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CHALLENGES FACED BY SUPERVISORS-SUPERVISEES DURING RESEARCH SUPERVISION AT AN EMERGING SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL UNIVERSITY: LIVED EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a study conducted at a university in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The research explored challenges faced by supervisors-supervisees during the conduct of a formal research project. The study focused on the relationship between students and supervisors. A qualitative research case study was adopted to explore experiences of supervisors and supervisees at the purposively chosen institution under study. Narrative interviews and open-ended interviews were used as the core data collection tools from a sample of 8 research students and 4 lecturers from two faculties of the university under study. The findings of the study revealed that lack of communication, delay and poor feedback, lack of ethical considerations, non-availability of some supervisors, lack of commitment and ill-preparedness by students, were the key aspects that influenced the negative supervisory experiences of the students and supervisors who participated in the study. The study proffers recommendations and interventions that could be used by those in authority in the university under study, by supervisors, and by research students in order to improve and change the supervision experience. Amongst these are the adoption of Faculty Collaborative Research model, training of students and supervisors, and communication guidelines.

Keywords: Research supervision, Supervisor, Supervisee, Rural University, South Africa.