

**THE IMPACT OF ADOPTION STANDARD SUPERVISION  
PROCEDURE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH  
DISSERTATIONS IN AJAYI CROWTHER UNIVERSITY,  
OYO, NIGERIA**

**Ucha I. Mbofung**

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria  
[uchambofung@gmail.com](mailto:uchambofung@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

*In Nigerian universities, submission of dissertation is a core requirement for undergraduate students as a partial fulfilment for the award of a certificate. Few studies have addressed supervision and assessment of undergraduate student dissertation in relation to responsibilities of supervisors and students in the process of dissertation writing and assessment. This study examined students' perception of supervisor's responsibilities in assessing dissertation and also what the supervisors in the different departments in Ajayi Crowther University expect in students' dissertation. Total enumeration was used to include 328 final year students from the three faculties in the university and 15 lecturers across the same faculties who teach and supervise final year students' dissertations. Linear regression was used to determine the influence of supervision methods on assessment from students' perception and a correlation analysis was conducted to find the relationship between supervision and assessment on the quality of dissertation. Analysis shows that supervisors had different priorities when assessing students' dissertations. Linear regression implies that there is high influence of the combined four methods of supervision (the accessibility, regular meetings, requesting chapter drafts, research material provision) on the assessment as perceived by the students. A correlation analysis revealed that there is low correlation between assessment factors and supervision as perceived by the supervisors. This study fills a gap in knowledge about students' dissertation assessment process and what the supervisors expect in students dissertation particularly in Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Dissertation supervision, research assessment, Nigerian universities, Ajayi Crowther University.*

Project writing is an established academic feature of diploma and first degree programmes in tertiary institutions worldwide. In Nigeria, it is a core requirement as a partial fulfilment for the award of a certificate. Different institutions refer to project writing with different terms. Popular terms include dissertation, research project, and long essay. In Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, the terms long essay and research project are used within departments.

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

This paper adopts the definition cited and adopted by I'Anson and Smith (2004) that refers to this independent undergraduate research as a dissertation.

All dissertation writing follows stipulated guidelines often provided by the instructors or institutions. While these guides vary within universities, they emphasise the same basic elements that are common to most forms of undergraduate writing. They also take cognisance of specifics for each discipline in relation to faculty or departmental requirements, written conventions or rules about documentation, structuring, method of analysis and presentation.

Dissertation writing challenges students to apply many essential skills, including analytical and problem solving skills, to synthesise and identify a problem to be investigated, and integrate their coursework knowledge to produce satisfactory scholarly work. It therefore becomes imperative to teach dissertation writing skills in the context of supervisor's skills, expectations and student experiences. At the undergraduate level, the independent study is expected to show appreciable knowledge of chosen subject, logic, clarity and reasonable standard in presentation of results. However, the project research is not expected to make significant contributions to new knowledge.

Assessment of a dissertation is a process leading to a successful completion. Areas often scrutinised consist of many technical elements and some aspects relating to students commitment to meeting the general requirements of a dissertation. This does not nullify the provision of policies on supervision of dissertations which give guidance on the responsibilities of a supervisor and students. The important implication to students is that the assessment process establishes relationships between their cognition and writing abilities, extent of their commitment to and quality of supervision. Thus both student and supervisor are expected to work closely together to be able to meet faculty/departmental purposes and guidelines as well as establish or resolve unpleasant perceptions and concerns about dissertation writing. It has been argued that most undergraduate dissertations

research is centred on the supervisor's views of supervision and assessment with less emphasis on the students experiences (Smith, 2005). The author of this article shares similar opinion. This paper originates from the experiences of the author while guiding undergraduate research and also processing the dissertations submitted to the library by the departments. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationships between students' expectations and perceptions on dissertation writing and what the supervisors in the different departments in Ajayi Crowther University (ACU) assess in students dissertations.

### **Literature Review**

Scholarly literature provides a consensus that dissertation is a first academic independent research undertaken by an undergraduate and forms a significant element of final year assessment. A major objective of undergraduate dissertation is provision of valuable preliminary research training and development in various kinds of independent investigation and report writing (Kelly, 1990). As indicated by I'Anson and Smith (2004) the objectives of the undergraduate dissertation encompass both acquisition of intellectual knowledge and scholarly writing skills development. In part, it provides opportunities and enablement for students to integrate knowledge acquired from coursework in an area of specialisation with professional application (Kelly, 1990). It also provides opportunities and medium through which students systematically synthesis theories on chosen subject areas of interest, examine existing studies, understand the contents, select and apply appropriate research methods in analysis and discussion (Hemmings, 2001). Apart from application of academic knowledge, students develop specific distinguishing skills that aid independent research such as: evaluative/analytical skills, problem solving skills, zeal to participate in active learning through identification of a problem to be explored and completed (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). These are some of the skills that enhance the student's ability to know how to read around a chosen or given subject area, the different reporting styles of an acceptable report, and sources of relevant information and effective presentation of technical report (Mbofung, 2000).

