Research Supervisors' Beliefs and Practices related to Supervision

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore research supervisors' beliefs and practices related to supervisory support provided to research students at MPhil and PhD level. This study used a qualitative case study research methodology. The study was delimited to four Social Science departments (related to Education, Psychology, Sociology, and History) in a public university in Pakistan. All supervisors of the selected departments were invited to participate in this study. Through purposive sampling technique, ten research supervisors from the selected departments were recruited as a sample for the study. Lee's (2008) framework—based on five approaches to supervision related to supervision, namely, functional, enculturation, critical thinking, emancipation, and relationship development—was used to develop a semi-structured interview guide and subsequently analyse the interview data. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data from the supervisors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with willing participants at the mutually agreed time and place. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants, and the audio recordings were used to transcribe interview data into transcripts. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse transcripts. Findings show that most of the supervisors' understanding of the supervisory support were closely related to the five conceptions of supervision. Not all supervisors use all the approaches to supervision. Workshops related to the supervisory support should be arranged using national and international experts in order to make the supervisory practices of supervisors more effective.

Keywords: Supervision; public university; content analysis; case study

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Introduction

In the recent decade, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has been striving hard to promote world-class research culture in Pakistani universities, especially in the area of Social Sciences. Coupled with other factors, this has led to the massive influx of research students in universities having a diversity of research interests. Most of the public universities in Pakistan—relatively new but aspiring to become world-class universities—are also experiencing the same massive influx of research students. As a result, some research students are forced to work on topics different from their supervisors' expertise, thus creating a challenge for research supervision in Pakistan. In such situation, it is hard to maintain the quality of supervision provided to MPhil and PhD students since the essential factor in the successful completion of research work, that is, the quality of supervision would not be according to the national as well international standards prescribed for supervision.

In literature, the characteristics of effective research supervisors are suggested, that is, the research supervisor has the qualities like he or she should be energetic, experienced and knowledgeable who should be capable of investigating and enhancing the research practices of their research students resulting in their personal growth and reflection (Abiddin & West, 2007; Gube, Getenet, Satariyan, & Muhammad, 2017). Sambrook, Stewart, and Roberts (2008) states that the central role of a supervisor is to provide the research students technical support and guidance in the conduction of research studies. It is also the supervisor's responsibility to provide his or her research students with emotional and affective support (Benmore, 2016). A productive relationship is significant for both the supervisors and the research students (Wellington, 2010). Therefore, it can be asserted that an essential person in the research student's life throughout their research study is his or her research supervisor (Eley & Murray, 2009).

Research students' expectations are not met sometimes. As most research students expect from their supervisors that they will be guided and helped by them during their research work from the start to the end. The research students also think that the supervisors will give them proper time and feedback for the students work and give them feedback toward their overall progress. Many factors frequently become the cause of research students' failure in their research work in which the rare meetings with the research supervisor, unavailability of the supervisor and the lack of direction to the research students related to their work from their supervisor. Sometimes, the working alliance is not developed at the start of the research work, which influences the relationship between the research students and the supervisor.

Many international research studies have provided evidence that research students' frustration and dissatisfaction with various aspects of supervisory support influence progress and development of positive relationship among research students and supervisors (Satariyan, Getenet, Gube, & Muhammad, 2015). In addition, numerous

studies show that the quality of supervisory support and relationship are critical components of research students' projects. In recent years, supervisory support has been a "burning topic" for research students and international research literature as well. However, with the exceptions of few studies (Ali, Ullah, & Sanauddin, 2019; Hammad, Ahmed, & Zahoor, 2018; Saleem & Mahmood, 2017; Saleem & Mehmood, 2018), there seems a dearth of research studies related to supervisory support in the Pakistani context. These studies mainly explored research students' perceptions and experiences related to the nature of supervisory support which they received from their supervisors during their research work. While some studies explain good characteristics of supervisors from the expectation of research students and supervisors towards supervisory practices; however, till now there is a need to explore the perspective of supervisors toward the research supervision and the expectation of the research supervisors (Lee, 2008, 2010, 2011), especially, in the Pakistani context.

