlight how cultural, ethnic, and educational backgrounds complicate effective communication in South Africa and Lesotho. This insight shows that postgraduate supervision relationships face communication barriers and cultural dynamics impacting on students' academic success (Mncina et al., 2024). Adedokun and Oyetunde-Joshua (2024) emphasise the need for supervisory styles tailored to students' needs, while Mncina et al. (2024) stress the importance of cultural competence in overcoming these communication challenges. Effective supervision requires supervisors to have cultural competences to manage cultural differences and to create supportive academic environments. However, the scalability of such personalised supervision models is problematic in resource-limited contexts or where student-to-supervisor ratios are high. This is a common issue in South African higher education. This challenge suggests that institutions need for alternative supervisory models and professional development with intercultural communication competencies. Adopt more flexible strategies to effectively address supervisory challenges.

#### **4.2 Institutional Concerns and Growth Mindsets**

Ferreira-Meyers (2022) examines how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the shifts to online supervision affect postgraduate students' progress. A concern is about research quality and completion delays. Gausdal and Svendsen (2023) advocate for fostering a growth mindset among doctoral supervisors. Scholars suggest that institutional support can improve supervisors' ability to support student development and adapt to supervisory challenges (Gausdal & Svendsen, 2023). According to Ferreira-Meyers (2022) the shift to online supervision reveals gaps in engagement and research quality. This calls for research and reassessment supervisory practices. Therefore, institutions should invest in robust online tools and supervisor training to address supervisory issues (Ferreira-Meyers, 2022; Gausdal & Svendsen, 2023). Developing flexible supervisory frameworks and promoting a growth mindset among supervisors in the evolving academic contexts can enhance adaptability and continuous learning (Gausdal & Svendsen, 2023). Overall, there are approaches that can empower supervisors to better handle the changing contexts and diverse supervisory challenges in postgraduate supervision.

#### **4.3 Mentorship, Shared Wisdom, Team**

Maguire, Anderson, and Chavez (2024) highlight the value of mentorship among women in academia for navigating challenges. This aligns with Muda et al. (2020) on developmental supervision and Johansen et al. (2019) and Robertson (2017) on team supervision dynamics. Largely, multiple supervisors contribute to the doctoral journey and enhance credibility. According to Maguire et al. (2024) the role of mentorship in supporting women in academia it is overcoming systemic barriers. This insight aligns with developmental supervision which focuses on personal growth. The team supervision model offers diverse expertise and distributing responsibilities and serves as an alternative to traditional one-on-one approaches (Johansen et al., 2019; Robertson, 2017). However, successful implementation of mentorship and team model is found to require clearly defined roles and coordination among academic members to avoid conflicts and ensure cohesive support for the students.

#### **4.4 Research Pedagogical Concerns**

Muthanna and Alduais (2021) highlight the vital role supervisors play in upholding research integrity. Scholars emphasise supervisors' responsibility in guiding students through ethical dilemmas and ensuring adherence to research standards. Zeegers and Barron (2012) argue that effective postgraduate supervision should involve active teaching and learning engagement. Thus, it is vital to integrate research integrity with pedagogical focus to foster an environment of mutual growth and adherence to standards in the postgraduate students (Zeegers & Barron, 2012; Muthanna & Alduais, 2021). However, implementing this approach remains an academic challenge and a site of struggle in postgraduate education.

#### **4.5 Summary of Literature**

The review of literature on postgraduate supervision in South Africa reveals a multifaceted landscape of postgraduate education challenges and strategies. Effective postgraduate supervision models need to be adaptable, culturally sensitive, and capable of leveraging both individual and team-based approaches. Higher education institutions in South Africa must invest in resources, training and development to support supervisors and students alike, and to foster environments conducive to student success and ethical research practices. The evolving nature of postgraduate education demands continuous reflection and adaptation of postgraduate

supervisory practices to meet the diverse and changing needs of masters and doctoral students in South Africa. The next section is the theoretical framework analysis.