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

As a significant beneficial component of the undergraduate curriculum, the process of writing dissertation adds several educational benefits to the student. It provides opportunity for the student to exercise responsible choice in method and content of their study, thereby encouraging a deep approach to learning and development (Ramsden, 1992). P'Anson and Smith (2004) anchored the value on provision of first opportunity to plan and carry out research, which at the first degree level forms the most substantial and independent assessment that the students will undertake. Furthermore, as opined by Ifedili and Omiunu (2012) it is an enthusiastic and joyous learning exercise; the student has more opportunity to learn from the expert knowledge of the supervisor (Kelly, 1990). It becomes obvious that the basic objectives of the undergraduate project and the several education functions lend credence to justify the symbolic value attached to dissertation writing for students as medium for promoting independent learning (Todd, Bannister and Clegg, 2004) and continue to have a central significance in the learning process associated with undergraduate study (Rowley and Stack, 2004).

All these factors imply that there is an established process that governs teaching, writing, supervision and assessment of dissertation of undergraduate students. In other words, there is a relationship between the three important activities that ensure successful completion and assessment of undergraduate dissertation. While teaching process ensures that students know how to read around a given subject to be able to choose a topic, know reporting styles, know information sources, data analysis and so on, writing skills ensure strict compliance to the technical presentation of facts. Supervision ensures strict compliance to requirements that enhance quality of final dissertation (Mbofung, 2000). The institution in its courses outline provides the overall policy while the lecturers teach and guide students on the right path to accomplishing the task successfully in record time. Therefore, the knowledge content should cover all essential areas as stipulated for research methodology, the progressing stages of the research process, structuring, organisation and time management. By implication, the students require a research plan which according to Kelly (1990) should integrate the development of the fundamental

skills that assist the students and the supervisors to make sure that the students make appreciable progress towards meeting targets and expectations.

Assessment of the dissertation is a process aimed at finding out whether students are realising the objectives of dissertation writing (University of Houston, 2006). It becomes therefore an open-ended process which starts from choice of topic to final submission. It is an exercise put in place to ensure quality and consistency while assessing or grading the final product. According to Pathirage et al (2004) three areas of assessment often considered are quality: consistency and criteria of assessment, though assessment of dissertation appears to be relatively underexplored. Furthermore, the study submits that quality calls for maintenance of good standard of current assessment practice by individuals, departments and institutions. In other words, if the dissertation of a student is not assessed by valid and reliable methods, standard is not guaranteed and raises issues of inconsistency. By implication, assessment adopts several methods that bring up concerns to staff and student in such areas as the role of the supervisor and the experiences and views of students on their experiences with the supervisors. For the supervisors, a challenging factor for proper assessment demands that they engage in continual development of their subject areas and methods of the disciplines in which they and students are handling as well as students learning processes (Rowley and Stack, 2004). In addition, the supervisor needs additional one-to-one communication skills, ability to provide constructive feedback on written work, advanced library and internet skills, organisational skills and time management approach (Kelly, 1990).

In all instances, a lecturer in the student's department who has good knowledge in the area of study is assigned to each student to agree on the research topic and also act as the supervisor. Part of the duties of the supervisor include: planning the research to meet all scheduled activities, giving guidance on expected research standard, presentation of report, language of subject, unethical research practices and avoiding plagiarism. Above all, the supervisor should be available and accessible to the student for advice and return well vetted drafts within reasonable time to avoid

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria*

unnecessary delay. On the part of the students, their responsibilities include: preparation of project proposal according to stipulated standard and submitting same at the time prescribed by the department; taking initiative in raising problems, discussing with the supervisor at agreed meetings and maintaining good progress at each stage of the work as agreed by the supervisor (Rowley and Stack, 2004, Kajian, 2015)

Implementation of a well laid out supervision plan that incorporates the suggestions above will shed more light on supervision process and experiences of both the students and supervisors. It will also reduce inconsistencies in management and assessment of dissertations caused by loss of sight of the project principles and evaluation criteria. Unethical practices such as plagiarism, stressful writing conditions, supervisor's delay in reading projects for further corrections and students engaging contractors to write for them as mentioned by Ifedili and Omiunu, (2012) will be controlled. It would be of interest to know the extent to which lecturers in higher institutions in Nigeria adhere and implement the stipulated supervision principles (if any) for commensurate assessment of dissertations of final year students the respective universities.

Despite the prominence in the academic status and perceived educational values of undergraduate dissertation, there have been great concerns for the future regarding the role, nature, quality of teaching, learning process and experience of both students and their supervisors and assessment practices. Rowley and Stack, (2004); Wiggins, Gordon-Finlayson, Becker and Sullivan, 2015) have linked the concern to dearth in literature while Pathirage, Haigh, Amaratunga, Baldry and Green (2004) have indicated that although reports have been published to ensure quality, consistency and improvement criteria of assessment, some of the existing work is relatively old with limited relevance to today's educational environment, in contrast to the growing literature on postgraduate and research student supervision. In relation to assessment practices and experiences of students and their supervisors, Webster, Pepper, and Jenkins (2000); I'Anson and Smith (2004) opined that most dissertation assessment is centred on the views of

supervisor and marking with much less emphasis on the students' perceptions. This situation nullifies the advantageous purpose for having a carefully designed assessment criteria as an important instrument for increasing the confidence of old and new assessors to take part in the assessment process (Pathirage et al 2004) while maximising quality and flexibility from the assessor's point of view.