The current study aims to explore the beliefs and practices of supervisors related to supervisory support because there is little empirical evidence in the literature available towards good supervisory support in the Pakistani context. Moreover, this research study aimed to understand the extent of the match between the research supervisors' practices of supervisory support and the five conceptions of supervisory support as articulated by Lee's (2008) framework. This framework is based on five approaches to supervision, which identify the basis for good supervisory support. A good supervisor must use all these approaches in his supervision in order to provide effective supervision to research students. Five main approaches of good supervision are articulated by Lee (2008) as:

> *Functional* – where the issue is one of project management; *enculturation* – where the student is encouraged to become a member of the disciplinary community; *critical thinking* – where the student is encouraged to question and analyse their work; *emancipation* – where the student is encouraged to question and develop themselves; and *developing a quality relationship* – where the student is enthused, inspired and cared for. (p. 267, emphasis added)

This framework is based on an examination of the literature on supervision—which was later refined after filtering it with the help of interview data from supervisors (Lee, 2007, 2008). This is also used in various international contexts to explore beliefs or experiences about the nature of supervision (Lee, 2007, 2008). For instance, Lee reports that "it has been tested now with groups of supervisors at universities in the UK, Sweden, Denmark, South Africa and Estonia" (2010, p. 19).

This framework argues that supervision practices are effective if they are based on the good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all five approaches and if they incorporate an appropriate and creative combination of different approaches (Lee, 2010, 2011). The blending of approaches is advised since it is perceived that supervision is an

interrelated practice in an organisation. However, the functional approach to supervision is given importance since it gives the background to all supervision related practices (Lee, 2010, 2019).
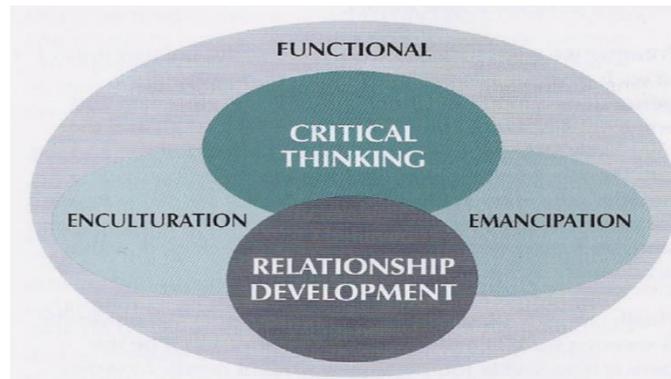

Figure 1: Interrelationship between different approaches (Lee, 2010, p. 22).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study research methodology. Merriam (2009) states that qualitative research study is a naturalistic inquiry. It is also called the interpretive case study as it tries to find ways of understanding: how people understand their skills and experiences in the world (Lune & Berg, 2017). This research study followed the model of the interpretive case study. In addition, this research study required insight into a problem (about the supervisory support which they provide to their research students); therefore, this was an instrumental case study (Stake, 2008). This case study was descriptive in nature because in this research study participants provided detailed descriptions related to their beliefs and practices concerning supervisory support during interviews (Stake, 2008, 2010, 2013).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the beliefs and practices of research supervisors for providing supervisory support. Moreover, this research study aimed to understand the extent of the match between the research supervisors' practices of supervisory support and the five conceptions of supervisory support as articulated by Lee' (2008) framework related to supervision—namely, functional, enculturation, critical thinking, emancipation and relationship development. The research aim was divided into the following research objectives:

(1) To explore research supervisors' beliefs and practices related to the functional approach of supervisory support?

(2) To explore research supervisors' beliefs and practices related to the enculturation approach of supervisory support?

(3) To explore research supervisors' beliefs and practices related to the critical thinking approach of supervisory support?

(4) To explore research supervisors' beliefs and practices related to the emancipation approach of supervisory support?

(5) To explore research supervisors' beliefs and practices related to the relationship development approach of supervisory support?

The study was delimited to four Social Science departments: Education, Psychology, Sociology and Pakistan Studies of the chosen university. The reason for focusing on Social Science departments was inspired by the fact of the least research output at the national level in the area of Social Science. Moreover, it is inspired by the HEC's recent initiative to enhance Social Science research in Pakistan. The research sample comprised of ten supervisors from the four selected Social Science departments. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the participants. When a researcher relies on his or her own decision for choosing the sample from the population, the technique is known as purposive sampling (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Detail of ten supervisors selected for the interviewing purpose is given below:

