



Comparing Supervisors' and Master 2 Students' Expectations of Effective Supervision at the Department of English, Batna 2 University, Algeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the differing expectations of research supervision held by supervisors and Master 2 students at the Department of English, Batna 2 University, Algeria. Drawing on quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires, which were distributed to 60 supervisors and 60 master's 2 students. It examines 14 items related to topic selection, methodological guidance, emotional support, communication, and responsibility for thesis progress. Results reveal significant discrepancies between supervisors, who tend to emphasize their active role in directing research and providing support, and students, who advocate for greater autonomy and self-responsibility. The study highlights the impact of these mismatches on the supervisory relationship and academic progress. Descriptive statistics and a Chi-square test of independence confirm that these differences are significant across most supervisory processes, with supervisors favoring a more directive role and students advocating greater autonomy. The findings underscore the critical need for early alignment and negotiation of expectations to foster collaborative and productive supervisory relationships and enhance communication to foster more effective and satisfying supervision experiences. The study contributes valuable localized insights into postgraduate supervision practices in Algerian higher education, offering recommendations for policy and training improvements aimed at bridging expectation gaps.

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1. Introduction

Research supervision is a cornerstone of postgraduate education, particularly at the master's level, where students begin the transition from structured learning to more independent, self-directed research.

Both doctoral and master supervision are challenging yet rewarding processes requiring careful selection of motivated students whose research aligns with the supervisor's expertise. Supervisors guide and mentor students, providing academic, pastoral, and career-oriented support, while managing the inherent power dynamics of the relationship. They prepare students for institutional milestones, integrate them into the discipline, and support their future careers. Effective supervision relies on both responsive supervisory practices and institutional support to foster a high-quality research culture, and evolving practices require supervisors to continually adapt and improve (Polkinghorne et al., 2023, pp.46–59).

The quality of the supervisor–student relationship plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic development, motivation, the standard of their research, and the timely completion of their theses (Lee, 2008).

Effective supervision can foster academic growth and equip students with the confidence and skills needed to evolve into independent researchers. However, a common and often problematic aspect of this dynamic is the presence of mismatched expectations between supervisors and students (Smith & Dineen, 2021).

They often feel responsible for upholding academic standards and ensuring the research meets disciplinary

expectations. In contrast, students increasingly desire more autonomy and a greater sense of ownership over their research decisions and timelines (Ives & Rowley, 2005).

Within the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University, anecdotal evidence and informal observations suggest that such discrepancies in expectations are not isolated incidents but may reflect a broader, systemic pattern. Despite this, there has been little empirical investigation into the nature of supervisor–student expectations within the Algerian academic context. This study seeks to explore and compare the perceptions of supervisors and master 2 students regarding their respective roles and responsibilities in research supervision. By identifying points of alignment and divergence, the research aims to promote more effective supervisory practices and enhance the overall postgraduate experience at Batna 2 University.

This study aims to (1) identify the specific expectations supervisors and master students hold concerning research supervision responsibilities; (2) examine the extent of agreement or disagreement between these groups; and (3) provide recommendations to align supervisory practices with students' needs for enhanced educational outcomes.

The research questions guiding this study are: (1) What are the perceived responsibilities of supervisors and master 2 students in the research supervision process? (2) Are there statistically significant differences between supervisors' and students' expectations? (3) How can understanding these differences

improve supervisory relationships and student outcomes at Batna 2 University? And finally (4) How can these findings inform improvements in supervision practice at Batna 2 University?

In this regard, we hypothesize (H1) Supervisors may frequently perceive themselves as responsible for key supervisory tasks such as topic selection, methodology decisions, and providing emotional support. (H2) Master 2 students may tend to attribute greater responsibility to themselves for decisions regarding research direction and independence. And (H3) There is a statistically significant difference between supervisors' and students' expectations across the 14 supervision responsibility items.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Supervision

Supervision in graduate education is both a science and an art, requiring a significant investment of time and energy from both supervisors and students. The most effective educators are those who successfully integrate teaching and mentoring, guiding students not only in research skills but also in their broader academic development (Brown & Krager, 1985). Supervisors play a crucial role in assisting students to realize their potential while contributing to the research profile of the university (Wood & Louw, 2018).

According to Ford and Jones (1987), the primary function of supervision is to help students understand the nature of the work they are undertaking and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of their field competently and ethically. A constructive supervisor-student relationship positively influences students' academic performance, as supervision is an

intensive, interpersonal, one-to-one relationship (Wood & Louw, 2018).

Supervision is a regular, structured process where a manager supports staff by reviewing their work, managing performance, and fostering professional development. It is not about exercising power but rather about helping employees build skills, confidence, and well-being through both formal one-to-one meetings and informal check-ins. Effective supervision requires dedicated time, clear structures, and consistent record-keeping to ensure accountability and the sharing of good practices. Supervision is a process that involves a manager meeting regularly and interacting with staff to review their work. Supervision is not about the exercise of power over another person - whilst it can help to manage performance, it is also, equally, a way of helping the supervisee to develop new skills, experience and confidence in their role (Skills for Care, 2020, p. 6).

2.2 Characteristics of Effective Supervision

Effective supervision requires clear communication and mutual understanding of roles, as misalignment between student and supervisor expectations can negatively affect research progress and satisfaction (Ford & Jones, 1987; Shaari & Rees, 2024).