### 5. Theoretical Framework

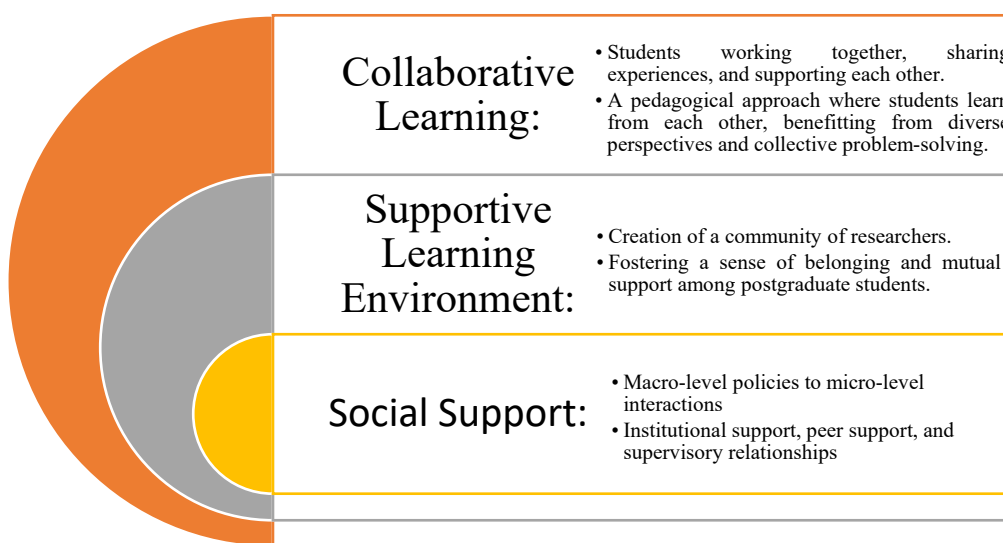
The landscape of postgraduate supervision, particularly knowledge and theoretical gaps within the South African context, is underpinned by various theoretical perspectives in fostering student success. Table 1 below presents unique lenses through which to understand the dynamics of postgraduate supervision.

**Table 1: Theoretical Framing**

Theorist (s)	Theory	Explanation
<b>Boud and Lee (2005)</b>	Peer learning theory	The potential of collaborative learning among students is a pivotal element of the pedagogic discourse.
<b>De Lange, Pillay, and Chikoko (2011)</b>	Cohort model of supervision	Creating a supportive learning environment for doctoral students involves developing a community of researchers who can share experiences, resources, and support throughout their doctoral studies.
<b>Carter-Veale et al. (2016)</b>	Dissertation House model	Creating a collaborative environment where doctoral students can work together to cope with the demands of writing their dissertations.
<b>Cornér (2020)</b>	Socially-Embedded Support System	There are various levels and forms of social support integral to macro-level policies, institutional practices, and micro-level interactions within research communities and supervisory relationships in doctoral education.

Source: Authors

The theories and models presented in Table 1 above offer valuable insights for enhancing postgraduate supervision and student success in South Africa. According to Boud and Lee (2005) peer learning creates opportunities for collaborative learning among the doctoral students. Cornér (2020) believe that socially embedded support system is aligning support with student needs which then suggests the need to develop comprehensive support structures that address the informational, instrumental, and emotional needs of postgraduate students. As De Lange et al.'s (2011) explain cohort model underscores the value of building a community of scholars. Theorists believe this model is essential for fostering a supportive learning environment. Carter-Veale et al. (2016) view the Dissertation House model as providing a practical framework for helping postgraduate students and helpful in navigating the final stages of their studies. The central theoretical lens drawn from these theorists shows interrelated information on peer, social support and collaborative learning in postgraduate education. Figure 1 presents this theoretical lens:



Source: Authors

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

This model presented in Figure underpins the envisioning of postgraduate supervision system which can help address the unique challenges faced by postgraduate students in South Africa. By fostering a more supportive and collaborative research environment, this lens contributes to explaining an alternative postgraduate supervision model for achieving higher completion rates and a more vibrant academic research community. Overall, the central theoretical lens encompasses the concepts of peer, social support and collaborative learning as key components in enhancing the postgraduate supervision practice in South Africa.