Table 1: Supervisors' Demographic Information

S. No.	Name	Gender	Academic Qualification	Supervision Experience	Department
1	Participant 1	Male	PhD Education	MPhil/PhD	Education
2	Participant 2	Male	PhD Education	MPhil/PhD	Education
3	Participant 3	Male	PhD Education	MPhil	Education
4	Participant 4	Male	MS Sociology	MPhil	Sociology
5	Participant 5	Male	PhD Sociology	MPhil	Sociology
6	Participant 6	Male	MS Sociology	MPhil	Sociology
7	Participant 7	Female	PhD Psychology	MPhil/PhD	Psychology
8	Participant 8	Female	PhD Psychology	MPhil	Psychology
9	Participant 9	Male	PhD History	MPhil	History
10	Participant 10	Male	PhD History	MPhil	History

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. For this purpose, the first thing which the researchers needed was access to the supervisors. The researcher got supervisors' contact details from the administrative office with the permission of the department heads. Then supervisors were asked via email and/or telephonic conversation about their willingness to participate in a research interview. The time and the date for the interview were fixed with mutual understanding. Researchers selected the semi-structured interview form. In this type of interview, a researcher can change questions

related to the situation and can easily cover the themes which he/she wants (Creswell, 2012). In addition, the researcher can ask more questions if the participant is not giving the required information and handle the situation with some new questions to get the required information which he wants to know (Mason, 2018).

In all interviews, the first researcher introduced the topic, assured the supervisors that the conversation would be kept in secret, and their name would not be shown to anyone (Kvale, 1996). In each interview, it was ensured that the participant was feeling ease and comfort. Before conducting the interview, the first researcher assured that nobody disturbed or interrupted the interview. The researcher kept polite behaviour and showed interest in the participant's views. The researcher was also aware and careful about her own behaviour that no word could hurt or disturb the participant, and the main purpose of the interview was just to know the participant's views. The researcher was well aware of the different techniques of the interview and knew the limitation. In the whole interview process, the researcher never guided any participant toward the things which the researcher wanted from the participants.

Before each interview, the researcher sought permission from participants for recording the interview and with their permission, the researcher recorded all the interviews. Two participants did not agree to record the interview initially, but when they saw that the writing of their views was taking more time, they allowed the researcher to record the interviews. For recording, the researcher checked the tape recorder and then put it in front of the participants, so their voice must be so clear. During the interview, the tape recorder was checked several times for ensuring proper recording.

Before conducting interviews, the researcher informed all the participant about the main purpose of the interviews clearly. The researcher also asked the participant whether they had any question related to the interview they could ask before starting the interview. The first few minutes of the interview were very decisive. Before talking freely with the interviewer, the participant wanted to know about the interviewer feelings and experiences. The researcher made good conversation with the participant by giving respect and listening to their views carefully and attentively and by showing the participants her keen interest in the conversation (Kvale, 1996). At the end of each interview, the researcher revised some essential questions and also confirmed that the answer of the participant was right. It was ensured that anything more if they wanted to tell the researcher—were included (Kvale, 1996). It was helpful for the researcher because it gave a chance to the participant to think and if they had something in their mind, they could describe. The interview process continued until the saturation of data—when no new theme emerged (Roulston & Choi, 2018).

After collecting data, the interviews were analysed through qualitative content analysis, a method for systematically describing meanings of qualitative data (Schreier, 2014). After data collection, all interviews were transcribed from the Urdu recording to English

language transcripts. After the translation, transcripts were checked by an English language expert for accuracy. Then, researchers used manual procedures to analyse the data. For the data analysis purpose, the researchers used a framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which identifies four stages for data analysis and interpretation of data. First is data collection, in which a researcher collects data, the second step is summarisation and condensation, in which the researcher develops a summary form of data, the third step is data display, in which the researcher displays relevant themes of data in the table and the final stage of data analysis is the conclusion and verifying in which the researcher verifies the final results of the qualitative case study. All steps were taken as prescribed so that the validity and reliability of the findings could be ensured (Roulston, 2014; Saldaña, 2011, 2013).

Findings

This section presents findings from the analysis of the interview data pertaining to supervisors' beliefs and practices related to supervision. Before asking about the beliefs and practices of supervisors, the first researcher asked the supervisors about the factor in supervisory support, which they thought, was the most important factor in supervisory support. Most supervisors reported that the supervisor's guidance was the most important factor because, without it, research students could not complete their research works in time. Others mentioned various factors in supervisors' guidance. For example, three supervisors highlighted these factors:

> I think the most necessary thing that the supervisor should ensure the development of scientific attitude in the supervisees. So, this is the thing that I focus on, and this is very important for the completion of a thesis. (Participant 3)

> The important factor in giving supervisory support is preparedness and motivation of the supervisee to do the tasks. And for this purpose, the supervisor's efforts to motivate research students to achieve targets is the key factor. (Participant 2)

> Writing is a key factor in supervisory support. I think these students are not just students, but these are the future supervisors, so the most important factor in supervisory support is to teach the students how to write. (Participant 7)

They were also asked about their understanding of supervisory practices and, especially, their knowledge related to five approaches to supervision as articulated in Lee's (2008) framework. Their responses revealed that they were unaware of these approaches, and

they admitted that they had not heard about different dimensions to the very concept of supervision before.