Furthermore, though assessments practices may differ in different disciplines, different universities and countries, studies indicate that the assessment process involves analysis and adoption of different approaches and methods of evaluation of different elements including: dissertation proposal, collecting primary research data, written dissertation performance of the student and time management (I'Anson and Smith, 2004, Pathirage, et al, 2004 and Todd, Bannister and Clegg, 2004). These elements were of great concern as they created problems and challenges for students. On the part of the supervisors, the same scholars have associated concerns and challenges to the rapid growth in student members, class sizes, student-staff ratios and greater accountability of supervisors with emphasis on the necessity to ensure quality, consistency and improved criteria of assessment of undergraduate dissertation. Ifedili and Omiunu (2012) identified similar concerns as factors affecting undergraduate dissertation assessment by lecturers in Nigeria in addition to specific assessment challenges of the student categorised as enthusiasm, self-motivation and unethical practices.

In another study, Undergraduate Council Core Curriculum Subcommittee of University of Houston (UH) (2004) used an analytic method (weighting method) criteria to explore undergraduate writing assessment focusing specifically on whether or not their students were realising the vision of the institution in which perceptions and expectations define the purpose of the student action. The survey explored the relationships between what the UH faculty want and what the UH students produce. The paper provided what is desirable of student writing, indicating that faculties have fairly similar priorities when responding to student work. Some trait challenges highlighted by dissertation students included feeling of confidence in writing ability, consideration of

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

audience, appreciation of academic writing as a difficult task, and less on language problem. From the report, there is an indication that University of Houston has a research plan and the supervision follows the stipulated plan to significant positive level.

Understood this way and as opined by Todd, Bannister and Clegg (2004) it is expected that there is skilled supervision and supervisors and students will develop a good effective communication and relationship both in shared goal and interest. There should be encouraging support that fosters an independent approach to learning in which the role of the supervisor is not only conveying academic guidance but in addition to motivating the student by setting targets and timeliness. The overall summation from all that has been discussed is that there are many stakeholders playing different roles that have established influential relationships between the roles of supervisors and students in assessment and supervision of dissertation projects at the undergraduate level.

The central focus of this paper therefore is supervision and assessment of undergraduate student dissertation. Few reports have been published addressing aspects of quality of presentation, assessing undergraduate dissertation and supervision in Nigeria. As noted by Mbofung (2000) the quality of students' project at the Polytechnic, Ibadan, was poor in relation to grammar, spelling, wrong punctuations, lacking clarity and violating fundamental principles and execution of good writing. The reporter wondered whether the students were taught report writing let alone adequately supervised. Today, the success of a student producing quality and original work, which to a large extent is still strongly dependent on close monitoring by the supervisor still suffers debilitating influences such as immaturity of students, increased student enrolment, uncondusive learning environment and infrastructure, unethical practices to the extent of complete replication of previous work, poor time management, and impact of internet (Ilo and Ifijeh, 2010; Ifedili and Omiunu, 2012). On the part of the supervisors, the scholars attributed poor supervision to heavy work load, improper teaching of research methods, failure to



make themselves available for consultation, too many students assigned to lecturers for supervision.

### **Context and method**

Dissertation is a pre-requisite to the successful completion of all degree awarding programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Mbofung, 2000; Ilo and Ifijeh, 2010 and Ifedili and Omiunu, 2012). At ACU, the importance, aims, expectations and preparations put in place to support successful completion of final year project for all disciplines are very much the same as those of other tertiary institutions within and outside Nigeria. In all departments, students are taught research methods either in the third year or beginning of the final year prior to choosing a research topic. The course content emphasises basic elements of good writing, stylistic and methodological variations specific to departments. Research topic of interest is chosen by each student, approved by a supervisor and then the department. The length of the report should be reasonable and acceptable in format and quality. Discussions are possible through regular contacts with students while ensuring that student is made aware of the inadequacy of progress or standard of work that is below expected standard. Students are expected to complete and submit an original project report (6 credit units) at the end of the second semester of the final year. Going by the above, there is an apparent relationship between the expectation of each department and the final report submitted by the student.