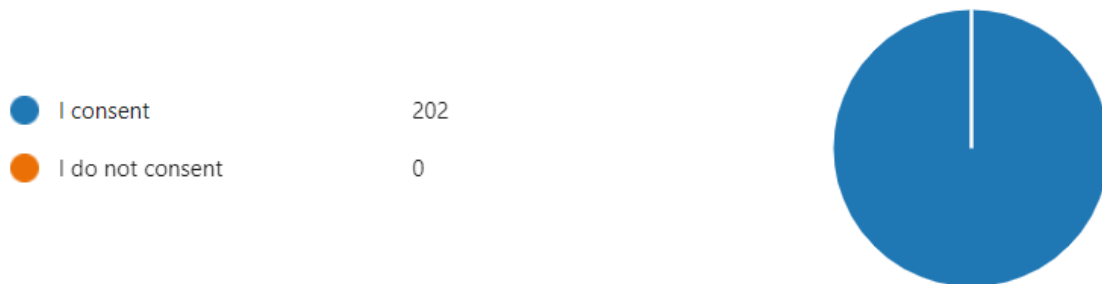
## 6. Methodology

This is a quantitative study which adopted the digital (online) survey design. The targeted research participants were masters and doctoral student population currently affiliated with 26 South African public universities and some private higher institutions with masters and doctoral programmes. A snowball purposeful and sampling techniques were used to recruit the participants to reach over 500 masters and doctoral students. The methodology for collecting data employed the Online-based survey including popular social media platforms in South Africa. Facebook; WhatsApp; and LinkedIn were used to administer the research digital survey questionnaire. In this research, the researchers designed an Online-based survey questionnaire with variables of the postgraduate supervision model. We deployed This digital survey questionnaire was created using Microsoft Form. The instrument was then deployed and distributed as link via the social media platforms in particular Facebook; WhatsApp; and LinkedIn to over 500 masters and doctoral students. This research strategy enabled the researchers to retain the integrity of the data collection and the actual data from the online survey. This study received approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethics Committee (Approval No.: HSSREC000064722023) because the methods and techniques to collect and collate data assured anonymity, informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary online participation with no rewards, or risks. Completing the data collection instrument required e-consent for anonymous data use. Descriptive data analysis was based on a Microsoft Form which analysed and explored up-to-date results in Excel as the descriptive data analysis process. This technique generated descriptive statistical results presented in the section below in this paper.

## 7. Results

### 7.1 Response Rate

The participants were given a description of the study and informed consent. They were freely available to consent or not consent to proceed participating in this study. The digital survey was distributed to over 500 participants and the response is presented in Figure 2:

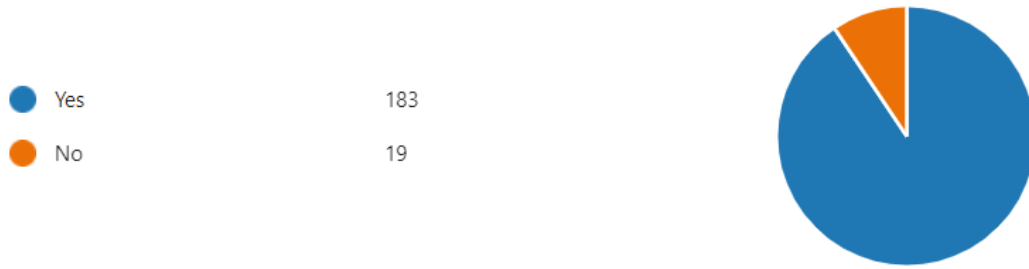


Source: Author

**Figure 2: Participants who consented and responded**

Figure 2 shows a 40.4% response rate from 202 of over 500 targeted master's and PhD students.

Then, the study target the participants enrolled and graduated in Master's or PhD programmes at public or private universities in South Africa between 2020 and 2024, and the result is presented in Figure 3 below:



Source: Author

**Figure 3: South African public or private Institution**

Figure 3 shows 91% of 202 respondents studied in South Africa, with a 9% response not studied in South Africa. The participants were asked to indicate the level of study in the last 5 years (2020-2024). The following result in Figure 4:

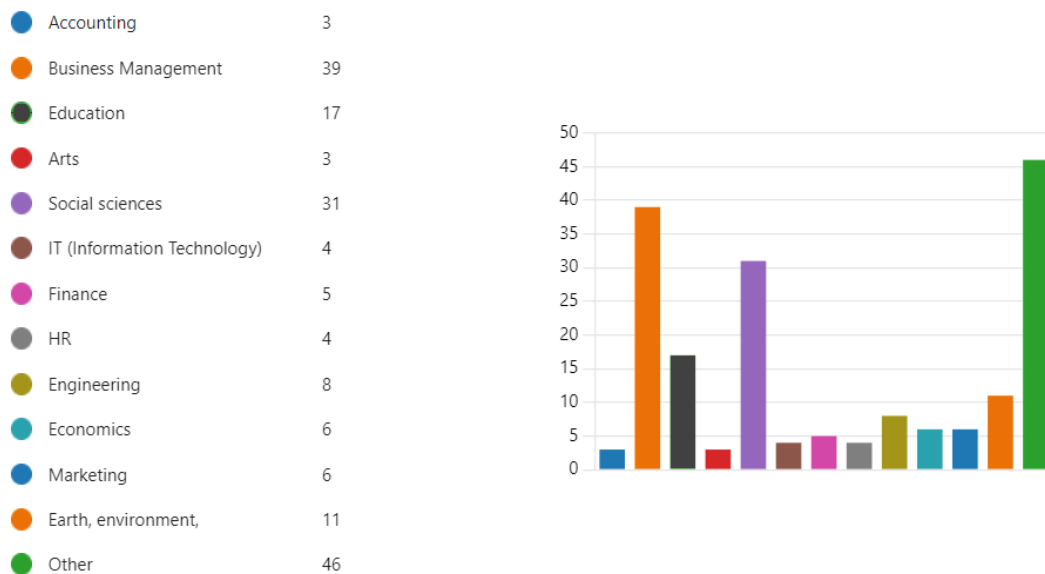


Source: Author

**Figure 4: Level of study in the last 5 years**

Figure 4 shows respondent distribution of 23% in progress with master's, 24% completed, 25% working on doctoral, and 28% completed. These results reflect ongoing transformation efforts and challenges in South Africa's postgraduate education sector and the need for enhanced postgraduate production (Zinn & Rodger, 2012; Motshoane & McKenna, 2021).

The participants were asked to indicate area of study specialisation for general representativeness. The result are as follows.



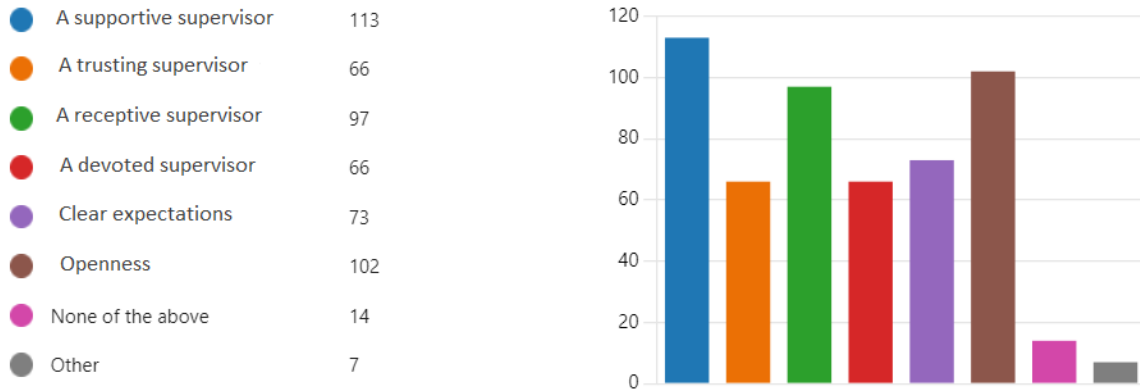
Source: Author

**Figure 5: Area of study specialisation**

Figure 5 shows the generalisation of field of study respondents are in.

### 7.2 Discussion of Descriptive Statistical Results

The participants were asked to select the best description of supervisory relationship they have experienced. The result is as follows in Figure 6 below:



Source: Author

**Figure 6: Supervisory Relationship experienced**

Figure 6 shows respondents' supervisory relationship descriptions: 113 supportive, 66 trusting, 97 constructive, 66 time-focused, 73 with clear expectations, 102 approachable, 14 with no positives, and 7 other. These results highlight the importance of relational qualities in supervision and support Zinn and Rodgers' (2012) view of the learner-teacher relationship as crucial to humanising pedagogy and mentorship.

### 7.3 Finding 1

Supervisory relationship is perceived as positive relational qualities influenced from effective and humanising pedagogy. The participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreeance regarding the supervisory relationship they need.



