Students' Level of Satisfaction of Postgraduate Thesis Supervision at the University of Education, Winneba

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ABSTRACT: The study sought to investigate the extent of postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with thesis supervision and completion in the University of Education, Winneba. The sequential explanatory design was used to carry out this study. The population of the study comprised students who offered postgraduate programmes, postgraduate thesis supervisors, and Deans of the various faculties. A cluster, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the respondents. A sample of 72 respondents were involved, 62 students answered the questionnaire while 10 supervisors were interviewed. The study found that more than half (56.5%) of the participants were familiar with the rules, regulations and procedures concerning postgraduate studies. More than half (53.2%) were not assigned supervisors in the first year and 6 out of 10 participants in the interview said that thesis topics were not approved. It was further found that two-fifth (40.3%) of the participants were satisfied with their supervisors' availability or accessibility for consultation. Again, one third (33%) of the participants were satisfied with the ability of their supervisors keeping to timelines. The study recommends that monitoring and tracking of students' study plan and progress reports by postgraduate coordinators and supervisors should be intensified in all postgraduate programmes and to submit annual report on all research postgraduate students.

KEYWORDS: postgraduate students, thesis supervisors, postgraduate coordinators, progress report, timelines.

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM CONTEXT

Several factors can be linked to the quality of higher education services, which may include; age-group, tuition fee, undergraduate education, level of income, type of graduate school, and institutional factors. This position agrees with other studies in the field of higher education services (Arambewela & Hall, 2008; Munteanu et al., 2010). Byrne, Jorgensen, Loukkola (2013) who argue that the quality of doctoral education is a widespread concern to both governments and society. As the main indicator, the feelings of PhD students about the training process are usually considered as an important indicator for evaluating the quality of doctoral education (Yang & Jianqiao 2022). In this context, performance indicators are management tools that guide management to maintain a given standard of higher education. Marzo-Navarro, Pedraja-Iglesias, and Pilar (2005) have come to a conclusion that, to some extent, PhD students are to doctoral education as consumers are to various other products. In the light of this, as a special commodity, the quality of doctoral education is closely related to the satisfaction of doctoral students with the training process.

As pointed out earlier, the feelings of postgraduate students about the training they are receiving serve as the indicators of their level of satisfaction in the higher education training service. A number of studies suggest that supervisors play a vital role in postgraduate students' satisfaction (Ericchsen, et al., 2014; Boyce et al., 2019; Gruzdev et al., 2020). In addition to this, course quality, team climate, financial support and future job prospects have also been said to be closely related to postgraduate student satisfaction (Shapiro et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2018). Besides, the above mentioned studies, (de Kleijn et al., 2012; Khosravi et al., 2013; and Munteanu et al., 2010) also highlighted the importance of academic advising services on students' satisfaction, which also include; the significant impact of graduate school (Ravindra and Kalpana, 2012, Uysal, 2015), learning resources, use of technology and physical facilities (Munteanu et al, 2010; Wilkins et al 2013, 2012; Dzikunu, Wiredu, Pajibo & Yelkpieri, 2025). It is worthy to note that students' satisfaction is widely acknowledged as an influential barometer of quality of service for higher educational institutions to sustain their competitive advantage (Arambewela & Hall, 2006). It is however, noted that, satisfaction is an individual's active perception, which may differ from one person to the other.

The situation of postgraduate students' level of satisfaction in Ghana may not differ much from that of postgraduate students outside Ghana. Postgraduate students in Africa generally complain about delay in the completion of theses at the postgraduate level which affects their graduation on time. Institutional support in this context may include; the availability of academic resources, student support system and guidance both in-campus and on-line (Rubin, Fernandes & Avgerinou, 2013) as well as the opportunity for creating a learning community. Some concerns have been raised by supervisors about the lack of institutional support and the need

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for better institutional services and practices to be made available for postgraduate students' theses work (Sidhu, Lim & Chan, 2017).

This delay comes as a result of certain factors at the institutional level which may be classified as institutional support that may cause the delay and result in students' inability to graduate on time. Another issue of concern has to do with supervision of students' theses. Thesis supervision is regarded as a complex and multidimensional task which involves one-to-one conscious interaction which occurs between a student and his supervisor with mutual respect, collegiality, professionalism and open-mindedness (Muthukrishnan, Sidhu, Hoon, Narayanan, & Fook, 2022, p. 53). They view the supervisor-student relationship as a symbiotic relationship in a professional environment for mutual benefits. The reason being that supervision involves academic, expertise and skillful management of interpersonal and professional relationships. Supervision is a system which offers five desirable supports to supervisees which include technical, intellectual, administrative, management and personal support (Mhunpiew, 2013).

