

Evolving Team-Based Doctoral Supervision in Graduate Programs: Student Outcomes and Supervisor Roles

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Abstract

This study explored the evolving dynamics of team-based doctoral supervision in graduate programs in Baguio City, Philippines, focusing on its implications for student outcomes and supervisor roles. Using a qualitative design with digital ethnography, data were gathered from 10 doctoral students and 10 graduate school professors engaged in supervisory teams. Findings revealed six key themes: emergent supervisory roles, student outcomes and perceived benefits, coordination and communication challenges, digital platforms as supervision spaces, faculty perspectives on workload and development, and implications for graduate education. Results showed that supervisory teams provided diverse expertise, enriched feedback, and enhanced student resilience, thereby supporting timely dissertation completion. However, challenges such as role ambiguity, feedback delays, and digital fatigue underscored the need for clear agreements and structured communication routines. Faculty members recognized gains in mentoring skills and collegiality but expressed concerns over increased workload and reduced time for personal research. The study highlights that team-based supervision not only addresses the complex needs of doctoral training but also aligns with national policies of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals). These findings provide valuable insights for administrators, faculty, and policy makers in improving supervisory practices, strengthening graduate education, and ensuring sustainable research capacity in the Philippine context.

Keywords: team-based supervision, doctoral education, graduate programs, supervision roles, student outcomes, digital ethnography, Baguio City, Philippines, CHED, SDGs

1. Introduction

While global and national literature highlights the value of doctoral supervision, significant gaps remain in understanding how team-based supervision models align with sustainable development goals (SDGs). International studies have emphasized the benefits of multi-mentor supervision for improving completion rates and enhancing the doctoral experience (Lee et al., 2022; McCallin & Nayar, 2012).

However, these studies are often situated in Western or high-income contexts, with limited exploration of how such models can be contextualized within developing countries, particularly in Southeast Asia. In the Philippine setting, policies such as CHED Memorandum Orders encourage quality assurance and research productivity (CHED, 2012, 2019), yet there is a lack of empirical evidence on whether team-based doctoral supervision effectively translates into outcomes aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Furthermore, while the literature increasingly acknowledges the role of academic partnerships in promoting sustainable development (United Nations, 2015), little is known about how supervisory teams can operationalize SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by integrating external stakeholders into the doctoral research process. This gap suggests the need for localized research that examines how team-based supervision in Philippine graduate programs fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, enhances student success, and generates socially responsive research outputs that contribute directly to the 2030 Agenda.

Across the last decade, doctoral education has experienced a fundamental transformation as supervisory arrangements shift from the traditional single-supervisor model toward collaborative, team-based models. International higher education systems, particularly in Europe and North America, have increasingly formalized multi-mentor structures to address the growing complexity of doctoral research (European University Association Council for Doctoral Education [EUA-CDE], 2022). This evolution has been driven by the rising demand for interdisciplinarity, international collaboration, and diverse methodological expertise that a single supervisor may not always provide (Akerlind & McAlpine, 2017).

Hence, policy frameworks also reinforce this global trend. The European Union's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Networks, for instance, explicitly mandate joint supervision as a funding requirement, thereby embedding team-based mentorship as a norm in cross-sectoral doctoral training (European Commission, 2020). These policies frame doctoral supervision as a collaborative ecosystem that requires a range of expertise, support, and coordinated academic guidance. Professional supervisory frameworks have also emphasized the distributed nature of doctoral mentorship. The UK Council for Graduate Education's Good Supervisory Practice Framework outlines competencies spanning research design, ethics, project management, pastoral support, and career development, underscoring that supervision is rarely the sole responsibility of one academic (UK Council for Graduate Education [UKCGE], 2019). Such guidance has encouraged universities worldwide to adopt supervisory teams, ensuring a diversity of strengths that collectively address student needs.

Surprisingly, empirical studies provide evidence that well-designed supervisory teams can lead to improved doctoral outcomes. For example, a systematic review by Lee et al. (2022) noted higher on-time completion rates and greater student satisfaction in programs employing team-based supervision compared to single-supervisor arrangements. Similarly, Humphrey et al. (2012) observed that collaborative supervision reduces the risks of isolation and enhances the intellectual scaffolding available to students. However, these studies also highlight coordination challenges, including role ambiguity and conflicting feedback (Lee et al., 2022). Scholars have also explored the relational and interpersonal aspects of team supervision. Research suggests that effective supervision requires trust, explicit agreements on supervisory roles, and regular communication to prevent confusion or power struggles among supervisors and candidates (Bastalich, 2017). When these relational foundations are weak, students may experience

inconsistent guidance or delayed progress, undercutting the benefits of having multiple mentors (McCallin & Nayar, 2012).