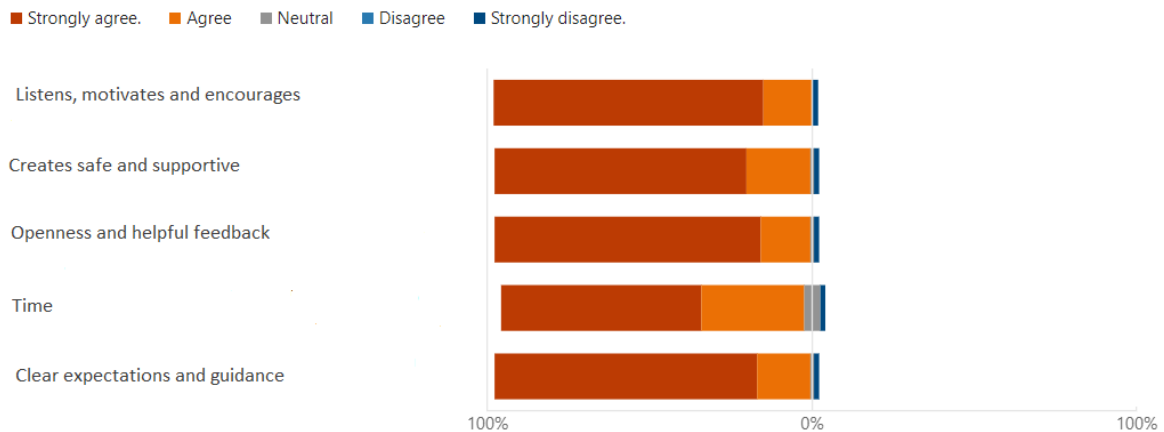
Source: Author

**Figure 7: Supervisory Relationship needed**

Figure 7 shows 79.2% of respondents strongly agree and 17.5% agree on needing a supportive, respectful, and communicative supervisor. Only 2.12% disagree. These findings align with the relational aspects and mentorship within the humanising pedagogy (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012).

### 7.4 Finding 2

The quality of supervisory relationships postgraduate students need are when a supervisor is accommodating, supportive, trusting, respectful, give time, and well informed. The participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreeance regarding the supervisory relationship needed to help them to succeed in their study. The result is presented in Figure 8 as follows:



Source: Author

**Figure 8: Supervisory Relationship for success in studies**

Figure 9 reveals that 83% of participants strongly agree that effective supervision involves a supervisor who listens, motivates, and encourages, aligning with Chugh et al. (2022) on the importance of open communication and mutual trust. Additionally, 78% agree that a supportive environment is crucial, consistent with Andriopoulou and Prowse’s (2020) view on the balance between structure and support. Furthermore, 82% believe beneficial supervision requires open feedback, and 62% value supervisors who dedicate time to skill development. Finally, 81% stress the need for clear expectations and guidance, echoing Lee (2008) and Andriopoulou and Prowse (2020) on critical thinking and independence in supervision.

### 7.5 Finding 3

A supervisor-supervisee relationship is perceived beneficial in postgraduate research supervision journey when it is supportive and structured based on:

- Listening, Motivating, and Encouraging.
- Open and Constructive Feedback.
- Clear Expectations and Guidance.
- Safe and Supportive Environment.
- Time for Teaching and Training.

## 8. Discussion of Findings

### 8.1 Positive Supervisory Relationships

The findings reveal that positive supervisory relationships, as experienced by master's and doctoral students, are characterised by relational qualities that foster human connections in the postgraduate supervision process. Zinn and Rodger (2012:76) argue that higher education in South Africa is still grappling with a “societal legacy of disempowerment and dehumanisation”. The continuing legacy leads to institutional and inhumane methods of postgraduate supervision which necessitates a shift towards a more humanised approach to education focusing on building the voices, agency, and community among researchers (Zinn and Rodger, 2012). The concept of “humanisation education” (Zinn & Rodger, 2012) is central to creating positive postgraduate supervisory relationships. The concept explains the importance of human aspects of students over the institutional administrative processes as emphasised in traditional supervisory models. Humanisation of supervisory relationship then ensures that the supervisors are supportive, empathetic, and student-centred, and enhance the postgraduate experience by addressing the emotional and psychological needs of students. Wanyama and Eyamu (2021) emphasise the importance of institutions in creating a supportive environment that enhances students' research journeys. A supportive institutional environment is crucial for fostering positive supervisory relationships and providing the necessary resources and infrastructure to facilitate effective postgraduate supervision. Institutions must therefore adopt supervision practices that promote a supportive and nurturing environment for postgraduate students. Moreover, the emphasis on peer learning by Boud and Lee (2005) suggests the need for creating opportunities for collaborative learning among the doctoral students. Collaborative peer learning environments enable students to share experiences, mutual support, and learn from

each other's research journeys. Peer interaction complements the supervisory relationship by providing additional layers of support and knowledge sharing which enrich the overall postgraduate experience.