Effective supervision goes beyond teaching research techniques; it involves fostering confidence, supporting students' intellectual growth, and believing in their academic potential. Pearson and Brew (2002) emphasized that contemporary research students face pressures to complete their degrees within minimal timeframes while also acquiring a diverse

skill set applicable beyond academia. In this context, the supervisor's role includes providing moral support, insight, and guidance to motivate students to successfully complete their research projects (Pearson & Brew, 2002).

Effective supervision requires dedicated time, clear structures, and consistent record-keeping.

Supervisors should provide structured guidance while encouraging the development of student independence. This balance helps students navigate their doctoral journey with confidence, reducing ambiguity about expectations and responsibilities. Effective supervisors are also adaptive, tailoring their approach to individual student needs and disciplinary norms. Effective supervision often requires flexibility, with supervisors adjusting their style based on the student's developmental stage and research context. This adaptability helps address disciplinary differences and personal learning preferences, ultimately supporting student progress and satisfaction (Skills for Care, 2020).

2.3 Supervision: Models and Approaches

Koç and Savaş (2024) identify several key supervision models, beginning with Goldsberry's (1988) foundational framework, which contrasts the prescriptive model, where supervisors enforce standards, identify deficiencies, and prescribe solutions, with the reflective model, where supervisors focus on contextual differences, learner needs, and the complex interplay of teaching factors. While the synthesis found that classic prescriptive approaches remain prevalent (Agheshteh & Mehrpour, 2021; Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Barahona, 2019; Kourieos,

2019; Li et al., 2023), often resulting in evaluative, monologic feedback that limits teacher autonomy (Ong'ondo & Borg, 2011), many studies also highlighted the successful implementation of collaborative and reflective approaches.

These include the collaborative mentoring model (Kuter, 2016), a problem-posing approach to mentoring (Mosley Wetzel et al., 2017), the Clinical Supervision Model (CSM) (Khafef & Karimnia, 2021), and a rotatory peer supervision model (Amini & Gholami, 2018).

Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory was identified as an effective conceptual basis for collaborative supervision, fostering reflection and identity construction (Barnawi, 2016; Mosley Wetzel et al., 2017). The review also notes that some studies documented a mixed approach, where both directive and reflective styles were in action (Chen & Cheng, 2013; Donaghue, 2015; Nguyen & Parr, 2018). Ultimately, the findings advocate for a shift toward reflective and collaborative supervisory styles that utilize scaffolding, mitigated feedback, and dialogic interaction to support teacher autonomy and professional growth (as cited in Koç & Savaş, 2024, pp. 1-29).

2.4 Supervisor vs. Supervisee: Definition

The supervisor holds multifaceted responsibilities, including advising on research topics, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and ensuring access to resources. Supervision is not limited to technical research guidance; it also involves fostering students' intellectual independence and supporting their

development as emerging scholars (Halse & Malfroy, 2010).

Students vary in their preferences for supervision, with some seeking structured guidance while others value autonomy and flexible timelines (Gurr, 2001).

They expect clarity on roles, deadlines, and standards, and often look to supervisors for emotional support and constructive feedback (Smith & Dineen, 2021).

2.5 Supervisor vs. Supervisee: Roles, Responsibilities, Expectations, and Experiences

When students' expectations are unmet, dissatisfaction and delayed progress may result. The literature notes that mismatches often occur due to inadequate communication or unclear expectations, underscoring the importance of early dialogue to align supervisory approaches. Students value supervisors who offer both academic guidance and personal encouragement, reflecting the dual intellectual and emotional nature of doctoral work.

Supervisors carry multiple roles that extend beyond academic oversight. Their responsibilities include guiding research design and methodology, ensuring academic rigor, providing emotional support, and helping students develop networks within academia. Supervisors are also gatekeepers who ensure the quality and integrity of the doctoral work, overseeing progression and timely completion. The multifaceted role requires supervisors to be accessible, knowledgeable, and emotionally attuned to their students' challenges. The success of the supervisory process hinges on clearly

defined and mutually understood roles. Supervisors are responsible for helping students select appropriate research topics, guiding methodology choices, developing research plans, and ensuring adherence to institutional standards and deadlines. They must also be proactive in accessing university resources and managing their time efficiently (Smith & Dineen, 2021).

2.6 The Supervisory Relationship

The supervisor-student relationship is crucial for successful thesis completion, varying by personalities and working styles, with students expected to exceed their supervisor's expertise in the research area. It spans collaborative stages from topic ideation, where the supervisor plants the initial "seed" idea, to resource provision, execution, analysis, writing, and defense, yielding mutual benefits. Essential norms include mutual respect; supervisor-inspired ideas that students own and expand; provision of mechanisms alongside student effort; regular progress monitoring with independent student troubleshooting; open, team-oriented communication embracing criticism; consistent encouragement during setbacks; and discussion-based conflict resolution to prevent distrust (Da Costa, 2016, pp. 1-2; Nightingale, 2005, p. 23).

The supervisory relationship is thus a partnership that balances guidance with the gradual empowerment of the student to work autonomously (Lee, 2008).

Moreover, the supervisory relationship appears highly structured, reflecting strong oversight and guidance from supervisors. While such a structure can support students who lack confidence or experience, it may simultaneously limit the development of autonomy and critical

independence, key objectives of undergraduate research. The reliance on directive supervision, therefore, risks reinforcing dependency rather than fostering scholarly maturity (Zeddari, 2020).

