DOCTORAL STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN GHANA: EXPLORING A NEW CURRICULUM USING BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTS

Inusah Salifu*	Department of Adult Education and Human Resource Studies, College of Education, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana	isalifu@ug.edu.gh
Joseph Seyram Agbenyega	Emirates College for Advanced Education, Abu Dhabi, UAE	jagbenyega314@gmail.com

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	To utilize Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) concepts of capitals, habitus, and field to explore and critically analyze doctoral students' learning experiences with a new doctoral curriculum introduced by a Ghanaian university.
Background	Global competition and labor market reforms have ignited the need for higher education institutions to reimagine their doctoral programs, develop and align them with labor market demands and national priorities.
Methodology	The research was conducted as a qualitative inquiry based on which the purposive sampling technique was used with 18 doctoral students from a Ghanaian university. Participants took part in individual interviews and data were analyzed using thematic coding procedures developed based on Bourdieu's (1984; 1986) theorization of capital, habitus, and field
Contribution	The study may benefit universities in monitoring the quality of doctoral students' learning experiences.
Findings	The research found that, although the participants were broadly satisfied with some aspects of their programs, the additional cost associated with its duration, the lack of quality and timely feedback from supervisors, and difficulty accessing conference funding were key challenges to achieving the ultimate goals of the new doctoral curriculum.

Recommendations for Practitioners	The paper draws attention to human dispositions, values, and beliefs (habitus) which operate with different forms of capital in fields of doctoral training.
Recommendations for Researchers	Researchers may focus on tools that help to transform supervisor habitus and the kinds of support that work for individual students.
Impact on Society	The strongest message gleaned from this study is that to improve doctoral students' learning experiences, it is necessary first to develop a student-supervisor relationship built on mutual respect, clear timelines for achieving supervision targets, and commitment to achieving the targets. The research further challenges the higher education system in Ghana and in deed, the world at large, to look beyond the objectified capital (certificates) and to develop relevant skills that students require to be professionally ready for the labor market.
Future Research	One of the study's limitations is that the sample was selected from one university in Ghana. Future research may compare doctoral curriculums and students' learning experiences across several Ghanaian universities. Again, this research used the perspectives of only students. A future study may draw on multiple perspectives to provide depth and breadth of knowledge on the doctoral program.
Keywords	Bourdieu's concepts, doctoral studies, doctoral curriculum, Ghanaian university, doctoral students' learning experiences

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, labor market reforms, and pressures imposed by national and international benchmarking and rankings have pushed universities worldwide to continually reform their programs, particularly at the doctoral level (Bao et al., 2018; Hasgall et al., 2019; Nerad & Heggelund, 2011; Romera Ayllón & Benito Bonito., 2013). As part of the reforms, many universities have (re)designed their doctoral curricula to emphasize both research and industrial skill development (Cornér et al., 2017; Duke & Denicolo, 2017; Fetene &Tamrat, 2021). Currently, different modes of doctoral programs are evolving to address the complex needs of society as well as respond to new workforce requirements and national priorities and goals (Bawa et al., 2014; Boulos, 2016; Confait, 2018). For example, some doctoral students opt for 'thesis by publication' requiring a series of peer-reviewed papers based on their research, either published or accepted for publication, to be examined as part of the fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Ph.D. degree (Frick, 2019; Guerin, 2016; Jackson, 2013; Lee, 2010; Niven, & Grant, 2012). African universities are responding to these global changes, although gradually, and are aligning their doctoral programs with the socio-economic needs and context of society (Cross & Backhouse, 2014; Dybas, 2013; Hodges et al., 2011; Hopwood et al., 2011). Similarly, Ghanaian universities are challenged by this new wave of changes in doctoral education across Africa and the world at large, leading to many of them recently either modifying their doctoral programs or introducing new ones to attract both local and international students (Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019). Despite this new development, research activities in Ghanaian universities have focused mainly on administrative staff performance (Atuahene, 2015; Lamptey et al., 2013) and faculty activities (Adika, 2003; Adusah-Karikari, 2008) to the neglect of students' learning experiences and wellbeing issues (Schmidt & Hansson, 2018; Stubb et al., 2011).