Ajayi Crowther University currently runs twenty accredited programmes spread over four faculties: Social and Management Sciences, Humanities and Natural Sciences. The fourth, Faculty of Law is in its second year and the students are not part of this study. The university library (T. Y. Danjuma Library) has a technology driven centre for undergraduate research. Unlike in the social sciences and humanities, the project work in the natural sciences involves experimentation. Science students are subjected to seminar presentation and oral examination on the projects undertaken. The final project is assessed by external examiners.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Two questionnaires (one each for students and supervisors) were used to gather

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

information. The content of the questionnaires was adopted from literature with modifications. The students' questionnaire has seven questions made up of four factors of supervision (independent variables) and three factors of assessment (dependent variables) while the supervisors' questionnaire consist of two supervision questions and ten assessment items count for grading. Total enumeration (census) was used to include 328 final year students from the three faculties in the university, namely: Faculty of Humanities (34), Faculty of Social and Management Sciences (196) and Faculty of Natural Sciences (98) and 15 lecturers across the same faculties who teach and supervise final year students' dissertations. Linear regression was used to determine the influence of supervision on assessment form students' perception and a correlation analysis was conducted to find the relationship between supervision and assessment on the quality of dissertation in Ajayi Crowther University.

## **Findings**

### **1: Demographic information of students**

**Table 1: Students surveyed in each faculty**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
<b>Faculty of Natural Sciences</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>29.9</b>
<b>Humanities</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>40.2</b>
<b>Social and Management Sciences</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 1 is array of students' participation by Faculty

**Table2: Students surveyed in each department**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Communication and Media studies	54	16.5
History and International Studies	17	5.2
English	17	5.2
Business administration	28	8.5
Economics	49	14.9
Accounting	65	19.8
Biological Sciences	27	8.2
Earth Sciences	6	1.8
Chemical Sciences	17	5.2
Physical Sciences	48	14.6
Total	328	100.0

Table 2 shows array of the students' participation by departments. Total number of final year students surveyed to form the analysis is 328. The largest percentage of participants is from Department of Accounting with a total of 65 students (19.8%) while the least participants are from the Department of Earth Sciences having 6 students (1.8%).

## **2: Preparing students for dissertation writing**

The ability to produce an acceptable preliminary draft and the quality of the final dissertation relates a great deal on whether or not students are taught all the necessary rudiments of scholarly scientific writing and reporting often embedded in Research Methodology. This preparatory course is taught at the beginning of the first semester of the third year or in some instances in the first semester of the fourth before students choose or are given topics.

**Table 3: Level at which Research methodology was taught**

<b>Level taught</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
300l	154	47.0
400l	124	37.8

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria*

Both	50	15.2
Total	328	100.0

The responses in Table 3 confirm that students are taught Research Methodology at different levels of study either 300 or 400 level or both. Despite the variations, 154 (47.0%) and 124 (37.8%) of the students indicate that research methodology was taught at 300 and 400 levels respectively. There are few departments that spread the course over two semesters and this can be used to justify the response of 50 (15.2%) of students who have indicated ‘both’. This course provides the rudiments of scholarly writing in readiness for dissertation works.

**3: Supervision of dissertation**

Quality of final dissertation relates also to input activities in supervision. Institutional/departmental policy demands meticulous directions to be followed in supervision of student’s dissertations and the responsibilities of the supervisor often involve mentoring or guidance on various activities: planning, reading the work (possibly drafts of different chapters), paying attention to genre and grammar, omissions, faulty presentations, and so on. Without appropriate advice and feedback, the quality of the dissertation may be affected. In examining these issues, students were asked to respond to seven questions that would help to determine the common responsibilities of their supervisors which can become clues to how students are supervised.

**Frequency tables to the research questions answered by the students.**

**Table 4: Responsibilities of supervisors (n=328)**

Questions	Yes	No
Is your supervisor accessible when you need advice?	295(89.9%)	33(10.1%)
Do you maintain regular meetings with your supervisor?	263(80.2%)	65(19.8%)

Does your supervisor request written draft of each chapter?	252(76.8%)	76(23.2%)
Does your lecturer return each draft with constructive criticism?	261(79.6%)	67(20.4%)
Do you take initiative in raising problems or difficulties encountered in your project?	290(88.4%)	38(11.58%)
Does your supervisor provide you suitable research material?	201(61.3%)	127(38.7%)
Are you aware of the implication of inadequacy of progress or standard of work that is below expected standard?	258(78.7%)	70(21.3%)

Answers to research questions displayed in Table 4

**Question 1: Is your supervisor accessible when you need advice?**

Results indicate that of the 328 students, 295(89.9%) have access to their supervisors for advice when need be. Successful accomplishment of this task depends a lot on availability, accessibility and painstaking discussions of the supervisor. Even when there is a faculty/departmental policy and Research Methodology is taught, a supervisor is assigned to each student to advice and also give guidance on various activities and expectations of the project to be undertaken.

**Question 2: Do you maintain regular meetings with your supervisor?**

Responses to this question show that 263 (80.18%) of respondents maintain regular meetings with supervisors and 65 (19.8 %) do not. The length of time spent on supervision varies and may exceed the time allocated for meetings with students. The more important

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

expectation is maintaining contact through regular meetings. The frequency and duration of meeting are clues to the supervisor's input and quality of dissertation.

**Question3: Does your supervisor request written draft of each chapter?**

At different stages of the writing process, it is expected that the student produces some drafts as indication that the work is going on within schedule and that the report is in the correct form for final submission. Analysis of result shows that 252(76.8%) students responded favourably that their supervisors request written draft of each chapter.