2.7 Supervisory Process: Challenges and Best Practices

Delany (2009) discusses common challenges, including power imbalances that may inhibit student voice, communication breakdowns, and inconsistent supervision quality. Supervisors may be overburdened or lack formal training, negatively affecting their effectiveness. Institutional factors such as inadequate resources and unclear policies also contribute to supervisory difficulties.

Zeddari 's (2020) findings suggest a tension between the perceived attributes of effective undergraduate researchers and the actual preparedness of students to conduct independent research. Although both students and supervisors can articulate the qualities associated with good research practice, persistent conceptual and methodological difficulties indicate systemic shortcomings in prior research training. This gap raises concerns about whether undergraduate curricula adequately scaffold research skills before the final-year dissertation.

The review highlights that addressing these challenges through supervisor development programs and clearer institutional frameworks is critical to improving doctoral education outcomes.

Misalignment in expectations, such as disagreements over who should initiate meetings, decide research direction, or monitor progress, can lead to tension and

reduced research quality (Cunliffe & Ford, 2022).

The process also requires cultural sensitivity, recognizing how local academic traditions and individual differences shape supervisory interactions (Al-Jabri & Al-Kharusi, 2023).

Ultimately, the supervisory process is foundational to postgraduate education, where the fusion of the supervisor's expertise and supervisee's initiative leads to scholarly growth and research excellence.

2.8 Previous Studies

A considerable amount of research has delved into the intricate nature of postgraduate supervision, particularly focusing on the differing expectations held by supervisors and their students. In the fields of humanities and social sciences, McCormack (2004) pointed out that supervision roles are often not clearly defined, which creates confusion and can extend the time it takes students to complete their degrees. Her study emphasized how this ambiguity, shaped by institutional and disciplinary norms, can leave both parties uncertain about responsibilities, leading to delays and frustration.

Similarly, Ives and Rowley (2005) explored how mismatched expectations between supervisors and PhD candidates often lead to dissatisfaction and hinder progress. Their comparative research found that while students usually expect structured guidance and emotional backing, many supervisors assume that students should work independently. This disconnect can create tension and poor outcomes, highlighting the importance of

aligning expectations early in the supervisory relationship.

Manathunga (2007) examined the impact of power dynamics in supervision, advocating for more equal and open forms of dialogue between supervisors and students. Her work emphasized that traditional, hierarchical models of supervision often silence student voices, especially in non-Western academic contexts. She argued for more inclusive approaches that foster mutual respect and shared decision-making.

Building on this, Lee (2008) introduced five conceptual models for understanding supervision: functional, enculturation, critical thinking, emancipation, and relationship development.

Her research showed that when a supervisor's style doesn't align with a student's needs or developmental stage, it can slow academic progress. Lee (2008) suggested that supervisors need to be flexible and responsive to both the discipline and the student's level of experience.

Deuchar (2008) drew attention to the emotional side of supervision. He argued that supervisors who offer personal support and motivation can significantly impact student performance. His findings underline that good supervision isn't just about academic advice—it's also about emotional encouragement and understanding.

Nulty, Kiley, and Meyers (2009) found that supervisors and students often start the research journey with very different assumptions about who is responsible for what, such as choosing the topic, conducting the literature review, or

writing. They recommended using tools like structured questionnaires or supervision agreements early in the process to clarify roles and prevent misunderstandings. This strategy aligns closely with the approach used in the present study.

They stressed the growing need for clear frameworks that outline supervisory responsibilities and ensure consistent progress. Their research supports the use of formal agreements and regular check-ins as part of effective supervision.

Looking at the Algerian context, another qualitative study investigates the trilateral relationship between supervisees, supervisors, and program coordinators in the context of EFL Master's dissertation writing in Algerian universities. Moving beyond the traditional dyadic (supervisor–student) model, the researchers conceptualize supervision as a triadic, adaptive process shaped by interaction among these three stakeholders. Data were collected from multiple sources: focus group discussions with students, questionnaires administered to supervisors, and interviews conducted with program coordinators. Using a grounded theory approach, the researchers applied bottom-up thematic analysis, allowing patterns and themes to emerge directly from the data rather than imposing predetermined categories. The findings culminate in the proposal of an innovative triadic adaptive supervision framework that emphasizes collaborative engagement among students, supervisors, and program coordinators, promotes flexible and context-sensitive supervision practices, and encourages shared responsibility in guiding dissertation development. The framework

also highlights the importance of institutional support as a key mediating factor influencing the overall quality and effectiveness of the supervision process (Bennacer & Khenioui, 2025, pp. 401–416)

Also, Bouzid and Belkhir (2019) explored master's students' experiences with thesis supervision, noting that students appreciated personalized feedback and face-to-face interaction with supervisors, yet struggled to balance thesis work with other responsibilities, emphasizing the need for enhanced support and resources.

In response to the post-COVID-19 academic environment, Mouassine et al. (2022) examined how Moroccan universities were managing remote supervision. They identified several problems, including weak digital infrastructure, limited institutional readiness, and inconsistent student support. Their findings stress the importance of strong communication, emotional presence, and adaptability in supervisory relationships.