Functional approach

This section presents the analysis of supervisors' practices in relation to the functional approach to supervision which requires guiding, forecasting, directing, acquiring assets and monitoring the research students. The interview data analysis revealed that most supervisors did not have research students with a different area of interest. Moreover, when they found any difficulty with the areas of research of their supervisees, they suggested them to transfer to other supervisors who were more capable in those areas of research. They reported that they always tried to have research students with the same area of interest. One of the participants reported:

> I select research students who are interested in my area. Many research students come with a blank mind, and they usually say, 'Sir, I do not know what kind of area or topic I should select.' So, I guide them and give them topics which are related to my area of expertise. (Participant 4)

Most supervisors reported that they properly helped and guided in the designing and conducting of the research studies of their research students, from the start till the end, from the literature review until the recommendations. However, very few reported that they not only provided guidance but also corrected their manuscripts with respect to grammar and formatting issues. They reported that the role of a supervisor was not just to guide the research students—but also to provide them with all kinds of help as they required.

With the exception of one supervisor, the majority of the supervisors reported that they always gave a specific task to their research students related to their research so that they could easily complete their work. Moreover, all the supervisors reported that research students did not submit their work on time. They reported that sometimes they followed the rules and met the deadline, but most of the time, they delayed their work.

Questions related to supervisors' satisfaction with their current level of expertise revealed that the majority of the supervisors were satisfied with their level of discipline expertise and they all emphasised their belief that there is room for improvement. Most supervisors had a positive conception of their expertise level. They believed themselves to be experts in their students' areas of research and believed to have a full grip on their areas of research. Few supervisors thought that there was always room for improvement, so they were reluctant to say that they were expert in their research students' areas of research. For example, two participants reported:

> No one could be an expert, I think. I learn daily. As a researcher, you know it very well sometimes you get stuck in your research work. This creates a problem for the supervisor too. So, with the help of other

supervisors, I find solutions. I think I am not an expert and more work needed in this field. (Participant 10)

I feel comfortable with quantitative methods, and I think I am an expert in this area of research. But now I am interested in working within the qualitative domain because this one is more required in Social Science, particularly. I have so many things to learn. (Participant 3)

Enculturation approach

This approach is closely linked to the introduction of the research students with the research community. The supervisors observe their research students like a family doctor. A supervisor will offer some exact expertise, but he will also become a gatekeeper to numerous learning assets, expert views and networks. The supervisor can decide the early gate of researcher life, which could be suitable for the early stage of the researcher (Lee, 2008).

Questions related to supervisors' beliefs and practices for encouraging their research students to attend conferences related to their research topics, all supervisors reported that they always encouraged their research students to attend the conferences related to their research work. However, they reported that most of the research students were female in Social Science departments and for them it was difficult to travel intercity, to leave home and to go to the different cities or even within the country; therefore, generally, male research students were more active, and they followed their advice regarding participation in conferences.

Most supervisors reported that they frequently attended conferences with their research students, but very few reported that they attended conferences related to their research students' research work. Some supervisors reported that they attended conferences, but not all the conferences which were related to their research students' areas of research. Moreover, the majority of supervisors reported that they published articles in their research students' areas of research—not necessarily related to their all research students but few articles related to their research students' area of research. For example, a participant reported his practice as:

Yes, I encourage not only my own research students but also my other students. I advise them to write articles and submit to the conferences not only to the conferences but for publishing in journals. And my students not all the students, but many students take part in conferences. Recently we attended an international conference at the Allama Iqbal Open University and my 15 students, along with my MPhil students, attended the conference. That was a great experience. (Participant 2)

Another participant reported,

> Most students just come for the degree, so they just want to complete their research work. If I ever told them to attend the conference, they never followed my order. One of my students came with the same work, I always guided her on how to change and correct the work. I suggested her to attend a conference related to her topic. She bluntly told me, 'I just want to complete my thesis and kindly help me with this.' So, what can I do for such kind of students? (Participant 4)

Majority of the supervisors reported that they guided their research students from the selection of area or topic till the end of the research study—and wherever research students needed, they guided them. Research students openly came to visit to their offices, and they guided them in areas of their needs. Few of the supervisors reported that they not only guided the research students but also provided the material related to their research work.