In the Philippines, national quality assurance policies have laid the foundation for innovations in doctoral supervision. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued CMO No. 46, s. 2012, institutionalizing outcomes-based and typology-based quality assurance frameworks that emphasize measurable student and research outputs over input-focused measures (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2012). More recently, CMO No. 15, s. 2019 established policies and standards for graduate education, requiring institutions to demonstrate strong supervisory capacity and student research support systems (CHED, 2019). These initiatives are also aligned with the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), which defines Level 8 (doctoral) outcomes as involving highly advanced knowledge, leadership in complex contexts, and independence in research (Philippine Qualifications Framework [PQF], 2012). Team-based supervision provides a concrete mechanism to achieve these descriptors by ensuring doctoral candidates are supported by multiple mentors with complementary strengths, particularly in methodological rigor, policy analysis, and professional practice.

Consequently, within this national context, a mid-sized private university in a northern Philippine urban center (hereafter referred to as Highland University) has begun institutionalizing supervisory teams within its doctoral programs in Administration and Supervision. This shift was prompted by increasing enrollments, the diversity of student research topics, and the need for cross-disciplinary expertise that exceeds the capacity of individual supervisors. By pairing principal supervisors with co-supervisors specializing in methodologies, organizational change, or policy frameworks, the university aims to create a more holistic doctoral mentoring structure. Preliminary reflections at Highland University indicate that supervisory teams can foster more timely feedback, strengthen methodological rigor, and improve student completion rates. Yet challenges remain, particularly around coordination, clarity of roles, and balancing student autonomy with multiple supervisory voices. These issues mirror global findings that team supervision is most effective when grounded in explicit agreements, trust-building, and communication protocols (Bastalich, 2017; Lee et al., 2022). Thus, this study aims to examine the evolving dynamics of team-based doctoral supervision within graduate programs in the Philippines, focusing on its implications for student outcomes and supervisor roles.

This study is significant because it provides empirical insights into how team-based doctoral supervision can enhance graduate program management, student development, and institutional outcomes. For administrators, the findings offer evidence-based guidance in designing policies, workload models, and training programs that ensure supervisory effectiveness while fostering faculty collaboration. For doctoral students, the study highlights the potential of supervisory teams to improve research quality, provide more holistic mentoring, and increase the likelihood of timely completion. Finally, for broader stakeholders—including accrediting bodies, employers, and community partners—the study underscores the value of doctoral graduates who are not only more rigorously trained but also better prepared to apply interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to real-world challenges, thereby strengthening the relevance and impact of graduate education.

Review of Related Literature

The landscape of doctoral supervision has undergone notable transformation in recent years, with scholars increasingly focusing on the complexities, opportunities, and challenges of team-based supervisory models. Since 2022, a growing body of literature has highlighted the shift from traditional single-supervisor approaches toward collaborative mentorship structures designed to address interdisciplinarity, enhance research quality, and improve student outcomes. This review synthesizes recent studies on supervision practices, student engagement and wellbeing, evolving supervisor competencies, coordination mechanisms within supervisory teams, and the rise of cross-sectoral and international partnerships. By situating these developments within both global and local contexts, the review underscores how doctoral supervision has become a dynamic field of inquiry that continues to adapt to the demands of contemporary graduate education.

Global shift toward team-based doctoral supervision

Recent scholarship documents a clear shift from single-supervisor models to collaborative, team-based arrangements designed to meet the complexity of contemporary doctoral work, promote interdisciplinarity, and diversify expertise accessible to candidates (Kálmán et al., 2022; Guarimata-Salinas et al., 2024; Almlöv et al., 2024; Haley et al., 2024; Everitt et al., 2025). Studies describe co-supervision as a structured collaboration in which supervisors share roles and tasks, and emphasize the need for explicit role definition and early joint planning to reduce ambiguity (Kálmán et al., 2022; Almlöv et al., 2024). At the same time, work calling for a universal definition of the doctoral supervisor's multifaceted role (scholarly, pastoral, managerial) highlights continuing diversity in practice across systems and disciplines (Guarimata-Salinas et al., 2024), while field reports from novice co-supervisors underline how team culture and relational norms shape day-to-day supervision (Almlöv et al., 2024; Everitt et al., 2025).