**Question 4: Does your supervisor return each draft with constructive criticism within reasonable time?**

The responses of students as displayed in Table 4 indicate that majority (261 or 79.6%) affirm that their supervisors return each draft with constructive criticisms and within reasonable time. Students are concerned about their ability to complete the work in record time. Inability or delay in scrutinizing the drafts will consequently slow down the pace of work and this may lead to frustration thus creating opportunity for the student to adopt any convenient 'short-cut' that will enable completion of work on target.

**Question 5: Do you take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties encountered in your project with your supervisor?**

Responses to this question (Table 4) show an encouraging result that supports consistency and good quality dissertation. Over 80% apply initiative in raising or solving problems and less than 12% representing 38 students failed to apply this problem solving skill.

**Question 6: Does your supervisor provide you suitable research material?**

The proportion of students who indicated "YES" is 201(61.3%) and "NO" 127(38.7%).The responses to the question are not impressive and have implications for quality of dissertation and knowledge of supervisors. Undergraduate dissertation work places

lots of demands on the students in many areas including searching for appropriate bibliographic resources. Supervisors are expected to guide students on how and where to gather relevant resources. They can provide also reading list that can enhance further literature searches.

**Question 7: Are you aware of the implication of inadequacy of progress or standard of work that is below expected standard?**

Affirmative responses are prevalent (Table 4). By implication of this result, students were told the repercussions of some adverse practices such as bad time management and sub-standard dissertation. Unless the dissertation process is accompanied by fixed assessment criteria, supervisors may not fulfil a crucial role of ensuring that students are made aware of the inadequacy of progress or standard of work that is below the expected. Students have the right to request clarification in these situations.

**4: SUPERVISORS' ASSESSMENT OF DISSERTATION**

**Demographic information of the Supervisors**

**Table 5: Number of supervisors surveyed in each faculty**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Faculty of Natural Sciences	3
Faculty of Humanities	3
Faculty of Social and Management Studies	9
Total	15

**Table 6: Number of supervisors surveyed in each department**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Earth Sciences	1
English	2
Accounting and Finance	5
Business administration	3
Physical Sciences	2

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

Economics	1
History and International Studies	1
Total	15

A total of 15 supervisors have been used for this study. Tables 5 and 6 give frequencies of participants by faculty and department respectively.

**5: Supervisors' assessment of dissertations**

While supervisors have different priorities when reacting to students' written work, it is important to scrutinise some crucial elements that aid consistency in assessment and quality of final project before final grading. In an attempted to determine this, lecturers were asked: "When you read and assess project work (draft or final) which of the following do you emphasize and count for grading?" By implication, assessment process starts from choice of topic all the way to completion and considers several components of the scholarly write up

**Table 7: Responses to student writing by supervisors (n =15)**

Questions	None	Very little	Some	A lot
Accurate factual content			4	11
Originality and appropriate research process			6	9
Editing effective sentences			9	6
Synthesizing, editing and documenting sources		2	5	8
Grammar and mechanics			5	10
Developing the topic adequately			3	12
Style and presentation of the facts			3	12
Addressing the right audience		1	9	5
Draw conclusion from evidence			7	8
Language usage impresses		4	4	7



reader				
--------	--	--	--	--

Table 7 shows that all the nine possible elements of student dissertation were given different degrees of attention during the supervision period. The figures indicate the number of supervisors. The significant areas accorded a lot of priority as indicated by 12 supervisors respectively are: developing the topic accurately and style of presentation of the facts. Accurate factual content is given a lot of scrutiny by 11 supervisors while grammar and mechanics are considered a lot by 10 supervisors. Originality and appropriate research process has also significant response by 9 supervisors. Significant responses in favour of “sometimes” as indicated by 9 supervisors respectively include: editing effective sentences and addressing the right audience. The importance of progressive assessment of these elements of the work is a way of ensuring standardization of good quality dissertation across the departments and disciplines while maintaining consistency in grading the final work of each student.

### **6: Research Analysis**

Analysis of students’ perception

Linear Regression has been used for this analysis.

The identified questions (from the questionnaire) that made up four factors of supervision (independent variables) are:

1. Is your supervisor accessible when you need advice?
2. Do you maintain regular meetings with your supervisor?
3. Does your supervisor request written drafts of each chapter?
4. Does your supervisor provide you suitable research material?

While assessment (dependent variables) was measured using the following questions from the questionnaire

1. Does your lecturer return each draft with constructive criticism?
2. Do you take initiative in raising problems or difficulties encountered in your project?
3. Are you aware of the implication of inadequacy of progress or standard of work that is below expected standard?

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria*

Here, the following research questions were formulated.

1. How much of assessment factor 1 (Returning of each draft of project with constructive criticism within reasonable time) is caused by the combined effect of the four factors of supervision?
2. How much assessment factor 2 (students take initiative from supervision concerning difficulty encountered) is caused by the factor effect of four factors of supervision?
3. How much of assessment factor 3 (students awareness on the implication of inadequacy of progress or below expected standard work) is caused by the combined effect of the four factors of supervision?