The availability of qualified thesis supervisors or advisors to guide postgraduate students is a big challenge to some departments in the University of Education, Winneba as well some institutions in Africa. As a result, some departments are forced by the circumstance to assign students to faculty members who do not have the required experience and expertise to supervise at the postgraduate level. In addition, some supervisors are assigned more than ten postgraduate students to supervise in some departments in the University of Education, Winneba, which does not support quality work because of the pressure supervisors have to endure combining supervision with teaching. The issue of quality resources for research work is critical and affects theses completion rate and students' satisfaction of postgraduate programmes.

The gap that this study seeks to bridge is that it seems there is no empirical research on postgraduate students' level of satisfaction conducted in the University of Education, Winneba, apart from the study that examined the factors that account for delayed completion of theses among postgraduate students of the University.

In sum, institutional support, ability to graduate on time, quality supervision, availability of experienced supervisors and modern research facilities, all contribute to the level of satisfaction that postgraduate students derive from the postgraduate training process.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent of postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with thesis supervision and subsequently completion in the University of Education, Winneba.

Research questions

The following research questions directed the research:

1. What is the level of satisfaction of postgraduate students with thesis supervision at the University of Education, Winneba?
2. To what extent are the postgraduate students aware of their responsibilities and services towards postgraduate studies in the UEW?

RESEARCH DESIGN

A sequential explanatory mixed method design was adopted in this study. With this approach, the quantitative data was collected and followed by the qualitative data. This design enabled the researchers to engage in detailed data collection by way of gathering both quantitative and qualitative data available for the study.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprised students who offered postgraduate programmes, and postgraduate thesis supervisors from the various departments and faculties. Supervisors who have supervised postgraduate thesis for at least three consecutive years were considered.

Sampling technique and sample size

A *multi-stage sampling* technique involving a two-stage approach was used to select faculties and departments and participants for this study. For the first stage, the University was clustered based on the faculties. There are ten (10) faculties offering postgraduate programmes and these include; Social Science Education, Science Education, Educational Studies, School of Creative Arts, School of Business, School of Communication and Media Studies, Foreign Language Education, Ghanaian Language Education, Home Economics Education and College of Distance Education.

Since the target group was the postgraduate students, a snowball sampling technique was used to select participants from the various departments that had postgraduate programmes since they were scattered and some were non-residents. In all, 72 participants were selected which consisted of 62 students and 10 supervisors who were purposively selected from the departments for the interviews. In addition, 8 students out of the 62 selected respondents were interviewed.

The study used two instruments, structured questionnaire for students and structured interview for students and supervisors for the data collection of the quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was used to collect information on the following; the

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demographic data of participants, backgrounds on their postgraduate program/thesis supervision, sources of funding graduate programme, services and accessibility of facilities for graduate students and reasons on delay in thesis completion.

The content of the interview guide focused on availability and accessibility of services to students, and extent of level of satisfaction with supervision and completion of thesis within schedule.

Instrument

The researchers used structured interview for the data collection. The interview guide focused on availability and accessibility of services to students and factors accounting for completion of thesis on time. The structured interview was useful as it enabled in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters of the study. Google forms were used to design an online self-administered questionnaire and disseminated through Whatsapp and email to supervisors, continuing graduate students and alumni to fill. The questionnaire, on the other hand enabled the researchers to involve more respondents in the study and thereby making the sample representative.

Trustworthiness of Data

Triangulation, member checking and peer review methods were used to establish the validity and reliability of the data collected through the use of interviews. Member checking and peer review enabled the researchers to check for accuracy.

Data Collection Procedures

The data was collected by Research Fellows of the Institute of Educational Research and Innovation Studies (IERIS). The contacts of the participants were obtained from the Graduate School, the various departments and the Planning Unit of the University. The interviews were conducted in-person by Research Fellows of IERIS. The interview was conducted in the English Language and at agreed locations and times of both the interviewer and interviewee.

Data analysis

Interviews conducted in English were transcribed. The transcriptions were done by a professional transcriber. Data quality check was done by going through the transcripts and playing the audio tapes along to verify that all the audio files have been transcribed correctly. The qualitative data were transcribed and analysed based on the emerging themes. Atlas.ti was used to analyse the qualitative data.