The research reported in this paper focused on a new doctoral curriculum implemented in 2014 by one of the country's universities to replace a former one. The erstwhile curriculum was based on a 3-year duration with a full concentration on thesis writing. No provision was made for coursework and experiential learning. With the focus on only research, concerns from government, civil society organizations, and previous graduates were that it prepared doctoral students theoretically only for academic occupations such as lecturing and neglected the skills needed for industrial employment. The rationale behind the new curriculum was to, thus, address this concern and respond to doctoral stu-

dents' needs, employment demands, and national priorities. Since its introduction, no research examined whether it met the aspirations of doctoral students of the university, even though, as key stakeholders and direct beneficiaries of the change, their voices should matter. Consequently, it was not clear whether the new doctoral curriculum implemented achieved its aim. Clearly, this was a knowledge vacuum and that was what this research sought to fill. Doctoral students with positive learning experiences are more likely to complete their courses (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012), so this study may benefit universities worldwide in monitoring the quality of doctoral students' learning experiences.

The structure and content of the new doctoral curriculum were examined in the research as follows: program duration, course work, comprehensive examinations, seminars, thesis writing and supervision, experiential learning, thesis examinations, and academic support services. The study had two purposes. First, to utilize Bourdieu's (1984; 1986) concepts of capital, habitus, and field to illuminate the new doctoral curriculum as operating within a relational but contested space. Second, to also draw attention to how supervisor master dispositions, which Bourdieu refers to as the habitus, could be transformed and utilized for better engagement and supervision of doctoral students to acquire the necessary skills (capitals) for their future professional work. The questions that informed this study were:

1. How do Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field help us to understand doctoral students' learning experiences with a new doctoral curriculum introduced by a Ghanaian university?

2. How can the concerns of the doctoral students be explained through Bordieuan lenses to offer directions for transformative practices?

LITERATURE REVIEW

USE OF PIERRE BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTS IN RESEARCH

Doctoral education is a socialization process which is influenced by the interactivity of habitus and capital in fields. Merton et al. (1957) provided a classical definition of socialization as "the processes through which [an individual] develops … professional self, with its characteristic values, attitudes, knowledge and skills ... which govern … behaviour in a wide variety of professional situations" (p. 287). Bourdieu's (1984; 1986) conceptual tools of habitus, capital, and field provide unique understanding of how this professional self develops individually and relationally.

According to Bourdieu (1986), habitus is described as a structured composition of people's master dispositions that they use to structure their social worlds. The social world acts as a relational interactive space to shape an individual's everyday practice (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus includes beliefs, values, choices, and perceptions that are institutionally and historically shaped. Interestingly, doctoral education is a choice driven by a person's habitus towards the acquisition of capital, and capital, in turn, shapes a person's habitus. Bourdieu (1986) described capital as accumulated assets or what is valued in fields of practice, and it manifests in various forms such as economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. Each of these forms of capital is transferable into other forms. Bourdieu (1986) also described economic capital as material assets that are "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights" (p. 242).

Social capital, in Bourdieu's theory, is a relational concept that describes a person's position relative to others in a social space (Pinxten & Lievens, 2014). It is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247). Cultural capital is an important consideration when it comes to the acquisition of doctoral degrees. Bourdieu's (1986) theorization draws attention to three forms of cultural capital: institutionalized state, which is a person's

educational attainment, objectified cultural capital, which is linked to the possession of cultural resources, and the embodied or incorporated, which defines a person's values, skills, knowledge, and preferences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013; Pinxten & Lievens, 2014). In this sense, doctoral education may be theorized as an institutionalized form of cultural capital that determines other forms of capital, for example, symbolic capital which is an honor or a prestige accorded a person. Such a person is viewed by society as possessing economic capital or dispositions which can be exchanged with other forms of cultural capital.

Field, in Bourdieu's (1986) theory, refers to networks of social relations. According to Bourdieu, habitus operates with capital in fields to determine a practice. Doctoral degree, as a form of capital, confers on a person an objectified cultural capital value which can be exchanged for other forms of capital, for example, economic assets (capital), which in turn, may determine a person's position, value, and nature of interactions relative to others in a social space. In the field of doctoral study, different forms of capital act as resources for doctoral students and influence how they experience their doctoral training (Gopaul, 2015). As the resources needed to acquire a doctoral degree emerge from the interplay between economic, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013), it is important that deeper understanding of how this interplay manifests in practice is explored. Bourdieu's concept of field describes a social space where practices take place. For example, doctoral education can be regarded as a field where different interests, beliefs, and practices converge. This convergence is influenced by differential power, thereby leading to striving for limited capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013; Gopaul, 2015).

