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*Ghanaian graduate nursing students' concerns regarding academic research supervision: an exploratory study*



**GHANAIAN GRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS CONCERN  
REGARDING ACADEMIC RESEARCH SUPERVISION: AN  
EXPLORATORY STUDY.**

**BY**

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# SUPERVISION



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# Presentation Outline

- Rationale/Objective of the study
- Method
- Results
- Conclusion
- Recommendations



# Rationale for the Study (1)

- The increased global trends and demands of knowledge and its dissemination is persuading institutions of higher education, particularly universities, to become more competitive (Brighouse & Mcpherson, 2015)
- The production of much of this knowledge is achieved through the practice of graduate research supervision (Naidoo, Joanne & Mthembu, Sindi, 2015)
- Globally, evidence shows that quality supervision of graduate studies determines the success of students' completion in institutions of higher learning (Ali, Watson, & Dhingra, 2016)



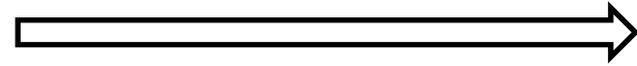
## Rationale for the Study (2)

- However, both graduate nursing student researchers and their supervisors have specific expectations, needs, and challenges.
- Previous studies have documented inadequate supervision, less interest of students in research, and lack of appropriate communication skills as some of the challenges associated with graduate research supervision in other locales (Havenga, & Sengane, 2018).
- It however, remains unclear whether these findings also generalize to a Ghanaian context. This study therefore explored graduate nursing students' perception regarding research supervision in a public university in Ghana



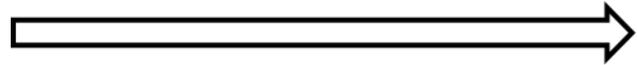
# Methods

**Study design**



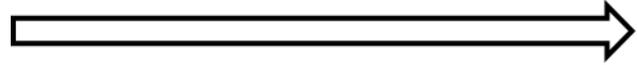
Explorative descriptive qualitative design

**Inclusion criteria**



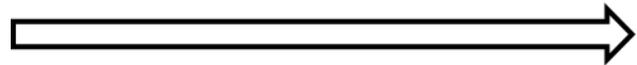
Final year regular MPhil. and MSc.  
nursing students

**Sampling method**



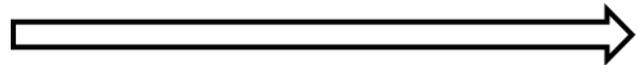
Purposive sampling technique

**Sample size**



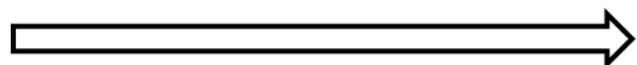
15 participants

**Data collection tool**



A semi-structured interview guide

**Data analysis**



Content analysis

## Results (1) Demographic characteristics

- Overall, **15** graduate students participated in the study.
- **10** of whom were females and **5** were males
- Age ranged from **28** to **48** years (M=34.1, SD=5.5)
- Of the **15** participants, **9** were offering Mphil. while 6 were offering MSc. Nursing programmes
- Each of the participants had **2** research supervisors.

## Results (2)

### Graduate student experiences with research supervisors

#### *Effective supervisory practice*

Some respondents indicated that their supervisors were supportive during the entire research period.

- *“My supervisors were consistently accessible on phone and e-mail. As and when I needed them, they created time for a meeting ”. (S2)*
- *“ I had great supervisors who went all out to ensure that I met my timelines. As you know, sometimes the desire to write is not there but my supervisors kept on reviving me throughout the process and I am glad they were assigned to me. The interesting aspect was the reminder messages even at an odd hours to demand a revised version of the work” . (S4)*

Conversely, some respondents said their supervisors were busy and had little time for the supervision.

- *“My primary supervisor was engaged with her own academic work. Her busy schedules made it practically impossible for us to meet with the second supervisor for face-to-face discussions ”. (S3)*

# RESULTS

## Views of Graduate students on effective supervision

### *Student-supervisor academic relationship*

Some respondents indicated that the research supervision built an academic relationship between them and their supervisors

- *“The whole process of supervision gives you an opportunity to build a lasting relationship with your supervisor. I am sure the journey will not just end after submission of the final work but it will lead to future collaborations”. (S5)*

On the other hand, some respondents indicated that the relationship was strictly student –supervisor relationship

- *“My supervisors only pointed out to me what I needed to do on the work and that was all. I didn't have the opportunity to learn anything outside my work. That was too strict and its not good enough” (S12)*