Ethical issues

The researchers sought the consent of all participants before the data was collected, and the University of Education, Winneba ethical standards regarding research was strictly followed. The purpose of the study, including the general objectives, benefits were explained to the participants. After that, the respondents provided verbal consents. Participants were also informed about the confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented according to the research questions. Descriptive statistics were used in presenting the findings. First, the background information are presented followed by the main issues or questions. The results were presented according to the research questions. Descriptive statistics were used to present the quantitative data while emerging themes from the qualitative data were also used in presenting the qualitative data from the interviews.

Background characteristics of respondents. Table 1 presents the background characteristics of the respondents as follows.

Table 1: Background characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Female	12	19.4
Male	50	80.6
Age		
Below 30 years	33	53.2
31-39 years	15	24.2
40-49 years	4	6.5
59 years and above	10	16.1
Marital status		
Married	42	67.7
Divorced	20	32.3
Employment status		
Employed	58	93.5

Unemployed	4	6.5
Place of residence		
Resident (eg UEW campus)	11	17.7
Non-resident (eg Outside UEW Campus)	51	82.3
If non-resident, where were you residing		
Within Winneba	14	27.5
Within Effutu Municipal (eg Asebu, New Winneba, etc	5	9.8
Outside Effutu Municipal	32	62.7
Total	**51**	**100.0**

Source: Field work, 2023

The results in percentage terms in Table 1 show that there were more males (80.6%) than females (19.4%). More than half (53.4%) of the participants were aged below 30 years, slightly less than one-fourth (24.2%) were between the ages of 31-39 years old and the least proportion, 6.5 percent were between 40-49 years. In addition, slightly more than two-thirds (67.7%) of the participants were married, and 93.5% were employed. With regards to the place of residence during participants' graduate studies, about 82 % were residents on UEW campus while 18 % were non-residents. For those who were non-residents and living outside UEW campus, majority, (62.7%) of them were living outside Effutu Municipal, 27.5 % were living in Winneba town and 9.8 % were living within Effutu Municipal but not in Winneba township. Of particular interest regarding the data in Table 1, it could be deduced that some of the students could not have completed their thesis on time due to their employment demands and residential status which may not be convenient enough to support their studies.

Table 2: Background Information on Graduate Programme

Graduate Programme	Frequency	Percentage
Postgraduate student status at UEW		
Full-Time	58	93.5
Part-Time	4	6.5
Postgraduate programme		
Masters	58	93.5
PhD	4	6.5
if Masters, kindly specify		
MBA	1	1.7
M.Ed	3	5.2
M.Phil	53	91.4
Postgraduate Diploma in Education	1	1.7
Which faculty did you enroll for the programme		
Educational Studies	10	16.1
Science Education	24	38.7
Social Science Education	7	11.3
School of Business	1	1.6
School of Creative Arts	3	4.8
Foreign Languages	13	21.0
Ghanaian Languages Education	4	6.5
Did you re-sit any of the courses you registered during your studies		
Yes	-	-
No	62	100.0
Total	**62**	**100.0**

Source: Field work, 2023

In Table 2, 93.5 % of the participants were full time students' while 6.5 % were part time students. Regarding the postgraduate programmes, 93.5% pursued Masters' degree programmes while 6.5 % were PhD students. This is a normal trend in every institution. PhD students are usually few as compare to those pursuing masters' and undergraduate programmes.

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Out of those who were pursuing Masters' degree programmes, 91.4 % were M.Phil students, followed by M.Ed (5.2%) and 1.7 percent for Masters' degree of Business Administration. In addition, 38.7 % of the respondents were in Faculty of Science Education, and 21.0 % in Faculty of Foreign Languages Education.

Table 3: Sponsorship/Funding for the Programme

Sponsorship/Funding for the Programme	Frequency	Percentage
Were you on study leave		
Yes	3	4.8
No	59	95.2
Were your postgraduate studies sponsored		
Yes	4	6.5
No	58	93.5
If yes (received postgraduate studies program), by whom		
Government	2	50.0
Private Organisation	2	50.0
Did you receive Government bursary		
Yes	20	32.3
No	42	67.7
Did you receive Educational Loan/Student Loan		
Yes		
No	62	100.0
Were you awarded UEW Graduate Fellowship?		
Yes		
No	62	100.0
Was your studies self-sponsored		
Yes	58	93.5
No	4	6.5

Source: Field work, 2023

Table 3 shows that out of those who were not self-sponsored, 50% were sponsored by the Government of Ghana and private organization. In addition, 32.3 percent of the participants received bursary while 67.7% did not. None of the participants received educational loan/student loan and UEW graduate fellowship. The data shows that most postgraduate students in UEW were not lucky to get Government of Ghana sponsorship nor any kind of funding for their studies like their counterparts in Europe. It is in the light of this that Said (2024) is of the opinion that all universities should evaluate ways to improve access to research infrastructure and also provide financial assistance to support graduate students during their research work.