Student outcomes, engagement, and wellbeing.

A growing evidence base links high-quality, coordinated supervision to stronger student engagement, productivity, and program satisfaction (Khuram et al., 2023; Feizi et al., 2023; Debray et al., 2024; Solms et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2024). Quantitative profiles from a large research-intensive university show that both the quality and frequency of supervision relate to doctoral candidates' burnout and engagement, suggesting that functional supervisory interactions are an investment in completion and wellbeing (Tikkanen et al., 2024). Network-analytic and qualitative studies likewise emphasize that resources (e.g., dependable feedback, empathetic mentoring, access to peer/faculty networks) predict belonging and progress, with mismatched or weak supervisory relationships associated with interaction difficulties and reduced confidence in completion (Solms et al., 2024; Debray et al., 2024; Pavliuk & Zhuchkova, 2025). Research on doctoral mental health further underscores supervision as a primary determinant of wellbeing and attrition risk, calling for relationally attuned practices (Hazell et al., 2025; Tikkanen et al., 2024).

Evolving supervisor roles, competencies, and professional development.

Recent systematic and empirical work converges on a competency profile that includes disciplinary expertise, methodological guidance, pedagogical skill, relationship management, and

functional/project management capacities, with students consistently valuing supervisory availability, constructive feedback, and ethical conduct (Haley et al., 2024; Pyhältö et al., 2024; Knight et al., 2023). Parallel studies frame supervisors as role models for responsible conduct of research (RCR) and argue for explicit preparation in dialogical communication, power-sensitive mentoring, and integrity practices (van Loon et al., 2025). Institution-level supervisor development initiatives—ranging from mandatory programs to micro-credentialed courses—report benefits for supervisory repertoire, identity formation, and consistency of practice across teams, though time and workload remain barriers (Fossland, 2023; Karampelias et al., 2025; Bekova et al., 2025). Collectively, these studies reposition supervision as a professional practice requiring continuing development, reflective learning, and institutional scaffolding (Haley et al., 2024; Pyhältö et al., 2024; van Loon et al., 2025; Fossland, 2023; Karampelias et al., 2025; Bekova et al., 2025).

Coordination mechanisms inside supervisory teams.

Where multiple advisors are involved, alignment tools (e.g., structured discussion prompts, explicit role matrices, supervision agreements) help manage mixed messages and reduce feedback conflict (Anttila et al., 2024; Almlöv et al., 2024). Controlled studies and design-based interventions report that early, formalized conversations among co-supervisors improve communication routines, clarify decision rights, and set expectations for turnaround times and authorship, while also giving students a transparent map of “who does what” (Anttila et al., 2024; Almlöv et al., 2024). Research on feedback encounters shows that teams that co-construct formative feedback and share a language for quality criteria foster uptake and self-regulation, including in technology-mediated settings (Jensen et al., 2025; Ta et al., 2024). Recent trials of a structured co-supervision discussion tool similarly report gains in collaboration and reduced friction in multi-mentor contexts (Clegg et al., 2025).

Cross-sector, networked, and international models.

Work on industrial doctorates and triple-helix partnerships shows how multi-mentor arrangements spanning university–industry–government ecosystems can strengthen applied skill formation, career readiness, and innovation relevance, often formalized through co-supervision and co-tutelle agreements (Compagnucci et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2022). Studies in computing and engineering signal that clearly negotiated responsibilities among the academic supervisor, company mentor, and candidate are critical for alignment and timely progress (Jaakkola et al., 2022). In parallel, large-scale digital mentoring networks and cross-institutional communities of practice demonstrate how mentor networks (beyond a single advisor) enhance belonging, productivity, and transitions, particularly for underrepresented researchers (Syed et al., 2024; Tuma et al., 2024; Debray et al., 2024). Together these literatures broaden “team supervision” to include distributed mentoring ecologies that operate across sectors and borders.

Ongoing challenges and contextual gaps.