Critical thinking approach

Critical thinking approach focuses on behaviour, attitudes and a set of skills that allow a listener or reader to relate balanced criteria to the way of thinking of speakers and writers (Lee, 2008). To know conceptions of the critical thinking approach in supervisory support, supervisors were asked to comment on the specific strategies they use to enhance the thinking ability of their students.

Most supervisors believed that the best way to enhance the thinking ability of the research students was reading and discussion. They maintained that through reading and discussion, they were always able to enhance the thinking ability of the research students. They gave their research students ideas to think, and they also guided them to create something new based on these ideas. For example, one of the participants reported:

> I advise my students to read more and more because reading habits not only increase your thinking ability but also improve your level of information. I assign them readings, and after reading, we discuss in supervisory sessions. I ask them probing questions. And I think in this way students' thinking ability increases. (Participant 1)

Another participant reported,

> I recommend them reading materials from different sources and recommend them to participate in conferences and then involve them in discussions to enhance their thinking ability. And I use the opportunity of workshops and discussion forums where students gather and get knowledge related to their research. (Participant 2)

> Only one supervisor reported that he never gave them an idea and he just guided them. First three months he never guided them, and he made research students cry

because he had the belief that after going through this tough struggle, they would be able to think about their topics and they would try to create something new. He expressed that he wanted to make his research students become creation oriented. In these three months, he throws them in a river to teach them how to fish. He perceived that his supervision philosophy was really different from other supervisors, but it worked for his research students all the time.

To understand supervisors' practices related to the kind of feedback they provide to their research students. Most of the supervisors reported that they provided all kind of feedback to their research students. They also reported that the feedback was mostly in written form, while sitting in front of the student, sometimes in a very polite way and sometimes very harshly. To explore the supervisors' beliefs and practices related to providing topic appropriate feedback. All the supervisors responded positively—that they helped the research students in providing topic appropriate feedback. Except one, almost all the supervisors believed that their feedback helped the research students to become more expert in their research work.

Emancipation approach

Emancipation in a supervision approach which is based on the assumption that research students should be given support as well as challenges. This approach allows supporting the individual transformation of the research student (Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2000). Supervisors' beliefs and practices related to what they do to make their research students independent scholars were also explored.

Most of the supervisors stated that in research work, it is the basic thing to make a research student an independent scholar. For this purpose, they guided them, recommended them to read books, articles, research papers and indulged their research students in all those activities which might play a role in making them an independent scholar. Few supervisors responded that they let their research students do their own work by themselves—believing that this helps research students become an independent researcher.

Another participant reported, "Activities to find out different types of materials, literature search and discussion—all these make the student an independent learner" (Participant 10). Few supervisors reported that when research students did their own work by themselves, they become independent. One of the participants reported, "I guide my students not to copy/paste the text. I ask them to read the literature deeply and other books related to their topic. When they work hard and do not copy/paste, this helps them to make independent learners" (Participant 1). Another participant reported:

> From the first day, I tell them, I'm here just for guiding you. Don't expect
> anything more from me, so they work themselves, study the literature and

rely on different sources of data. I think this is the best way to make them independent scholars. (Participant 8)

All the supervisors reported that they helped the students in providing topic appropriate feedback. One of the participants reported that "When the topic is finalised by the discussion, and it is the most critical part of the research feedback is provided in the topic selection phase." (Participant 3) Another participant reported, "Yes, surely as a supervisor, it is my duty to guide the students regarding their topics, and I do this" (Participant 8). However, another participant reported:

> I help the students in the topic selection. I give my students appropriate feedback. One of the reasons is that first of all, I want to understand their interest, and I ask them what kind of area they want to select for their research work. So, when they select the topic I give them appropriate feedback to refine the topic. (Participant 5)

Relationship development approach

Supervisors' understanding of the relationship and being connected was also explored. This approach to supervision suggests that relationship development is a very important factor for supervisors and also for research students because of the poor relationship between research students and supervisors may hinder the successful completion of the degree.

Most of the supervisors' responses were positive—they stated that their research students were connected with them. With the help of the internet, they were connected with them. They also reported that few research students were active in this regard, and few were lazy. Few supervisors reported that their research students were not active in this regard—just their few research students were active. Supervisors believed that they always provide proper time and guidance to their research students, but most of the research students had no interest to complete their work in time.