Awareness of responsibilities and services to you as a postgraduate student
From Table 4, more than half (56.5%) of the participants were somehow familiar with the rules, regulations and procedures concerning postgraduate studies, 38.7% were not sure of the rules, regulations and procedures, and 67.7% attended orientation after enrolment. More than half (53.2%) of the participants were not assigned supervisors(s) in the first year and 6 out of 10 students interviewed said their thesis topics were not approved in the first year of enrolment. A situation like this had the potential to delay students' theses completion on time. In addition, about 70 percent of the participants indicated that there was a plan of work for their theses. Among those who had plan for their thesis, 7 out of 10 participants initiated the plan of work themselves and more than half (55.8%) had their plan followed to the end of their study. Arguably, the non-assignment of students to supervisors in the first year of their programme does not conform to international best practice and a disincentive to students completing their theses on time (Frempong et al., 2020).

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Table 4: Awareness of responsibilities and services to you as a postgraduate student

	Frequency	Percentage
Your knowledge or level of familiarity with rules, regulations and procedures concerning postgraduate studies		
Not Familiar	3	4.8
Not sure	24	38.7
Somehow Familiar	35	56.5
Very Familiar	-	-
Did you attend orientation on enrolment		
Yes	42	67.7
No	20	32.3
Were you assigned supervisor(s) in the first year of enrolment		
Yes	29	46.8
No	33	53.2
Was your thesis topic approved in the first year of enrolment		
Yes	25	40.3
No	37	59.7
If not the first year, what year was the topic approved		
Second year	37	
Third year	-	
Was there a plan of work for your thesis		
Yes	43	69.4
No	19	30.6
If yes, who initiated the plan of work		
Self	31	72.1
Supervisory team	12	27.9
Was the plan of work for your research and thesis followed to the end of the study programme		
Yes	24	55.8
No	19	44.2

Level of satisfaction of postgraduate students

The level of satisfaction of students with respect to supervision varies from one student to the other and this is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Level of satisfaction of students during studentship

Statement	Responses Level of Satisfaction Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsure
Your supervisor(s) availability/accessibility for consultation	10 (16.1)	25 (40.3)	21 (33.9)	6 (9.7)
Ability of supervisor(s) to keep to timelines	8 (12.9)	22 (35.5)	20 (32.2)	12 (19.4)
Guidance or assistance offered by supervisors or supervisory team on research methodology and thesis writing	7 (11.3)	32 (51.6)	14 (22.6)	9 (14.5)
Quality of teaching of Research Methods /Research Seminars	6 (9.7)	28 (45.1)	21 (33.9)	7 (11.3)

Support offered by the Graduate School	2 (3.2)	10 (16.1)	38 (61.3)	12 (19.4)
Support/cooperation offered by your Dean of Faculty or Head of Department	6 (9.7)	24 (38.7)	21 (33.9)	11 (17.7)
Support/cooperation offered by your Principal Supervisor	10 (16.1)	21 (33.9)	14 (22.6)	17 (27.4)
Support and cooperation offered by co-supervisor(s)	4 (6.4)	23 (37.1)	14 (22.6)	21 (33.9)
Availability of equipment and facilities for your research work	2 (3.2)	18 (29.0)	30 (48.4)	12 (19.4)
Availability of good reading materials for your research	2 (3.2)	22 (35.5)	24 (38.7)	14 (22.6)

The results in Table 5 shows that two-fifth (40.3%) of the participants were satisfied with their supervisors' availability/accessibility for consultation, slightly more than one third (35.5%) were satisfied with the ability of their supervisors' keeping to timelines, more than half (51.6%) of the participants were satisfied with the guidance or assistance offered by their supervisors or supervisory team on research methodology and thesis writing and 45.1% were also satisfied with the quality of teaching of research methodology/research seminars. It is in this respect that Barnes and Randall, (2012) are of the opinion that PhD students' satisfaction has been regarded as an effective means of assessing and promoting the quality of doctoral education.