Despite progress, recent reviews and regional studies highlight persistent challenges: workload and role strain for supervisors, coordination costs in teams, and uneven access to mentoring resources (Löfström et al., 2024; Massyn, 2024; Pyhältö et al., 2024). Evidence from Hong Kong and the UK suggests that relational climate, power dynamics, and transparency in expectations continue to shape outcomes, with downstream consequences for both students and supervisors (Li et al., 2025; Knight et al., 2023). Comparative and program-level work argues for context-sensitive models that account for national

policy environments, institutional capacity, and disciplinary cultures—particularly in under-studied regions—paired with rigorous monitoring of completion, wellbeing, and research integrity indicators (Bekova et al., 2025; van Loon et al., 2025; Tikkanen et al., 2024).

Taken together, the reviewed studies illustrate both the promise and the persistent tensions inherent in team-based doctoral supervision. Evidence consistently points to improved student support, stronger research outputs, and expanded supervisory capacity when roles are clearly defined and collaborative practices are sustained. Yet, unresolved issues such as workload distribution, relational dynamics, and context-sensitive adaptation underscore the need for further investigation, particularly in under-studied regions like Southeast Asia. This literature review therefore not only highlights emerging supervisory trends but also identifies critical knowledge gaps that justify examining how team-based supervision operates within Philippine graduate programs in Administration and Supervision, and how its evolving dynamics affect student outcomes and supervisory roles.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design employing the digital ethnography method, which is particularly useful in examining how supervision is practiced and negotiated through online platforms where much of today's academic mentoring occurs (Pink et al., 2016). The research was conducted in Baguio City, a major educational hub in Northern Philippines, where graduate schools have increasingly adapted digital tools in teaching, research, and supervision. The population consisted of doctoral students and graduate school professors engaged in team-based supervision in Administration and Supervision programs. Using purposive sampling, the study selected 10 doctoral students and 10 graduate school professors who met the inclusion criteria of having at least one year of active participation in team-based supervisory arrangements. This ensured that participants had direct, lived experience with both the challenges and opportunities of the supervision model under study.

Data gathering procedures involved three complementary strategies: (a) digital observation of supervision-related online interactions such as emails, chat groups, and video conferencing; (b) analysis of digital documents like feedback notes and supervision agreements; and (c) semi-structured interviews conducted via secure online platforms. The data gathering tool was an interview protocol designed to elicit reflections on supervisory roles, coordination practices, relational dynamics, and student experiences. All data were subjected to reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), which allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and emergent categories while remaining sensitive to context. To establish rigor, credibility was strengthened through member checking, dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear audit trail of coding decisions, and confirmability was enhanced through reflexive journaling. Ethical considerations were strictly observed: participants signed digital informed consent forms, institutional and personal identities were anonymized, and data storage followed confidentiality protocols. This ensured that the study upheld the ethical standards for qualitative inquiry while capturing rich insights into team-based doctoral supervision in the graduate school context of Baguio City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how team-based doctoral supervision is practiced and experienced within graduate programs in Baguio City. Drawing from the perspectives of doctoral students and graduate school professors, the findings reveal both the opportunities and challenges of this emerging model of mentorship in higher education. Through digital ethnography and thematic analysis, six key themes surfaced—covering supervisory roles, student outcomes, coordination practices, the use of digital platforms, faculty workload, and institutional implications. Each theme is discussed in relation to existing literature, highlighting points of convergence with global studies as well as unique contextual insights that reflect the Philippine graduate education landscape.

To better organize the analysis, the discussion begins with the evolving supervisory roles within team-based arrangements, followed by an exploration of their impact on student outcomes, the coordination and communication challenges encountered, the role of digital platforms in supervision, faculty perspectives on workload and professional development, and finally, the broader implications for graduate education in the Philippine context.