**7: RESULT**

**Table 8: Dependent Variable: Does your lecturer return each draft with constructive criticism?**

<b>Model Summary<sup>b</sup></b>			
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.925 <sup>a</sup>	0.855	0.728.

A regression line was fitted to determine assessment factor 1 on the combine effect of supervision. The Rsquare value (coefficient of determination) is 0.855 which implies that there is high influence of the combined four methods of supervision (the accessibility, regular meetings, requesting chapter drafts, research material provision) on the assessment as perceived by the students. That is, the supervisors emphasize four methods in assessment to ensure quality dissertation.

**Table 9: Dependent Variable: Do you take initiative in raising problems or difficulties encountered in your project?**

<b>Model Summary<sup>b</sup></b>			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.440	0.194	0.248

The regression line fitted for assessment factor 2 gave a low coefficient of determination of 0.194. The implication of this is that the students seldom or rarely takes initiative and corrections from their supervisors on the difficulties they encountered which might affect the quality of their dissertation.

**Table 10: Dependent Variable: Are you aware of the implication of inadequacy of progress or standard of work that is below expected standard?**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.273 <sup>a</sup>	.333	0.256

The results from regression line in this case gave a coefficient of determination of 0.333 which implies that some students are not aware or not well informed on the implication of doing low quality dissertation.

### **Analysis of supervisors' perception**

Questions answered by the supervisor were grouped into two from the questionnaire:

1. Supervision:

- a) What words comes to mind to describe typical undergraduate student writing in your discipline?  
(Informed, Grammatical, Organized, Clear)
- b) What kinds of writing should undergraduate degree candidates in your discipline be able to do on a routine basis?(Synthesize several sources of Information, write detailed instructions, explain a decision concisely, arrange paragraphs concisely)

2. Assessment (10 items count for grading)

(Accurate factual Content, Productive and appropriate research process, Editing effective sentences, Organizing paragraphs to support a main idea statement, Synthesizing editing and documenting sources, Grammar and Mechanics, Developing the topic adequately, Achieving the appropriate purpose, Addressing

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria*

the right audience, Draws conclusion from evidence, Language usage impresses reader

**Table 11: A correlation analysis to find the relationship between supervision and assessment on the quality of dissertation in Ajayi Crowther University.**

Correlation	What words comes to mind to describe typical undergraduate student writing in your discipline? (Informed, Grammatical, Organized, Clear)	What kinds of writing should undergraduate degree candidates in your discipline be able to do on routine basis? (Synthesize several sources of Information, write detailed instructions, explain a decision concisely, arrange paragraphs concisely)
Accurate factual Content	0.1878	0.055
Productive and appropriate research process	0.0463	0.1258
Editing effective sentences	0.103	0.0963
Organizing paragraphs to support a main idea statement	0.2313	0.1815
Synthesizing, editing and documenti	0.2203	0.0753

ng sources		
Grammar and Mechanics	0.1565	0.193
Developing the topic adequately	0.1363	0.103
Achieving the appropriate purpose	0.0188	0.103
Addressing the right audience	0.346	0.2223
Draws conclusion from evidence	0.0933	0.4445
Language usage impresses reader	0.2443	0.0755

Results in Table11 indicate a general low correlation between assessment factors and supervision factors as perceived by the supervisors. This implies that assessment is not strictly based on supervision of students.

**Discussion on findings**

Generally, students were taught research methodology at either 300 or 400 level of study. This course provides the rudiments of scholarly writing in readiness for dissertation works. There is a possibility of the teaching period spilling over two levels in very few departments. However, the important implication is that students were given relevant background knowledge of all the stages of research process thereby ensuring that students acquired the fundamental skills before choice of topic. This, according to Kelly (1990) assists students and supervisors to make sure that the students progress at the same time minimise the ills caused by

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria*

derailing from the aims and steps to achieving quality student undergraduate dissertation. Also, during the interactive sessions a good student - supervisor relationship can be established. Such relationship provides opportunity to ensure that both student and supervisor agree on the acceptable boundaries of the different assessed elements and subsequent quality of the final dissertation.

Responses of the students to questions on accessibility and meetings with supervisors are impressive. Over eighty percent affirmed that their supervisors were accessible when they needed them. This implies that the supervisors were accessible to give academic guidance and maintained contact through regular meetings. It is at such meetings that supervisors request for drafts and give feedback that enable students to adjust to the right path to ensure adequate progress of work. Regular meetings would reduce unethical practices, motivate students and foster greater commitment to producing quality dissertation. Thus, the results of this study reiterate the benefits of supervision as submitted by Kelly (1990); Todd, Bannister and Clegg (2004; Rowley and Slack, 2004). In addition, the students would definitely value the prompt constructive feedback and advice related to quality and prompt execution of their works.