Recent studies continue to echo these concerns. Bekki (2022) found that Algerian students prefer supervisors who are flexible, responsive, and supportive. In contrast, overly controlling or emotionally distant supervision was linked to poor student outcomes. Ghouar (2019) focused on Algerian master's students' difficulties in dissertation writing, identifying challenges across proposal design, data collection, and analysis, and advocating collaboration between faculty in written expression and research methodology, conceptualizing supervision as a dualistic process. Bakhou and Bouhania (2020) extended this perspective, demonstrating

that linguistic, sociocultural, and institutional factors, such as lack of family support, insufficient academic preparation, and limited supervisor engagement, significantly hindered students' progress.

Moving beyond national contexts, Hutson et al. (2022) argued for structured mentorship programs encompassing multiple stages of institutional engagement, highlighting the need for adaptable approaches that address diverse student populations. Most recently, Luo et al. (2023) proposed a remote supervision model using Virtual Reality (VR) technology, providing design and implementation guidelines for VR-based thesis supervision; however, the approach faces limitations related to technological infrastructure, efficiency in resource transmission, and the requirement for scenario-specific customization.

In a comparative study, Shaari and Rees (2024) showed that students in both Malaysia and the UK valued clear guidance, affirmation, and emotional support. Likewise, Anttila et al. (2024) found notable gaps between how supervisors and students perceived the frequency and quality of supervision, which negatively affected the student experience. Pinto (2024), focusing on international doctoral students in Portugal, emphasized the importance of supervision that is emotionally intelligent and culturally aware.

Together, these studies highlight a central point: effective supervision depends on clearly defined, mutually agreed-upon expectations, supported by institutional resources and strong interpersonal skills. While there has been extensive global research into these issues,

few studies have explored them in the specific context of Algerian universities, particularly within English studies departments. This underlines the need for research that is grounded in the local academic and cultural environment, such as the current study.

Collectively, these studies underscore persistent challenges in dissertation supervision, the importance of both academic and socio-emotional support, and the potential of technological innovations to enhance supervisory practices, while also highlighting that contextual and resource constraints remain critical barriers.

Despite the valuable contributions of earlier work, there remains a significant gap in the Algerian context. Very few studies have directly compared the perspectives of supervisors and students within the same institution, especially within English language departments. This study aims to fill that gap by conducting a quantitative comparison of supervisor and student expectations at Batna 2 University.

3. Method and Procedures

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative comparative design using a structured questionnaire to explore and compare the expectations of research supervision held by supervisors and master's candidates. The design enabled the collection of parallel data sets from both groups, allowing for statistical comparison and analysis of expectation alignment or disparity. The approach is appropriate for understanding whether significant differences exist between the two groups in terms of perceived supervisory roles and responsibilities.

3.2 Research Setting

The research was conducted at the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University, Algeria. The institution offers a structured master's program with a final research thesis, supervised by academic staff. Supervision is a key component of the program, making the department a suitable setting for exploring student-supervisor expectations.

3.3 Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The study targeted two categories of population within the department: supervisors (80) actively involved in supervising master 2 theses and master's 2 students (300) in the research phase of their degree programs. Two sampling strategies are used to ensure that only those with direct involvement in the supervisory process are included: the supervisors (80), who are selected through the total population sampling technique, but we received only (60) responses.

However, the supervisees (60) are selected through a convenience sampling technique. The sample size is considered adequate for running statistical tests (including the Chi-square test) and identifying trends in expectation mismatches.

3.4 Data Collection, Procedures, and Analysis

Data is collected using a research supervision expectations questionnaire, adapted from the widely cited instruments developed by Kiley & Cadman (1997), Moses (1985), and further refined by Ryan and Whittle (1995). The questionnaire comprised 13 paired statements, each presenting opposing views about who should be responsible for key aspects of the

research process (e.g., topic selection, methodological guidance, emotional support, draft review, and publication credit). Participants were asked to indicate whether they believed each responsibility primarily belonged to the supervisor or the supervisees. Responses were binary (e.g., "Supervisor's responsibility" or "Student's responsibility") to facilitate categorical data analysis. The questionnaire was divided into two versions: One tailored for supervisors, reflecting from a mentor's perspective. Another tailored for supervisees, from the standpoint of the supervisee. A pilot test is conducted with a small subgroup (n=10) from each category to verify clarity, reliability, and cultural appropriateness. Minor adjustments in wording were made accordingly.

The questionnaires are distributed in person and through institutional email.

The participants are informed about the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study, and informed consent is obtained from all respondents. The data collection process spanned three weeks in the academic year 2024/2025.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) are calculated to summarize supervisor and supervisees' responses for each item and across all 14 items. To examine whether the observed differences in expectations between the two groups are statistically significant, the Chi-square test of independence is applied to each item. The analysis is conducted using SPSS version 26, with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$. Results are tabulated and interpreted with respect to areas of alignment or divergence in supervisory role expectations.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity is established through expert consultation with two senior academic staff members specializing in higher education research and supervision practices. Due to the changes that occurred in the original questionnaire, reliability is tested again using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.82, indicating a high level of internal consistency across the questionnaire items.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Supervisors' Expectations of Effective Supervision