In line with supervision offered by mentors and their relationship with students, some supervisors expressed these views:

Some of the mentors do not have time for the mentees. They mostly engage themselves in other activities other than supervision (Supervisor # 9).

A respondent anchored the nature of the relationship on the behaviours of students in the following words:

Some students have problems with their supervisors/mentors due to high mentee-mentor ratio. This brings about delays and unhealthy relationship. Because of this we encourage mentors from Nigeria to come and do sabbatical (Supervisor # 5).

The data gathered from some of the Deans and graduate coordinators who also double as supervisors observed that most supervisors are burdened with teaching loads and others such as counseling among others which take a lot of their time and as a result, they are unable to make much time for their students. In view of this situation students who are not patient enough turn to have problems with their mentors. This leads to frustration and subsequently abandonment of the programme. Dzikunu et al. (2025, p.14) found that "there are situations where a lecturer is given four or five students to supervise. At the same time, the lecturer has to do other teaching and research, which is a serious challenge". This present finding is further buttressed by Domaley, et al. (2023) who found that supervisors lacked the opportunity to meet their students as a result of limited time at their disposal.

In addition, about 6 out of 10 participants (61.3%) interviewed were not satisfied with the support offered by the graduate school and one-third (33.9%) of the participants were unsatisfied with the support/cooperation offered by their Dean of Faculty or Head of Department. The limited institutional support as evidenced by the inadequate facilities at the faculties and the Graduate School are factors that should not be grossed over by any university that strives for excellence in graduate studies. It is in line with this basis of assessment that Munteanu et al. (2010 & Kahu, 2013) try to define PhD as feelings or perceptions that are used to expressed PhD students' responses to whether the doctoral training process meets their expectation. With regard to facilities, Dzikunu et al. (2025, p.8) found that "Both alumni and supervisors agreed that adequate facilities, including internet access and library reading materials, were available".

The interview data show mixed results. While some of the students were very satisfied with their supervisors' others were not satisfied due to the delays in reviewing their work. For instance, one student indicated that;

Yes, for me I was very satisfied. And if I want to describe the level of satisfaction, I will say strongly. However, some of my colleagues are not satisfied (Student #2).

For me and my supervisor we had a good relationship, the thing was, she won't call you to submit your work but when you submit the maximum time will be one month before you get the feedback. The problem came when I submitted and it took over a year (Student #1).

And yet a faculty member also made this observation:

There are varied perceptions. It depends on the individual mentor's make-up; some value and respect the students, others do not. Some mentors are sociable, and outward-going. They welcome students. Some are unfriendly. Sometimes we have problems with joint supervision and reported cases of inappropriate personal relationship (Supervisor # 8).

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With respect to students' satisfaction with their supervisors, it was a mixed reaction because some students were happy or satisfied while others were not. A section of the students acknowledged the good relationship they had with their supervisors and sometimes not too good but they managed such relationship well to ensure that they complete the work on time. The faculty member's observation sums the issue of the relationship between students and their supervisors. This is an objective opinion because individuals differ in how they relate to others.

Views on completion duration and related matters

With regards to opinion on completion duration and related matters (Table 6), more than half (58.1%) of the participants did not complete their thesis within the stipulated study period and went on extension. Out of those who went on extension, half of the students (50.0%) went on extension for one semester, slightly more than one third (36.1%) went on extension for two semesters and 13.9% for four semesters.

From the narratives, most students indicated that they were unable to complete their thesis on time. They often go on extension to enable them complete their thesis. A respondent had this to say:

*No. It's a big, big no. Hardly does anybody finish within two years for MPhil or three years for a PhD (**Supervisor #2**).*

Another respondent agreed with the previous respondent in the words:

No. No. Like I mentioned earlier, even though we graduate many students almost at every graduation, but most often the duration should be two years for an MPhil and three years, four years maximum for a PhD. But they are not able to, few students are able to work within the two and three years. Seriously, few, a handful (Supervisor 3).

The data gathered from the supervisors (Deans and Vice Deans) suggests that postgraduate students hardly complete their research work within the stipulated time. As a result, request for an extension of time to enable them to complete their programmes.

In addition, about two-thirds (64.5%) of the participants heard or know of any postgraduate student who dropped out of school or could not complete his/her studies at UEW. The qualitative results support the fact that some of the students have abandoned their programmes. Regarding the abandonment of the programme some of the reasons given related to frustration from the supervisors which is mainly due to delay of feedback from the supervisors. One of the students stated that;

Sometimes you will finish with chapter one to four then the lecturer comes to tell you to do this here which might affect the entire work because once you touch the objectives or research question it affects everything so that frustration sometimes will make some people leave. (Student #3).