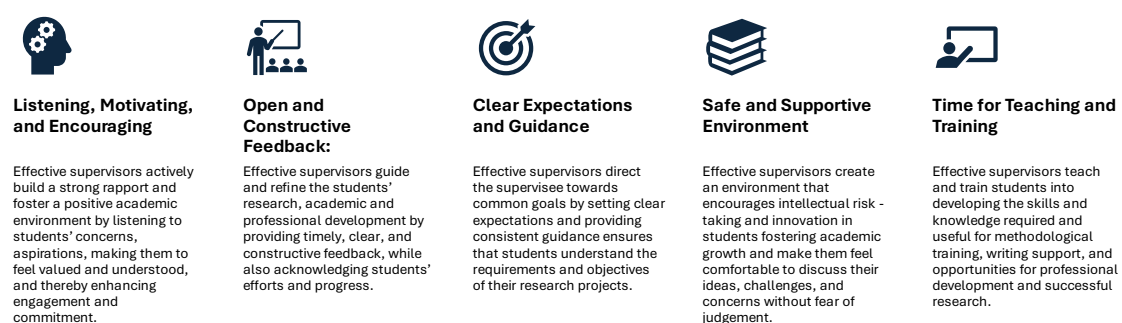
## 8.2 Quality Supervisory Relationships

The current study's second finding underscores the critical need for supervisors who make students feel appreciated, supported, trusted, respected, and well-informed. These qualities are fundamental to forming quality supervisory relationships that significantly impact students' academic journeys. Cekiso et al. (2019) highlight the importance of supervisor-student relationships and the provision of adequate support systems, which are crucial for enhancing students' experiences and research productivity. This indicates that the nature of the supervisory relationship is pivotal in shaping the postgraduate experience. Supervisors who embody these relational qualities contribute to a supportive and nurturing environment. Such an environment fosters student confidence and motivation, which are essential for academic success. The feeling of being appreciated and respected can enhance a student's sense of belonging and commitment to their research, while trust and support from a supervisor can mitigate feelings of isolation and anxiety that are often associated with postgraduate studies.

Cornér (2020) introduces the concept of a socially embedded support system, which aligns with the idea of comprehensive support structures tailored to meet the diverse needs of postgraduate students. This approach emphasises the importance of addressing the informational, instrumental, and emotional needs of students. By aligning support with student needs, supervisors and institutions can create an environment where students are not only academically supported but also emotionally and socially nurtured. The development of comprehensive support structures is essential. Informational support involves providing clear and consistent guidance on academic and administrative processes, ensuring students are well-informed about their responsibilities and opportunities. Instrumental support includes providing resources such as funding, access to research materials, and opportunities for professional development. Emotional support entails creating a supportive atmosphere where students feel valued and understood, which can significantly reduce stress and enhance overall well-being.

## 8.3 Supervisory Model

The third finding in this study indicates that master's and doctoral students perceive a beneficial research supervision journey as one that develops a supportive and structured supervisor-supervisee relationship. According to Holtman and Mukwada (2014), the quality of postgraduate research supervision significantly impacts time-to-degree and throughput rates at South African universities. This insight suggests that effective supervision is not merely a matter of academic guidance but a comprehensive support system that fosters timely and successful completion of postgraduate studies. Holtman and Mukwada (2014) is confirmed by the findings that a beneficial supervision journey and practice should be modelled as in Figure 9:



Source: Author

### Figure 9 Supervision Model

Figure 9 shows as supervisory model with five theoretical principles as explained by Holtman and Mukwada (2014) that improved quality supervision practices enhance student progression and completion rates. In addition to Holtman and Mukwada (2014), De Lange et al.'s (2011) cohort model underscores the value of building a community of scholars by bringing together students and supervisors. A collaborative and supportive network promoting peer learning and mutual support a practice fostering a safe and supportive learning environment, listening, motivation and encouragement. Further, Carter-Veale et al. (2016) explain Dissertation House model supporting the above practical framework for helping postgraduate students navigate the final

stages of their studies. Thus, supervision model shown in Figure 9 can be demonstrated by structured workshops, individual consultations, and peer support. Collectively, students assist each other to experience clear expectations, guidance, teaching, open and constructive feedback leading to complete their theses efficiently.