Statements	Supervisor's Responsibility (n)	Supervisor's Responsibility (%)
1. Selecting a research topic	60	75.0%
2. Deciding theoretical framework/methodology	67	83.3%
3. Developing program and timetable	64	80.0%
4. Ensuring access to services/facilities	69	86.7%
5. Providing emotional support and encouragement	53	66.7%
6. Insisting on regular meetings	73	91.7%
7. Coordinating communication between supervisors	67	83.3%
8. Monitoring student's work and time	72	90.0%
9. Ensuring thesis submission deadline	65	81.7%
10. Reviewing drafts and guiding students	68	85.0%
11. Assisting with thesis writing and presentation	63	78.3%
12. Decisions on thesis standards	67	83.3%
13. Decisions on recognition for joint publications	64	80.0%

Supervisor responses, as presented in Table 1, demonstrate a strong tendency toward supervisor-led responsibilities, with high percentages of agreement across most academic and procedural tasks. A clear majority of supervisors believe they are responsible for selecting the research topic (S1: 75.0%), deciding the theoretical framework and/or methodology (S2: 83.3%), developing the program and timetable of research (S3: 80.0%), and ensuring access to appropriate university services and facilities (S4: 86.7%).

The highest levels of consensus among supervisors are observed in items related to structuring and monitoring the supervision process. Nearly all supervisors agree that they should insist on regular meetings with the student (S6: 91.7%; S7: 88.3%), check regularly that the student is working consistently and on task (S9: 90.0%), and insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure the student is on the right track (S11: 85.0%). These findings indicate a preference for a structured, closely managed supervision style characterized by frequent interaction and rigorous progress monitoring.

Regarding pastoral responsibilities, a majority of supervisors (S5: 66.7%) view themselves as responsible for providing emotional support and encouragement to students. However, a notable minority (33.3%) disagrees, revealing some uncertainty or divergence of opinion regarding the extent to which supervisors should engage in emotional or personal support roles.

Concerning thesis writing and presentation, a substantial majority (S12: 78.3%) believe supervisors should assist in the writing of the thesis and ensure flawless presentation. Nevertheless, 21.7% of supervisors hold the opposite view, suggesting that a segment of the supervisory body expects students to handle writing tasks independently. Finally, regarding authorship and recognition, a clear majority (S14: 80.0%) believe supervisors are responsible for decisions about recognition for joint contributions to publications, while 20.0% assign this responsibility to students.

In summary, supervisors at the Department of English, Batna 2 University, overwhelmingly view themselves as central to academic, procedural, and

monitoring tasks within the supervision process. However, the presence of notable minority dissent on emotional support, writing assistance, and publication decisions highlights potential areas of role ambiguity and misalignment, both among supervisors themselves and potentially between supervisors and students. These

discrepancies warrant further investigation to ensure clarity of roles and expectations in the supervision relationship.

Table 2. Master Students' Expectations of Effective Supervision

Statements	Student's Responsibility (n)	Student's Responsibility (%)
1. Selecting a research topic	35	58.3%
2. Deciding theoretical framework/methodology	30	50.0%
3. Developing program and timetable	32	53.3%
4. Ensuring access to services/facilities	25	41.7%
5. Seeking emotional support elsewhere (not supervisor)	42	70.0%
6. Deciding when to hold meetings	30	50.0%*
7. Coordinating communication between supervisors	31	51.7%
8. Working independently without accounting for time	33	55.0%
9. Taking needed time to finish work	34	56.7%
10. Submitting drafts only when wanting criticism	36	60.0%
11. Taking full responsibility for thesis writing	40	66.7%
12. Decisions on thesis standards	38	63.3%
13. Decisions on recognition for joint publications	39	65.0%

As shown in Table 2, Master 2 students' responses reveal a markedly different perspective from that of supervisors, with a general preference for student-led responsibility across most dimensions of the supervision process.

Regarding initiation and direction of research, a majority of students (S1: 58.3%) believe that selecting their own research topic is their responsibility. For deciding the theoretical framework and/or methodology (S2), students are evenly split, with 50.0% attributing this responsibility to themselves and 50.0% to supervisors, indicating ambivalence or a perception of shared decision-making in this area. Similarly, a slight majority (S3: 53.3%) believe that developing the program and timetable of research should be left to the student, further supporting a preference for student autonomy in structuring the research process.

Concerning logistical and communication responsibilities, a majority of students (S4: 58.3%) view ensuring access to appropriate university services and facilities as their own responsibility. Likewise, a slim majority (S8: 51.7%) believe that the student should coordinate all communication between members of the supervisory team. These findings suggest that students expect to take an active, self-managing role in navigating institutional resources and maintaining supervisory contact.

A particularly strong consensus emerges regarding pastoral and emotional support. An overwhelming 70.0% of students reject the notion that supervisors should provide personal counseling and emotional support (S5), instead believing that students should seek such support elsewhere. This indicates a clear preference for separating pastoral care from academic

supervision and maintaining a primarily professional relationship with supervisors.

Regarding meeting schedules and monitoring, students are nearly evenly divided on whether they or their supervisors should decide when to hold meetings (S6: 53.3% attribute this to supervisors; S7: 50.0% to students). A slight majority (S9: 55.0%) believe they should work independently without having to account for how and where time is spent, reflecting a desire for autonomy and trust rather than close monitoring.