Another student indicated that:

Yes, we still have, some colleagues coming around. I think four years from the time I completed and some have still not completed even up to 2020 and we are in 2024. Some are coming from Kumasi just because of the program. If they keep coming and then they are not getting feedback from their supervisors, they can't complete. And so, if care is not taken, they will just abandon it (Student #5).

The data sheds light on the frustration that students have to contend with in their research journey. Because supervisors are unable to give feedback to students on time, students are made to go ahead with their work without any feedback only to be told they should change research questions or methods which inadvertently affect the entire work. This makes students spend long years on their work, which is frustrating most postgraduate students.

Table 6: Views on completion duration and related matters

Did you submit your thesis within the approved study period? (i.e., without extension)	Frequency	Percentage
No	36	58.1
Yes	26	41.9
Total	62	100.0
How many semesters of extension did you take		
One semester	18	50.0
Two semesters	13	36.1
Four semesters	5	13.9
Total	36	100.0
Did you hear or know of any postgraduate student who dropped out or could not complete his or her studies at UEW		
No	22	35.5
Yes	40	64.5
Total	62	100.0

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The results of the study suggest that hardly do students finish their thesis within the stipulated time of two and three or four years for M.Phil and PhD respectively. Most students go for an extension of time to enable them to complete their work. The case of delay in thesis completion is not peculiar to postgraduate students in the University of Education, Winneba, or postgraduates in African only but is a problem in institutions in Canada too. Frempong, Osei-Amankwah, and Kyeremeh, (2020) in their study noted that postgraduate education also experiences problems especially the long time it takes students to complete their research. Again, in the United States of America, the Council of Graduate Schools noted in 1991 that time-to-degree and changing research environment was of great concern to many stakeholders in higher education.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are made:

First and foremost, it was found that the supervisors understood their roles and responsibilities except that they complained of coupling their supervisory roles with other responsibilities such as teaching and administration. Although this is expected of any academic, however, overburdening a supervisor with too many responsibilities makes his role, including supervision, less effective. It was further revealed that, some of the problems for the delayed completion of these were getting specialists to examine students' projects, workloads of internal and external assessors and inadequate motivational packages, especially for internal assessors. This implies that, heads of department and graduate coordinators need to work hard to identify internal and external examiners who are specialists who can be contacted to examine students' theses whenever the need arises. To ensure a good working relationship in this respect, a good motivational package (fees) should be set aside to pay internal and external examiners. The implications are that if serious steps are not taken to address these issues, they have the tendency to discourage prospective graduate students from applying to the University of Education, Winneba.

The study found that more than half (56.5%) of the students were familiar with the rules, regulations and procedures concerning postgraduate studies. This suggests that postgraduate students know their rights and the dos and don'ts as spelt out in the graduate handbook. This knowledge should always guide them in their research journey. This also implies that supervisors should bear in mind that students know their rights and will always expect their supervisors to play the game according to the rules. However, a significant number 43.5% were silent or not familiar with the rules and regulations governing postgraduate study. This is worrying considering the fact that students at this level are considered independent researchers who can also manage their studies. On this score, it requires that the graduate coordinators make conscious effort to educate students on the rules and regulation governing graduate programmes in the university.

It was further found that postgraduate students were satisfied with their supervisors' availability or accessibility for consultation. This means that supervisors knew their roles and responsibilities towards their supervisees and were ready to attend to them and the needed services as supervisors. This is a good gesture, as a result, students should make sure they make the best out of such a situation to enable them complete their research work on time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The study recommends that monitoring of students' progress reports and tracking of student study plan by postgraduate coordinators should be intensified in all postgraduate programmes and submit annual report on all research students. This step will serve as a check on both students and supervisors. In this way, they will sit up.

2. Regarding joint supervision of a project work, that involves mixed match of supervisors, departmental heads should ensure regular meeting between a student and his supervisors.
   Pertaining to division of responsibilities, the School of Graduate Studies should state clearly through writing the roles of the principal supervisor and co-supervisor for each research project.

3. The study further revealed that more than half (53.2%) of the students were not assigned supervisors in the first year and 6 out of 10 participants who were interviewed thesis topics were not approved. Heads of departments and Graduate Coordinators should always ensure that supervisors with expertise in students' research areas are available before they admit them to avoid situation where students are assigned to non-experts.

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