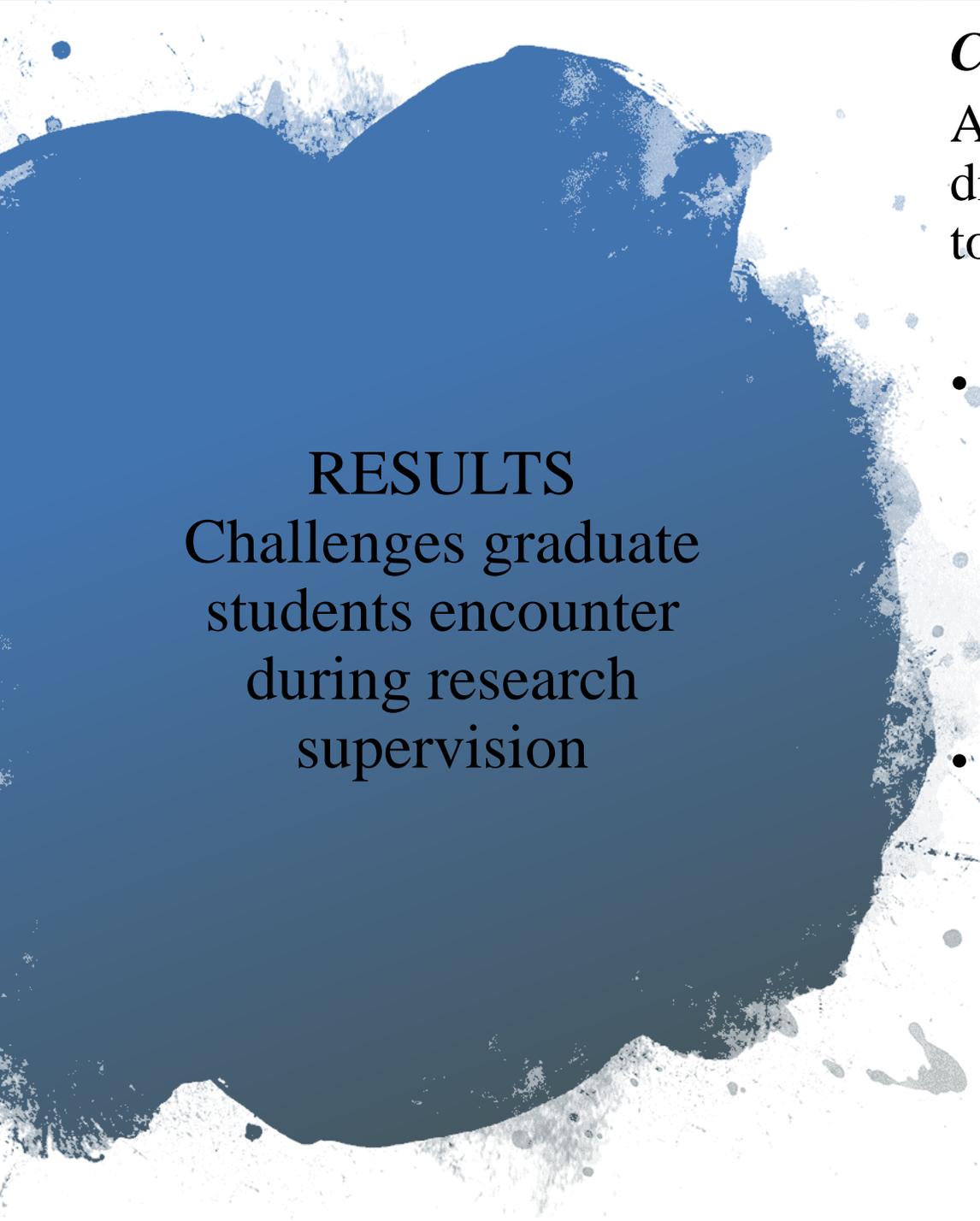
# RESULTS

Challenges graduate  
encounter during  
research supervision

## *Delayed feedback from supervisors*

Several of the respondents mentioned a gap in the feedback they received from the supervisors

- *“The only part, maybe I wasn’t happy with was that, one supervisor always delayed giving me feedback on my work. Sometimes the feedback came so late that you were not sure, whether to continue writing the rest of the chapters or wait for the corrections. And the difficulty was that it always came with a lot of corrections and changes”. (S2)*
- *“Feedback took a long time. Sometimes it took a whole month or two months, and the feedback that came had no suggestions. You had to look for the solution all by yourself.”(S6)*



## RESULTS

### Challenges graduate students encounter during research supervision

#### *Conflicting supervisory role*

A number of the respondents indicated the difficulties they had with regards to being assigned to two supervisors

- *“I was having one supervisor with a qualitative background and the other with quantitative background. This was always a problem. I don’t really know and so sometimes they had different opinions. It was a difficulty”(S4)*
- *“I think the co- supervision is also difficult to deal with. I realized they had conflicting views and it ended up confusing me a lot”. (S7)*

# Conclusions

- Students' expectations are not entirely met regarding some aspects of supervision.
- Majority of respondents complained of difficulty receiving timely feedback from their supervisors.
- Students also expressed difficulty in having to deal with conflicting responses from different supervisors.
- Respondents indicated the importance of being part of the study, completing their chapters early, and being assigned to supervisors who were expert in their area of study.



# Recommendations

- Regular training of supervisors of graduate students and co-supervision should be encouraged
- Supervisors should discuss their feedback before research work are sent to students.
- Students should be assigned to supervisors who are experts in the areas they are conducting research.



# References

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