> We have easy access to each other. But there are different types of students, the very regular and very active students but the very active ones are least. Mostly the students in their learning habits are average, and they depend on the teacher, and it's not good. They themselves should be active; rather, they should be proactive. I think we are not developing such kind of skills in them. (Participant 3)

Another participant reported, "Students doing their research work regularly visit my office weekly and discuss the problems they face in their research work. Agenda focused meeting are conducted each week" (Participant 2). One of the participants reported, "They can easily contact me through mobile, internet and emails whenever they want to meet with me. Not all students are active, but I have to make them active" (Participant 8).

Most of the supervisors reported that they provided proper time to their students. They scheduled time for every student, and they often came to meetings according to the scheduled time. One participant reported, "I am always committed to giving time to them" (Participant 3). Another participant reported, "Time for each scholar has been fixed every week, and during that time students have to discuss every point of their research work" (Participant 2). However, another participant reported, "I try my best to give proper time and guide to my students. But due to my academic activities sometimes students suffer. In spite of that, I try to facilitate them" (Participant 1). One of the participants reported differently. He reported, "I try to facilitate them, but it depends on my other activities. Sometimes I provide them fixed time, and sometimes they wait for hours, but because of my busy schedule, it becomes impossible for me to give them proper time" (Participant 5).

Few supervisors reported that their students were not active in this regard just their few students were active students. One of the participants elaborated: "Most of my students are not active. They come to me just only for two or three times. I push them and make them active. Mostly, students are job holders or married. They are stuck in their own life" (Participant 4). One of the supervisors reported, "I feel difficulty in this regard. Students fix a time for meetings, and most of the time, they do not show up. They do not take the research work seriously" (Participant 9).

Discussion and Conclusion

All the supervisors were not knowledgeable of the five basic approaches of supervisory support as articulated in Lee's (2008) framework, but most of the supervisors used these five approaches in their practices related to supervisory support. All of the supervisors use the functional approach in their supervisory, and this is the most used approach in all the supervisors. Most of the supervisors follow the enculturation approach by encouraging their research students to attend the conferences, but few teachers neglect this approach. Most of the supervisors use the critical thinking approach to enhance the thinking ability of their research students and give them different tasks which they believe would be very helpful for enhancing their thinking abilities. However, few of the supervisors do not focus on it. Most of the supervisors want to make their research students an independent scholar, and they try their best to make their research students an independent scholar. Most of the supervisors have good relationships with their research students, and they also give them proper time and feedback. However, a few give a tough time to their research students, but with the sole purpose of enhancing their learning in their areas of research.

All supervisors provided support to research students related to project management, coaching, evaluation and argument analysis, mentoring, facilitation and emotional intelligence. Some of the supervisors just fulfilled only one or two approaches of

supervisory support, but the majority of the supervisors supervised their research students, according to Lee's (2008) framework. They are well experienced and mostly fulfil the requirement of five supervisory approaches. This study has provided a detailed description of the beliefs and practices of supervisors responsible for providing supervisory support in a Pakistani context. It is hoped that this study would help provide guidance to future supervisors for effective supervisory support for research students.

Though the use of qualitative case study research design and purposive sample size limit generalisations, the findings of this study can help develop the supervisory support mechanism for research students in Social Science departments of Pakistani universities. The research study was delimited to only four departments of Social Science, but the exploration of beliefs and practices of all Social Science department's supervisors will be more helpful. Workshops related to the supervisory support should be arranged using national and international experts related to supervision in order to make the supervisory practices of supervisors more effective. Also, all supervisors should be informed about the five approaches of supervision because in this way they can perform well by providing literature on the five approaches of supervision to the supervisors so that they could enhance their knowledge and skills related to supervision. Moreover, supervision related policies may be amended to ensure the incorporation of the five approaches of supervision so that supervision can be improved by using policy levers.

Findings indicate that most of the supervisors use the functional approach in their supervision, and this is the most common approach used by the supervisors. The supervisors also use the enculturation approach by motivating their students to attend conferences, and only a few supervisors neglect this approach. Similarly, most of the supervisors use the critical thinking approach to enhance the thinking ability of their research students and give them different tasks, which they believe would be very helpful for enhancing their thinking abilities. However, few of the supervisors do not focus on it. Most of the supervisors want to make their research students independent scholars and try their best in this regard. Most of the supervisors have good relationships with their research students, and they also give them proper time and feedback.

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