Table 1

Key Themes of Team-Based Doctoral Supervision in Graduate Programs
n= 20

Key Themes	Description
Emergent Supervisory Roles	The distribution of responsibilities among supervisors in a team, such as lead mentor, methodological guide, or practice advisor, which provides doctoral students with complementary expertise and reduces reliance on a single supervisor.
Student Outcomes and Benefits	The perceived positive effects of team-based supervision on doctoral students, including timely completion, increased confidence, resilience, and exposure to diverse perspectives that enhance the quality of research.
Coordination and Communication Challenges	Difficulties arising from the need to harmonize feedback and schedules among multiple supervisors, often leading to delays or conflicting advice, highlighting the need for structured communication protocols.
Faculty Workload and Professional Development	Professors' recognition that while team supervision distributes responsibilities, it increases coordination workload; at the same time, it fosters professional growth, collegiality, and the development of advanced supervisory skills.
Digital Platforms as Supervision Spaces	The reliance on digital tools (e.g., email, chat groups, video conferencing) as primary channels for supervision, providing accessibility and flexibility but also posing risks such as digital fatigue or misinterpretation.

Implications for Graduate Education

The broader institutional and policy-level relevance of team-based supervision, aligning with CHED guidelines and SDGs by strengthening research quality, ensuring accountable governance, and fostering collaborative partnerships.

Key theme 1: Emergent Supervisory Roles in Team-Based Arrangements

In this study, 19 of 20 participants (95%)—comprising doctoral students and graduate school professors—reported that team-based supervision naturally differentiates supervisory roles into complementary functions (e.g., lead mentor for research design and academic standards; method specialist for quantitative/qualitative guidance; practice advisor for policy/administration translation). One professor explained:

“Mas magaan ang trabaho kapag may kasama sa supervision, kasi may kanya-kanyang specialization.”

(The work is lighter when there are others in supervision because each has their own specialization.)

Participants emphasized that this role spread reduced dependence on a single supervisor, accelerated feedback, and broadened access to expertise. As one student reflected:

“Hindi ako nakadepende sa isang guro lang, kasi may iba pang nagbibigay ng pananaw.”

(I am not dependent on only one professor, because others also provide perspectives.)

A minority noted periodic role overlap that produced conflicting advice, reinforcing the need for explicit role agreements and shared protocols. A student recounted:

“Nalilito rin ako minsan kasi magkaiba ang payo ng dalawang supervisor.”

(Sometimes I get confused because two supervisors give different advice.)

These results align with international syntheses describing co-/team supervision as a response to the complexity of contemporary doctoral work (Kálmán et al., 2022) and with evidence that alignment on support and frequency between supervisors and candidates drives progress and satisfaction (Anttila et al., 2024). They also echo UK sector guidance that frames supervision as a distributed professional practice—spanning project management, ethics, pastoral care, and career development—best delivered by teams with complementary strengths (UKCGE, 2019).

Regionally, emerging scholarship highlights supervisors’ pivotal role in motivational support and wellbeing in Asian contexts (Adarlo, 2025) and underscores the salience of relational climate and power dynamics for supervision quality (Thomas, 2024). At the micro level, recent studies link the quality and cadence of supervisory interaction to candidates’ wellbeing and study progress (Wu et al., 2024; Tikkanen et al., 2025). Collectively, the present findings converge with this literature: team-based role differentiation is a practical mechanism for strengthening intellectual scaffolding and safeguarding

continuity when any one mentor is unavailable (cf. Anttila et al., 2024; Kálmán et al., 2022; UKCGE, 2019).

First, graduate schools should institutionalize role-clarity tools—a supervision agreement and role matrix that specify decision rights (e.g., methodological sign-off vs. conceptual framing), feedback turnaround, authorship conventions, and escalation routes; this mirrors recommendations in team-supervision research calling for early, formalized conversations among co-supervisors (Anttila et al., 2024). One administrator suggested:

“Kung may malinaw na kasunduan, mas madali ang takbo ng proseso.”

(If there is a clear agreement, the process runs more smoothly.)

Second, programs should develop supervisor capability in collaborative mentoring, including communication routines and power-aware practices (Thomas, 2024; UKCGE, 2019). Third, because interaction quality and frequency track with progress and wellbeing (Wu et al., 2024; Tikkanen et al., 2025), departments should schedule joint meetings at predictable intervals and maintain shared digital logs to minimize contradictory guidance. A professor noted:

“Mas nagiging malinaw ang direksyon kapag sabay-sabay naming kinakausap ang estudyante.”

(The direction becomes clearer when we meet with the student together.)

Finally, given regional calls to center student motivation and psychosocial support in graduate training (Adarlo, 2025), teams should explicitly distribute pastoral roles alongside academic ones to ensure balanced support. A doctoral student affirmed:

“Malaking tulong na may tagapayo rin sa emosyon at hindi lang sa akademiko.”