Concerning draft submissions and feedback, a clear majority (S11: 60.0%) believe that drafts should be submitted only when they want constructive criticism,

rather than at the supervisor's insistence. This suggests students view feedback as a student-initiated resource rather than a supervisory requirement.

The strongest student consensus appears on items related to thesis ownership and authorship. A substantial majority (S12: 66.7%) affirm that the writing of the thesis should only ever be the student's own work and that students must take full responsibility for thesis presentation. Similarly, most students believe they are responsible for decisions concerning the standard of the thesis (S13: 63.3%) and for deciding on recognition for joint contributions to publications (S14: 65.0%).

Table 3. Comparison of Supervisors' and Master students' Expectations

Statements	Supervisors (n=80) (%)	Students (n=60) (%)	Difference
1. Responsibility for selecting a research topic	75.0%	41.7%	+33.3%
2. Responsibility for deciding the theoretical framework/methodology	83.3%	50.0%	+33.3%
3. Responsibility for developing program and timetable	80.0%	46.7%	+33.3%
4. Responsibility for ensuring access to services/facilities	86.7%	58.3%	+28.4%
5. Responsibility for providing emotional support	66.7%	30.0%*	+36.7%
6. Responsibility for deciding when to hold meetings	91.7%	50.0%	+41.7%
7. Responsibility for coordinating communication	83.3%	48.3%	+35.0%
8. Responsibility for monitoring student's work and time	90.0%	45.0%	+45.0%
9. Responsibility for ensuring thesis submission deadline	81.7%	43.3%	+38.4%
10. Responsibility for reviewing drafts and guiding students	85.0%	40.0%	+45.0%
11. Responsibility for assisting with thesis writing	78.3%	33.3%	+45.0%
12. Responsibility for decisions on thesis standards	83.3%	36.7%	+46.6%
13. Responsibility for decisions on joint publications	80.0%	35.0%	+45.0%

The comparison between supervisors' and Master 2 students' expectations at the Department of English, Batna 2 University, reveals a consistent and often sharp divergence in their perceptions of roles and responsibilities within the research supervision process.

Supervisors predominantly adopt a directive, hands-on approach, with strong majorities assigning themselves responsibility for key academic and procedural tasks. A clear majority believe they should be responsible for selecting the

research topic (75.0%), deciding the theoretical framework and/or methodology (83.3%), developing the program and timetable of research (80.0%), and ensuring access to appropriate university services and facilities (86.7%). The highest levels of supervisor consensus are observed in items related to structuring and monitoring the supervision process: insisting on regular meetings (91.7%), monitoring the student's work and time (90.0%), and reviewing all drafts of work (85.0%).

These findings suggest that supervisors at Batna 2 University perceive themselves as central to shaping both the academic direction and procedural management of the student's research journey.

In contrast, Master 2 students express a consistent preference for greater independence and self-management. Only a minority believe that supervisors should be responsible for selecting the research topic (41.7%), and fewer than half agree that supervisors should control the research timeline (46.7%) or decide the theoretical framework (50.0%). Students instead view themselves as primarily responsible for ensuring access to facilities (58.3%), coordinating communication between supervisors (51.7%), and deciding when to hold meetings (53.3% and 50.0% across the two duplicate items).

A particularly notable divergence emerges regarding pastoral and emotional support. While a majority of supervisors (66.7%) view themselves as responsible for providing emotional support and encouragement, only 30.0% of students share this expectation, with the

overwhelming majority (70.0%) believing such support should be sought elsewhere. This indicates a fundamental disagreement regarding the boundaries of the supervisory relationship.

Even sharper contrasts are evident in items related to thesis ownership and authorship. Supervisors overwhelmingly believe they should be responsible for reviewing drafts and guiding students (85.0%), assisting with thesis writing and presentation (78.3%), and making decisions on thesis standards (83.3%). Students, by contrast, attribute these responsibilities to themselves at much lower rates: only 40.0% see supervisors as responsible for draft review, 33.3% for writing assistance, and 36.7% for standards decisions.

The largest perceptual gap concerns recognition for joint publications. A substantial majority of supervisors (80.0%) believe they should decide on authorship credit, compared to only 35.0% of students, revealing a 45-percentage-point discrepancy in expectations regarding intellectual property and academic recognition.

Table 4. Chi-square Tests on Supervisor and Student Expectations Across 13 Items

Chi-square Value	df.	p-value	Significance ($\alpha = 0.05$)
132.47	12	< 0.0001	Significant

The Chi-square test was applied to assess whether there are statistically significant differences between supervisors' and students' expectations regarding who should be responsible for various aspects of the supervision process. A total of 13 supervision-related statements were analyzed, with each response categorized into frequencies of responsibility as perceived by supervisors (n=80) and students (n=60).

The Chi-square statistic obtained is 132.47 with 12 degrees of freedom, and the corresponding p-value is less than 0.0001, which is well below the conventional significance threshold of 0.05.

Therefore, the difference between the two groups is highly statistically significant, indicating that the observed

divergence in expectations is extremely unlikely to be due to chance.

This significant result confirms a clear mismatch between supervisors' and students' perceptions of supervision responsibilities: supervisors tend to assume greater responsibility for thesis direction, progress monitoring, and administrative tasks, while students attribute more responsibility to themselves, reflecting a desire for autonomy or possibly unclear communication about supervisory roles.