#### **8.4 Integration: Building a Postgraduate Supervision Model**

Building a postgraduate supervision model for student success in South Africa requires moving away from institutional-focused traditional one-on-one models to humane-oriented models and practices. Such a multifaceted approach demonstrated in Figure 9 above in this paper integrates humanisation education, institutional support, and peer learning fitting Zinn and Rodger's (2012) theory of "humanising pedagogy" in South Africa. In this theory, Zinn and Rodger (2012), premise humanisation education as building the voice, agency, and community embodying belonging and the essence of citizenship. The postgraduate supervision model as a crucial to humanising pedagogy embodies supervisory relational qualities fostering supportive institutional environments and promoting collaborative learning among students (Zinn & Rodger, 2012). Thus, postgraduate education in South Africa can adopt this supervision model for more humane and effective in support for students' personal and professional development leading to quality dissertations and theses, completion and throughput. According to the findings in this study, along with scholarly insights from Zinn and Rodger (2012), Cekiso et al. (2019) and Cornér (2020), it is necessary for supervisors to possess relational qualities that make students feel appreciated, supported, trusted, respected, well-informed and embracing them as human. Furthermore, the qualities align with socially and humane embedded approach to give postgraduate student the social support and collaborative learning experience. Higher education institutions in South Africa can adopt and develop humane-oriented supervision models that promotes student success, well-being, research productivity, completion and throughput. Thus, building a postgraduate supervision model for postgraduate student successful completion and throughput in South Africa should be routed in humanising pedagogy. Supervision models embracing humanising pedagogy are characterised by listening, motivating, and encouraging students. Supervisors provide open and constructive feedback, setting clear expectations and guidance, create a safe and supportive environment, and allocate time for teaching and training students. Institutions can significantly develop their postgraduate research supervision framework by learning from humanising pedagogy praxis, cohort model, dissertation house model, and socially-embedded support system to enhance student success, timely completion rates, and overall research productivity.

### **9. Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of masters and doctoral candidates and graduates to develop and recommend an optimal postgraduate research supervision model that ensures student success rates in South African universities. The central research question posed was: How can the experiences of masters and doctoral candidates and graduates be used to explain and propose an optimal postgraduate research supervision model that best supports student success rates in South African universities? Examining postgraduate supervision models in South Africa through existing theoretical frameworks reveals various approaches and potential supervision strategies for enhancing student success. Each model offers unique advantages and challenges that need to be carefully assessed and tailored to the local context. This paper established that integrating elements from these different perspectives, a more comprehensive and effective postgraduate supervisory framework can be developed, promoting academic excellence and higher completion rates among South African doctoral students. Humanising supervision practices are particularly supportive and foster strong supervisor-student relationships. As a practical approach, this is crucial for enhancing students' experiences, improving time-to-degree completion, and increasing research output. We found that a postgraduate supervision model grounded in the theory of humanising pedagogy can improve successful student completion and throughput in South Africa. This model is characterised by active listening, motivation and encouragement of students, providing open and constructive feedback, setting clear expectations and guidance, creating a safe and supportive environment, and allocating time for teaching and training. It is a futuristic model. A futuristic supervision model taps into innovative postgraduate education. A postgraduate supervision models this study proposes encompasses the future roles of students and supervisors, and future supervision spaces. The models should use humanising pedagogical criteria with pastoral care to address individual students' competencies, strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Therefore, futuristic supervisor cultivates agility, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in students for real-time scenarios by listening, motivating, encouraging, providing open and constructive feedback, setting clear expectations and guidance, creating a safe and supportive environment, and allocating time for teaching and training. This includes using new technological tools for research and evaluating research competencies to ensure students are well-

prepared for an authentic research culture. Additionally, postgraduate supervision pedagogical tools must equip student researchers for a rapidly evolving job market characterised by new communication technologies, globalisation, and fostering human-machine collaboration. A suggested postgraduate supervision model in this paper embraces futuristic humanising postgraduate education contributing to the overall success and productivity of masters and doctoral students in South African universities. This model supports the humane awareness raising and emancipatory approach to supervising student researchers within South African postgraduate education.

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