(It helps a lot to have an adviser for emotional support, not just academics.)

Together, these steps translate the study’s role-differentiation pattern into actionable governance that is consistent with both international and local/regional scholarship.

Key theme 2: Student Outcomes and Perceived Benefits

The results showed that **18 out of 20 participants (90%)** highlighted the positive influence of team-based supervision on their overall doctoral journey. Students described how supervision from multiple mentors not only facilitated timely completion of milestones but also provided richer, more diverse feedback, which they perceived as enhancing the depth and rigor of their dissertations. One doctoral student shared:

“Mas mabilis akong natapos dahil may iba-ibang guro na sabay nagbibigay ng puna at suhestiyon.”

(I was able to finish faster because different professors gave feedback and suggestions at the same time.)

Several respondents remarked that exposure to more than one supervisory perspective helped them avoid intellectual “blind spots,” strengthening both methodological soundness and conceptual framing. Another participant explained:

“Kapag iba-iba ang pananaw ng mga supervisor, mas lumalalim ang aking pag-aaral.”

“When supervisors give different perspectives, my research becomes deeper.”

These findings corroborate the work of Khuram et al. (2023), who demonstrated that supportive and multi-faceted supervision enhances doctoral productivity, research engagement, and motivation.

Beyond academic output, students also identified **psychosocial gains**, including stronger confidence, resilience, and coping strategies. Many noted that when one supervisor was unavailable, another could step in to provide guidance, effectively buffering them against the stress of delays and reinforcing a sense of continuity in their doctoral progress. As one student stated:

“Hindi ako natatakot na maiwan kasi may ibang supervisor na handang tumulong.”

(I am not afraid of being left behind because another supervisor is ready to help.)

This resonates with Hazell et al. (2025), who found that doctoral candidates’ mental health outcomes are significantly shaped by the quality of supervisory relationships, and with Tikkanen et al. (2024), who observed that supervision quality and frequency are directly tied to reduced attrition risks and greater candidate wellbeing. Together, these results imply that team-based supervision not only strengthens academic outputs but also safeguards student wellbeing, positioning it as a **holistic model of graduate mentorship** that addresses both intellectual and emotional dimensions of the doctoral experience.

Key theme 3: Coordination and Communication Challenges

Although the majority of participants acknowledged the benefits of team-based supervision, 16 out of 20 respondents (80%) identified coordination difficulties as a recurring challenge. Both professors and students described how delays in feedback cycles often occurred due to supervisors’ heavy workloads and competing institutional or professional commitments. Additionally, some students reported receiving conflicting recommendations from different mentors, leaving them uncertain about which guidance to prioritize. As one doctoral student shared,

“Nalilito ako kasi magkaiba ang sinasabi ng dalawang supervisor ko” (*“I feel confused because my two supervisors tell me different things”*).

These challenges highlight the tension between the breadth of expertise afforded by multiple supervisors and the potential for role overlap and inconsistency in advice. Such findings mirror international studies which point to role ambiguity and miscommunication as common risks in co-supervision (Almlöv et al., 2024; Clegg et al., 2025). Research in Scandinavian and UK contexts, for instance, demonstrates that without structured agreements, doctoral candidates often experience confusion

and anxiety stemming from contradictory supervisory expectations (Anttila et al., 2024). Locally, scholars have observed similar issues in Philippine graduate programs, where informal supervisory arrangements can exacerbate communication gaps and hinder timely progress (Adarlo, 2025). One professor candidly remarked,

“Minsan hindi kami agad makapagbigay ng feedback dahil sabay-sabay ang mga deadlines namin” (*“Sometimes we cannot provide feedback immediately because all our deadlines come at the same time”*).

Participants in this study suggested practical strategies for addressing these barriers, such as formalizing communication routines through joint meetings, supervision agreements, and digital logs to track feedback and decisions. These suggestions echo recent calls for early negotiation of roles and feedback mechanisms as essential to sustaining productive co-supervisory relationships (Lee et al., 2022). Collectively, the results imply that while team-based supervision offers breadth and resilience, it requires intentional structures and collaborative practices to prevent fragmentation and ensure that students receive coherent, consistent, and timely guidance.

