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A PROJECT MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE OF PHD SUPERVISION PROCESS – TOWARDS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MODEL [ABSTRACT]

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	Continuing low percentage of on-time-completion of doctoral studies suggest the exploration of new approaches to the process is desirable.
Background	PhD studies may be viewed as a project- it is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product. Project management practices have proven to be helpful in numerous domains.
Methodology	Process analysis method will be applied, using: 1) semi-structured interviews with supervisors and supervisee, 2) data gathered by the school of advance graduate studies in higher education institute.
Contribution	The research will explore the appropriated measurable indicators of successful PhD and identify project management practices that promote better process and outcomes of PhD studies.
Impact on Society	Better and more efficient process will support lower individual and national spending on doctoral studies
Future Research	Further research should explore relevance of the findings in various settings (characteristics of the supervisor and supervisee, higher education system etc.)
Keywords	doctoral studies, supervision, project management

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Traditionally, doctoral studies has been observed mainly as an apprenticeship process (Golde, Bueschel, Jones, & Walker, 2006). Park (2005) citing others, depicts that PhD is a period of learning the tricks of the trade and the art and the science of research. However, the continuing low percentage of on-time-completion (Elgar, 2003; Kim & Otts, 2010; National Research Council, 2011; Roberts, Tinari, & Bandlow, 2019; Sowell, 2008), suggest the exploration of other approaches is desirable. Indeed, calls for a more structured and better coordinated process have been voiced and some efforts have been made (e.g., Golde et al., 2006; Roberts, Tinari, & Bandlow, 2019; Sowell, 2008). Such structure may be offered by exploring PhD studies within the project management framework. As a project, PhD studies is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product (A guide to the project management body of knowledge: PMBOK (®) guide, 2017), i.e., skilled researcher. Project management practices have proven to be helpful in numerous domains (engineering, software, development etc.). Thus, this research will explore the added value of project management best practices to the PhD supervision process. Specifically, this research aims to explore the following questions:

- What are the appropriated measurable indicators of successful PhD?
In order to promote quality education of PhD students, success indicators are required. Measurable success indicator will facilitate effective control over the process and thus supports the promotion of quality and efficiency.
- What project management practices promote better outcomes of PhD studies?
Following successful PhD students, based on the success measurements defined, this research aimed at identifying project management practices contribution to the supervision process.

Two primary research methodologies will be used in this research. In order to analyze the supervision process and identify the fit between project management best practices and the supervision process practices, a process analysis method will be used (Poole, Van de Ven, Dooley, & Holmes, 2000; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). This analysis will support the development of a model for a supervision process promoting successful PhD. Two groups of subjects will be in the focus of this research. The first is supervisors of PhD students, from two faculties (social science and engineering) with varying degrees of experience in supervision. Such choice will provide a wide range of inputs relevant to the research. The second group of subjects will be the supervisors' former supervisee who completed their studies (i.e., PhD graduates). In semi-structured interviews, the subjects will be asked about the supervision process and its output (e.g., goals definition, measurable milestones, submission to conferences and journals, etc.). The second methodology to be used in this research, aimed at measuring successful results of the process will be the analysis of relevant data gathered by the school of advance graduate studies in the institute regarding academic performances and experience of the supervisors, and academic performances of the supervisee.

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BIOGRAPHIES



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