Furthermore, over eighty percent of the respondents applied initiative in raising problems that they encountered in their work. On the part of the students, having initiative in raising problems has several implications. Without this ability, the plans and activities of the students may not accommodate the input and help of others including the supervisors. Undergraduate dissertation work involves independent approach in which the student takes the initiative to a greater extent in choice of topic, searching for appropriate materials, carrying out survey and writing up of final copy. Along the line there will be problems and it is the student that ought to take initiative in raising them with the supervisor. Inability to raise problems may be an indication that the student is ignorant of what is expected; it can mean also that the student is unaware of implication of inadequate progress or standard of work. Therefore, to be on the safer side raising and discussing problems send alert to the supervisor on problems being encountered by each

student. Unfortunately, even though over eighty percent of the respondents applied initiative in raising problems, regression analysis for assessment factor 2 gave a low coefficient of determination of 0.194. This can be interpreted that the students took initiative but seldom or rarely adhered to corrections from their supervisors on the difficulties they encountered which might affect the quality of their dissertation. Similarly, a coefficient of determination of 0.333 strengthens the interpretation that some students are not aware or not well informed on the implication of doing low quality dissertation.

The results of the study showed also that significant majority of students affirmed that their supervisors requested for written drafts of each chapter and return same with constructive criticism. This occurrence prevailed in a similar study involving polytechnic students (Mbofung, 2000). The practice assists in producing good quality dissertation while maintaining consistency in assessment criteria. However, depending on the average number of students being supervised, level of knowledge of the supervisor, and commitment of the supervisor, there may be lapses. For example, Ifedili and Omiunu, (2012) in a study of faculties report that high student population in the faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities generate high student/supervisor ratio and this consequently makes project supervision more stressful than in the Sciences. Though no particular procedure or style is best, it is suggested that the supervisor reads the work in chapters so as to avoid boredom; reading bulky work and confusion which may arise as a result of ignorance of the content (Ekwenze, 2011). For supervisors, the result indicates a reasonable high level of commitment in giving guidance, advice and feedback thereby reflecting the work of guidance along dissertation journey as indicated by Rowley and Slack (2004).

The advantage of carefully designed criteria for assessment reduces inconsistency in assessment and maximises flexibility from the assessor's point of view. It ensures that the assessment practices are adhered to in line with the submission of Pathirage et al. (2004). Core elements of scholarly writing that were highly assessed in students' dissertations were: accurate factual content, grammar and language, originality and appropriate research

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

process and style of presentation of the facts, editing effective sentences and addressing the right audience. When a student has mastery of use of language in a chosen discipline, he/she can with minimal stress putt across all other areas above. Before binding the final work, the supervisor must have seen and corrected the errors so recommended. This reiterates that extreme care be exercised in supervising student dissertation prior final presentation and grading. If the assessment practices follow designed criteria, then dissertation research would not be centred on views of supervisors with much less emphasis on students' perceptions as reported by Webster Pepper and Jenkins (2000) and I'Anson and Smith, (2004). Linear regression analysis used test the combine effect of supervision implies that there is high influence and contribution of a combination of the accessibility, regular meetings, requesting chapter drafts, research material provision on the assessment as perceived by the students. That is, the supervisors make use of the four methods in assessing their students in order for them to have quality dissertation.

The proportion of students who affirmed supervisors provide suitable research materials was sixty percent, this is not impressive. Though the students may know some sources to consult, the supervisors will know better. The report of the study has implications for knowledge of supervisors. The process of providing suitable resources is more directional than the actual. It involves teaching adequate library skills including how-to use library catalogue, location of journals, CD-ROM searches for preliminary reading before choosing a topic. Textbooks and journals are not enough sources (Mbofung, 2000). Availability of previous dissertations will also assist students to understand the scope of topics (Kelly, 1990), However, as advised by the same scholar, supervisors should not undertake the search for the students because the process is an important assessment element of dissertation work. The result of the study suggests a downplay of appropriate research process involving literature search and literature review.

Result of correlation analysis to find the relationship between supervision and assessment on the quality of dissertation generates



unpleasant arguable interpretations some of which need further investigation. First, applying the interpretation of Undergraduate Council Core Curriculum Subcommittee of University of Houston (UH) (2004) the result implies that Ajayi Crowther University does not have an undergraduate research plan or policy and the supervision did not follow the stipulated plan to significant positive level. Furthermore, the prevailing circumstance negates the advantageous purpose for having a carefully designed assessment criteria as an important instrument for increasing the confidence of assessors, maintenance of standard of assessment process (Pathirage et al 2004) maximising quality and flexibility from the assessor's point of view. Secondly, the result confirms speculations of the author, Webster, Pepper, and Jenkins (2000); I'Anson and Smith (2004) who opined that most dissertation assessment is centred on the views of supervisor and marking with much less emphasis on the students' perceptions. On the side of the students, one can argue that they did not pay adequate attention to or were not properly taught salient elements of dissertation work, in addition to areas of assessment therefore resulting to low grading. Grading is used to standardise dissertation from start to finish (Warren ad Denning, 2011). By implication, supervision runs the whole length of preparing and following student from the initial beginning. Based on these interpretations, there is a relationship between teaching Research Methodology before choice of topic, supervision, consistency and quality of final draft of dissertation.