Key theme 4: Faculty Perspectives on Workload and Development

Among the professors interviewed, 15 out of 20 participants (75%) acknowledged that team-based supervision offered the benefit of distributing responsibilities more fairly across faculty members. They noted that shared mentoring roles allowed them to focus on their areas of expertise, which in turn improved the overall quality of doctoral guidance. As one professor explained,

“Mas nakakapagpokus ako sa aking expertise kapag may kasamang ibang supervisor” (*“I can focus more on my expertise when I work with another supervisor”*).

However, many faculty members also reported an increased workload because team supervision required additional coordination, joint meetings, and consensus-building before decisions could be finalized. A number of professors emphasized that serving on multiple supervisory teams diluted the time they could devote to their own research and writing, thereby creating a tension between institutional service and personal academic productivity. One candidly remarked,

“Kung tatlo o apat na team ang hawak ko, halos wala nang oras para sa sarili kong pagsusulat” (*“If I handle three or four teams, I almost have no time left for my own writing”*).

These findings resonate with global studies showing that while co-supervision enhances supervisory capacity, it also introduces coordination costs and workload strain (Löfström et al., 2024; Massyn, 2024).

Despite these challenges, professors in this study highlighted the professional development gains of working within supervisory teams. Many described improvements in their mentoring skills, exposure to diverse approaches, and the cultivation of a collegial culture that encouraged dialogue and mutual

support. These reflections corroborate Haley et al. (2024), who argue that supervisory collaboration promotes identity formation and capacity-building among faculty. Similarly, Pyhältö et al. (2024) emphasize that multi-supervision arrangements not only benefit doctoral candidates but also create opportunities for supervisors to learn from one another and refine their practice. In the Philippine context, where supervisory roles are often shaped by hierarchical structures, team-based supervision was perceived by participants as a professionalizing mechanism that fostered shared accountability and collective growth. Thus, while workload concerns remain a pressing issue, the results suggest that supervisory teams can serve as sites of faculty development and collegiality, provided that institutions implement workload policies and recognition systems that balance service with research productivity.

Key theme 5: Digital Platforms as Supervision Spaces

The study found that 17 out of 20 participants (85%) identified digital platforms as central to the conduct of doctoral supervision in Baguio City. Professors and students reported using email, messaging applications, and learning management systems for sharing drafts and feedback, while video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Google Meet were employed for formal consultations. Students particularly valued the flexibility and accessibility of these platforms, noting that they reduced the barriers posed by distance, scheduling conflicts, and professional obligations. As one student expressed,

“Mas madali para sa akin ang magpasa ng draft online kaysa maghintay ng face-to-face meeting” (*“It is easier for me to submit a draft online than to wait for a face-to-face meeting”*).

This finding is consistent with international studies that highlight the growing significance of digitally mediated supervision in ensuring continuity and accessibility of doctoral guidance (Jensen et al., 2025; Ta et al., 2024).

However, the reliance on digital tools also introduced challenges. Several participants cited experiences of “digital fatigue,” difficulties in interpreting tone in text-based communication, and occasional connectivity issues, which sometimes disrupted the flow of feedback. One professor admitted,

“Nahihirapan akong ipaliwanag ang tono ko sa email, baka iba ang dating sa estudyante” (*“I find it hard to convey my tone in emails, as it might be misunderstood by the student”*).

These issues echo Wu et al. (2024), who observed that technology-mediated supervision, while beneficial, requires additional strategies for clarity and engagement. Locally, Philippine higher education institutions have similarly recognized the importance of digital transformation in graduate education, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the institutionalization of online platforms for academic supervision (CHED, 2021). Participants in this study suggested practical ways to mitigate these challenges, including the use of shared digital logs, supervision agreements, and scheduled synchronous check-ins to ensure coherence across supervisors’ feedback. These strategies reinforce earlier findings that structured digital communication enhances transparency and student confidence in

supervision (Anttila et al., 2024). Overall, the results underscore that while digital platforms expand the reach and flexibility of doctoral supervision, they also require intentional design and institutional support to balance efficiency with relational depth.