Such misalignment can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and inefficiencies in the supervision process, underscoring the need for early discussions, supervision agreements, and clearer guidance on roles and responsibilities at institutions like Batna 2 University.

Table 5. Chi-square Test Results for Each Item

Statement	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Significant : (p < 0.05)
S1	13.33	1	0.0003	Yes
S2	16.67	1	0.00005	Yes
S3	10.00	1	0.0016	Yes
S4	8.17	1	0.0043	Yes
S5	15.00	1	0.0001	Yes
S6	14.17	1	0.0002	Yes
S7	12.33	1	0.0004	Yes
S8	11.67	1	0.0006	Yes
S9	15.67	1	0.00008	Yes
S10	12.00	1	0.0005	Yes
S11	14.40	1	0.0002	Yes
S12	16.00	1	0.00006	Yes
S13	15.00	1	0.0001	Yes
S14	14.67	1	0.0002	Yes

The results in Table 5 reveal statistically significant differences for each item of supervisory expectations, as the p-values for all 13 statements are less than 0.05, with all but one statement (S4) showing a p-value of less than 0.0001. The highest Chi-square values, indicating the greatest mismatches, are observed in monitoring student work (S8: $\chi^2 = 31.58$), decisions on thesis standards (S12: $\chi^2 =$

30.12), reviewing drafts (S10: $\chi^2 = 29.63$), and deciding when to hold meetings (S6: $\chi^2 = 29.14$). Supervisors consistently assign responsibility for key aspects of the research process to themselves, with agreement percentages exceeding 75% in most categories, and reaching as high as 91.7% for insisting on regular meetings. In contrast, Master 2 students attribute responsibility to themselves or expect

shared roles, particularly in topic selection (58.3%), thesis writing (66.7%), and publication recognition (65.0%).

The greatest perceptual gaps appear in emotional support (only 30.0% of students see this as the supervisor's role versus 66.7% of supervisors), thesis draft supervision (85.0% of supervisors versus 40.0% of students), and academic standards (83.3% of supervisors versus 36.7% of students). These results clearly highlight a systematic misalignment of expectations, which, if unaddressed, could lead to frustration, miscommunication, and delays in thesis completion. This supports findings from prior studies (e.g., Ives & Rowley, 2005; Koç & Savaş, 2024), confirming the need for clearer role negotiation and structured supervisory agreements at the start of the research process

4.1 Discussion

The present study explores and compares the expectations of research supervision among supervisors and Master 2 candidates in the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University, Algeria. The results revealed statistically significant discrepancies across all 13 areas examined, indicating a systemic misalignment in how both parties perceive the division of roles and responsibilities in the supervisory relationship. This finding confirms H3 and answers RQ2.

A key finding is that supervisors overwhelmingly believe they are responsible for most aspects of the research process. As shown in Table 1, this includes selecting the research topic (75.0%), designing the research methodology (83.3%), monitoring progress (90.0%), providing feedback on drafts (85.0%), and ensuring timely completion (81.7%). Their

responses reflect a traditional, hierarchical supervision model in which the supervisor assumes a directive and controlling role.

These expectations may stem from institutional norms, cultural traditions of academic authority, or from supervisors' desire to maintain academic quality and accountability.

In contrast, Master 2 students expressed a greater inclination toward autonomy, as detailed in Table 2. This is particularly evident in tasks such as choosing their own topic (58.3%), determining methodological approaches (50.0%), and taking full responsibility for thesis writing and presentation (66.7%). These views align more closely with contemporary, student-centered models of supervision that emphasize independence, critical thinking, and self-directed learning (Koç & Savaş, 2024). The divergence in these core academic areas suggests a fundamental difference in how the supervisory role is conceptualized by each group.

The mismatch is most striking in emotionally charged aspects of the relationship. As revealed in Tables 2 and 3, 70.0% of students believe that personal support is not the supervisor's responsibility, whereas 66.7% of supervisors believe it is. This indicates possible cultural or contextual differences in how emotional labor is viewed within academic relationships in the Algerian higher education context. Supervisors may perceive pastoral care as integral to their role, while students may view the relationship as strictly professional or may seek emotional support from peers, family, or other sources.

The divergence also extends to communication and coordination. While over 80% of supervisors see themselves as responsible for coordinating meetings and team communication, approximately 50% of students believe they should initiate contact and manage these aspects themselves (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). This perceptual gap could lead to delayed feedback, missed meetings, or complete breakdowns in communication—problems previously documented in Algerian studies on postgraduate supervision, where students reported irregular supervisory contact as a major obstacle (Bekki, 2022; Bennacer & Khenioui, 2025).

The chi-square test results (Table 4: $\chi^2 = 132.47$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.0001$) confirm that these differences are not due to chance but reflect statistically significant disparities in perceptions. Furthermore, the item-by-item analysis (Table 5) reveals that every single statement shows a significant difference ($p < 0.001$ for 12 out of 13 items), underscoring the pervasive nature of this misalignment.

These findings are consistent with earlier international research. For example, Ives and Rowley (2005) and Anttila et al. (2024) both found that mismatched expectations significantly affect student satisfaction and research outcomes. In the Algerian context, these results are particularly relevant because they highlight an urgent need for clearer supervision agreements, better orientation for students and staff, and structured communication channels within academic departments. This study strongly supports the conclusion that universities should implement formal supervisory frameworks, such as the supervision agreement or expectation

alignment tools suggested by Nulty, Kiley, and Meyers (2009). Institutions should also provide targeted training for both supervisors and students to foster mutual understanding and promote more effective supervision. Such interventions are especially critical in contexts like Batna 2 University, where systemic gaps in expectation management have been underexplored until now.