### **Conclusion**

The research provides an insight into supervision and assessment of students' dissertation in Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo. Students were taught research methodology in readiness for dissertation writing. By this, students were expected to write purposefully adopting appropriate language, style, logic, sources and well organised methods to produce quality dissertation. On the responsibilities of supervisors as perceived by the students, there were divergent opinions between students in the three faculties as to the key roles of the supervisors. The tests confirmed that there were significant relationships in the perceptions of students and those of the supervisors of the undergraduate dissertation research supervision and assessment in Ajayi Crowther University. Though supervisors had different priorities when reacting to students'

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

written work, they greatly emphasised on originality, accurate factual content, language use, style of presentation and less emphasis on conclusion. By these results, there are trace evidences in favour of standardisation in supervision and assessment of undergraduate dissertation in Ajayi Crowther University but more in favour of the argument the supervisors are not applying a stipulated an undergraduate research plan or policy. It may also be that the supervision process did not follow the stipulated plan to significant positive level. What cannot be ascertained is the quality of the content of each dissertation. This study recommends to all stakeholders to: adopt undergraduate research policy, emphasise skills for literature search which have great input in producing high quality dissertation for final assessment and ensure periodic reading of drafts to the benefit of supervisors and students.

**References**

Ekwenze, S. (2011). "Project work by students for first degree: an appraisal". *Nnamdi Azikiwe University of International Law and Jurisprudence*. Available at:  
[www.ajol.info/inex.php/nauilj/article/download/82418/72573](http://www.ajol.info/inex.php/nauilj/article/download/82418/72573)

Hemmings, S. (2001). "The place of the dissertation in learning to research". R. Humphrey and C. Middleton (Eds.) *Learning to research: resources for learning and teaching in sociology and social policy* (Sheffield, SSP2000/Teaching and Learning Network for Sociology and Social Policy).

Hussey, J and Hussey, R. (1997). *Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. London: Macmillan Press.

I'Anson, R.A. and Smith, K. A (2004). "Undergraduate research projects and dissertations: issues of topic selection, access and data collection amongst tourism management students". *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* 3:1 19-32.

Ifedili, C J. and Omiunu, S. (2012). "Supervision of undergraduate final year's project requirement in Nigerian universities – The way out of the wood". *Asian Culture and History* 4:2 153-158.

Ilo, P.I. and Ifijeh, G. (2010). "Impact of the internet on final year student's research: a case study of Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria". *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Available at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/403?>

Kajian, K. (2015?). "Guide to the writing of final year case study". Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra, Malaysia. Available at <http://exec.upm.edu.my/web/resources/8mix/Kajian%20Kes%20BI.pdf>

Kelly, M. (1990). "Supervising undergraduate projects". Professional Development Unit. Educational Technology Centre Workshop Series No. 2. Available at <http://teaching.polyu.edu.hk/datafiles/R25.pdf>

Mbofung, U. I. (2000). Student's project write-ups in Polytechnic: issues arising". *Nigerian Library and information Science Review* 18:1&2 7-17.

Mottiar, Z and Gorham, G. (2010). "Student and staff perceptions of the undergraduate dissertation – the good, the bad and the ugly". Available at: <http://www.shannoncollege.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/THRIC-2010-Full-Paper-Z>

Pathirage, C., Haigh, R., Amaratunga, D., Baldry, D. And Green, C. (2004). "Improving dissertation assessment". Extract from Education in a Changing Environment 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September, 2004 Conference Proceedings. Available at [www.ece.salford.ac.uk/proceedins/papers/cha\\_4rtf](http://www.ece.salford.ac.uk/proceedins/papers/cha_4rtf).

Ramsden, P. (1992). Learning to teach in higher education. London: Routledge

*The Impact Of Adoption Standard Supervision Procedure Of  
Undergraduate Research Dissertations In Ajayi Crowther  
University, Oyo, Nigeria*

Rowley, J. And Slack, F. (2004). "What is the future for undergraduate dissertation?" *Education and Training*, 46:4 176-181.

Todd, M., Bannister, P. And Clegg, S. (2004). "Independent inquiry and the undergraduate dissertation: perceptions and experiences of final-year social science students". *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 29 (3), 335-355.

University of Houston (2006). "Undergraduate writing assessment". Undergraduate Council Core Curriculum of University of Houston. 28p. Available at: <http://www.uh.edu/writecen/Resources/UndergraduateWritingAssessmentSpr06.pdf>

Webster, F., Pepper, D. and Jenkins, A. (2000). "Assessing the undergraduate dissertation". *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 25:1 71-80.

Wiggins, S., Gordon-Finlayson, A., Becker, S. and Sullivan, C. (2015). "Qualitative undergraduate project supervision in psychology: current practices and support needs of supervisors across North East England and Scotland". Available at [www.\users\computer\\_catalog\Downloads\Taylor&Francis](http://www.users.computer_catalog/Downloads/Taylor&Francis).