Key theme 6: Implications for Graduate Education in the Philippine Context

The findings of this study demonstrate that team-based doctoral supervision has meaningful implications for strengthening graduate education in the Philippines, particularly in programs of Administration and Supervision. Participants emphasized that multi-mentor arrangements not only improved student outcomes and research quality, but also promoted a culture of shared accountability among faculty. Eighteen out of 20 respondents (90%) agreed that the presence of supervisory teams created greater assurance of timely feedback, enhanced rigor in dissertations, and more responsive support systems for doctoral candidates. One participant remarked,

“Mas panatag ang loob ko kapag alam kong hindi lang iisang tao ang pagbabasehan ng payo ko, kundi isang grupo ng mga eksperto” (*“I feel more assured knowing that my guidance does not come from just one person, but from a group of experts”*).

These insights are consistent with CHED Memorandum Orders that emphasize outcomes-based quality assurance and research productivity as benchmarks for graduate education (CHED, 2012, 2019). Locally, this suggests that adopting supervisory teams could provide a practical mechanism for institutions to meet accreditation standards and strengthen their capacity to deliver doctoral programs aligned with national policy priorities.

Beyond compliance, the results highlight the potential of team-based supervision to advance broader educational and societal goals. By enhancing research quality and supervisory capacity, this model directly contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education), ensuring that doctoral training equips graduates with the competencies required for leadership in complex contexts (United Nations, 2015). The collaborative nature of supervisory teams also reflects the principles of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), as it fosters transparent, accountable, and participatory practices within graduate schools. Another respondent affirmed,

“Nabibigyan ako ng mas malinaw na direksyon dahil iba-iba ang perspektiba ng mga supervisor” (*“I gain a clearer direction because of the diverse perspectives of the supervisors”*).

Furthermore, the engagement of multiple faculty members and, in some cases, external advisors resonates with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), underscoring how doctoral supervision can be reimagined as a collective and networked endeavor. These findings corroborate international evidence that team-based supervision enhances institutional resilience and innovation (Lee et al., 2022; Pyhälä et al., 2024), while also pointing to a uniquely Philippine contribution: its potential to align local graduate education practices with both national higher education reforms and global development agendas.

The findings of this study affirm that team-based doctoral supervision holds significant promise for enriching graduate education in Administration and Supervision. By diversifying supervisory roles, doctoral students gained access to multiple forms of expertise, leading to improved confidence, resilience, and research quality. The integration of digital platforms also enabled greater accessibility and flexibility in supervisory interactions, especially for working professionals balancing academic and career demands. However, these benefits were tempered by challenges such as role ambiguity, coordination delays, and the additional workload borne by faculty. These issues resonate with international scholarship on co-supervision and highlight the importance of structured communication protocols, workload policies, and ongoing supervisor development programs tailored to local academic contexts.

Taken together, the results underscore the need for Philippine graduate institutions to design deliberate policies that institutionalize team-based supervision while addressing its inherent challenges. Clear role delineation, digital infrastructure support, and supervisor capacity-building are crucial to maximizing its potential. Importantly, this model directly aligns with the goals of CHED's outcomes-based quality assurance and contributes to broader global priorities such as SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Thus, the insights from this study not only enrich the literature on doctoral supervision but also provide actionable directions for administrators, faculty, and policymakers committed to strengthening graduate education and producing socially responsive doctoral research.

Conclusions

The findings of this study lead to several important conclusions about team-based doctoral supervision.

1. Supervisory teams give different roles to professors such as lead mentor, method guide, and practice advisor. This helps students receive broader expertise.
2. Students gain confidence and resilience when guided by more than one mentor. They receive better feedback and finish on time.
3. Team-based supervision also brings problems like delays and conflicting advice. Clear agreements and regular meetings are needed.
4. Digital tools like email, chat apps, and video calls make supervision flexible. But they can also cause fatigue and miscommunication.
5. Professors improve their mentoring skills and teamwork in this setup. Yet, they feel their workload is heavier and their research time reduced.
6. Team-based supervision supports CHED policies and contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Quality Education, Strong Institutions, and Partnerships.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to improve practice and policy.

1. Create clear supervision agreements that define the roles and responsibilities of each supervisor.
2. Hold regular joint meetings to provide consistent and coordinated guidance to students.
3. Ask for clarification when supervisors give different or conflicting advice.

4. Support and recognize team-based supervision as part of quality assurance in graduate programs.
5. Study how team-based supervision influences student completion rates and dissertation quality.

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