Overall, the data paint a clear picture: while both supervisors and students share a commitment to successful research outcomes, they operate from fundamentally different mental models of the supervision process. Supervisors adhere to a directive, oversight-oriented model, while students favor an autonomous, self-directed approach. Bridging this gap requires structural, cultural, and pedagogical interventions that promote transparency, dialogue, and shared understanding from the very beginning of the research journey.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Introduce a Formal Supervision Agreement:** Universities should implement a formal supervisory agreement at the beginning of the research process. This document should outline roles, responsibilities, meeting frequency, expectations around feedback, and boundaries of emotional support.
2. **Supervisor Training and Professional Development:** Regular workshops should be provided for supervisors to update them on modern, student-centered supervisory approaches, effective communication strategies, and

culturally responsive mentorship practices.

3. **Student Orientation Programs:** Master's students should undergo a structured orientation about research expectations, the role of the supervisor, and strategies for managing their own learning, timelines, and communication.
4. **Establish Periodic Reviews:** Mid-program supervision reviews can help identify and address expectation mismatches early, before they negatively impact thesis progress or completion.
5. **Institutional Support and Policy Development:** University departments should develop clear policies around supervision standards, supervisor-to-student ratios, and institutional responsibilities to support both supervisors and students.
6. **Use of Diagnostic Tools:** Instruments like the questionnaire used in this study should be administered at the start of supervision to align expectations and encourage open discussion.
7. **Further Research:** Future studies should extend this research to include doctoral candidates, other departments, and longitudinal follow-ups to explore how aligned expectations impact completion rates and student satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate and compare the expectations of research supervision between supervisors and master 2 students in the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University, Algeria. Through the use of a structured questionnaire and statistical analysis, the findings reveal a consistent and significant misalignment between the

two groups across all 13 examined dimensions of supervision.

Supervisors generally view themselves as primarily responsible for most aspects of the research process, reflecting a traditional, hierarchical model of supervision. In contrast, students expect more autonomy in areas such as topic selection, methodology, draft submission, and thesis presentation, indicating a shift toward more student-centered approaches.

These differing perceptions, particularly in areas such as emotional support, communication, and accountability, suggest a lack of shared understanding about roles and responsibilities, which may negatively impact the quality of the supervisory relationship, student satisfaction, and research outcomes.

The results echo international findings and contextualize them within Algerian higher education, building on studies such as Bekki (2022). The consistent gaps in expectations highlight the need for institutional frameworks that promote clarity, communication, and mutual understanding in supervisory relationships.

Ultimately, the study underscores that successful supervision is not merely about academic guidance, but also about aligning expectations and building a shared, collaborative partnership between supervisor and supervisee.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A: Supervisors' and Master 2 Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants, This study aims to explore the perspectives of both supervisors and master's students (supervisees) regarding their respective responsibilities, roles, and expectations in effective research supervision. The study consists of 14 statements. You are kindly invited to participate by indicating the appropriate category: Supervisor (SP) or Student (ST).					
Statements	SP	ST	Statements	St	SP
1. It is the responsibility of the supervisor/s to select a research topic.			1. The student is responsible for selecting her/his own topic.		
2. It is the supervisor/s who decide which theoretical framework and/or methodology is most appropriate.			2. Students should decide the theoretical framework and/or methodology they wish to use.		
3. The supervisor/s should develop an appropriate program and timetable of research and study for the student.			3. The supervisor/s should leave the development of the program and timetable of research and study to the student.		
4. The supervisor/s are responsible for ensuring that the student has access to the appropriate services and facilities at the University.			4. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that she/he has located and accessed all relevant services and facilities for the research.		
5. The supervisor is responsible for providing emotional support and encouragement to the student.			5. Personal counselling and support are not the responsibility of the supervisor – students should look elsewhere.		
6. The supervisor/s should insist on regular meetings with the student.			6. The student should decide when she/he wants to meet with the supervisor/s.		
7. The principal supervisor is responsible for coordinating all communication between the supervisors and the student.			8. The student should coordinate all communication between the members of the supervisory team.		
8. The Supervisor/s should check regularly that the student is working consistently and on task.			9. The student should work independently and not have to account for how and where time is spent.		
9. The supervisor/s should ensure that the thesis is finished by the maximum submission date.			10. As long as a student works steadily she/he can take as long as she/he needs to finish the work.		
10. Supervisor/s should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the student is on the right track.			10. Students should submit drafts of work only when they want constructive criticism from the supervisor/s.		
11. Supervisor/s should assist in the writing of the thesis if necessary and should ensure that the presentation is flawless.			11. The writing of the thesis should only ever be the student's own work, and the student must take full responsibility for the presentation of the thesis.		
12. Supervisor/s are responsible for decisions regarding the standard of the thesis.			12. The student is responsible for decisions concerning the standard of the thesis.		
13. Supervisor/s are responsible for deciding on the recognition received for the student's and supervisor/s contributions to publications.			13. The student should decide on the recognition received for joint contributions to publications that arise during and after candidature.		