The academic skills developed during a postgraduate study and the confidence mustered up in using these skills represent a form of embodied cultural capital. Although an individual journey, doctoral students often benefit from social networks (social capital) such as writing groups, valuable objects and materials provided by the institution (objectified capital), and supervisor quality influenced by the reputation of the institution awarding the degree (institutionalized capital). The doctoral degree socializes an individual into "a form of accreditation that certifies that the holder has proved himself or herself as a researcher and warrants admission to the community of licensed academics or competent scholarly independent researchers" (Yates, 2004, p. 61). Holders of the doctoral qualification are accorded honor and prestige (symbolic capital) as result of their objectified capital, i.e., the PhD (Blessinger, 2016) with expectation to enhancing economic capital (Boulos, 2016; Bourdieu, 1986; Romera Ayllón & Benito Bonito, 2013).

Due to their economic value, several countries attach great importance to doctoral degrees. In Australia, for example, the Commonwealth government covers the tuition fees for Australian and New Zealand citizens, including those with permanent resident visas for Australia acquired through the Australia Government Research Training Program (RTP). In addition, Australia provides generous economic capital in the form of scholarships to support local and international students pursuing doctoral level degrees. Besides Australia, some other countries including Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Saudi Arabia also offer free doctoral programs to their citizens. The USA, for example, considers the doctoral degree as an opportunity for training researchers to grow the national research capacity, knowledgeable workforce to advance the economy, and high-quality staff for higher education institutions. Similar outcomes drive the pursuant and funding of doctoral degrees even in non-western countries (Frick, 2019; Lee, 2010; Niven & Grant, 2012). Holders of the Doctorate worldwide contribute significantly to national and international development through the creation of new knowledge in education, engineering, medical interventions, space explorations, economic theories, and social protection programs and policies (Clarke, 2014, Standing, 2010; Walker et al., 2009). Apart from national interests influencing the upsurge of students pursuing doctoral degrees, studies have shown that individual habitus and quest for capital accumulation have also been the motivational drive for people to undertake a doctoral level degree (Barnett et al., 2017; Bogle et al., 2011; Boulos, 2016; Clarke, 2014; Confait, 2018).

ALIGNING THE CHALLENGES OF DOCTORAL STUDIES WITH BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTS

While the global proliferation of doctoral programs and increased admissions of doctoral students have widely been applauded, there has equally been a growing concern about the quality of doctoral programs and the need to reform doctoral education and training (Bao et al., 2018). In developing countries, quality control systems to improve doctoral programs are beginning to emerge (Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019). These authors defined quality doctoral programs as those "designed in keeping with labor market information about actual or potential career opportunities available for people with doctorates" (Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, p.1). Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) concepts of field described doctoral education field as a contested space where different interests, tastes, practices, and differential power converge.

Indeed, utilizing the interactive concepts of Bourdieu's field, capital, and habitus may enable us to explore and critically analyze the ways doctoral students experience their doctoral training. One of the critical elements of doctoral education is the supervision component. Poor advising or supervision (Duke & Denicolo, 2017) has been blamed for causing doctoral students to exhibit weaknesses in research and employability skills (Hunter & Devine, 2016; Selmer et al., 2011). Doctoral supervisors and students bring to bear on the supervision work their individual unique (habitus) characteristics such as preferences, beliefs, perceptions, or ways of reasoning and responding to supervisory relationship (Fetene &Tamrat, 2021). Supervision style is a form of capital that combines with habitus to shape the doctoral experience (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, supervisors who confer limited symbolic capital on doctoral students and view the students as their subordinates often adopt a master-servant supervisor relationship and practices that decrease the quality of doctoral learning experiences.

In Bourdieu's (1986) view, the field of education is an arena of practice characterized by differences in power, capital, and habitus consequently producing struggles for those who engage in the field. The quality of doctoral learning experience thus depends on institutional capital, supervisor positive dispositions and respect for doctoral students as valued colleagues in research rather than objectified cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Such practices inform the development of an embodied cultural capital, which is a skill doctoral students need during their training to build confidence and resilience to complete their studies.

In addition, acquiring a doctoral degree involves developing the habitus in ways to successfully negotiate the boundaries imposed by personal and institutional cultures, values, and beliefs. Schatzki (2017, p. 29) argued that "the more the habitus is acquired, the better someone can proceed in these fields, and in a greater range of situations."

Another challenge in doctoral training is the capacity to invest time. Bourdieu's (1986) idea of embodied capital signifies a personal investment of time in order to acquire an objectified cultural capital (the qualification itself). Most importantly, investment of time goes hand in hand with that of economic capital, which represents the cost of pursuing doctoral degrees (Atuahene, 2015).

Doctoral degrees have also been criticized for not equipping graduates with the forms of capital and dispositions (Brourdieu, 1986) they need to respond adequately to societal needs (Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Barnes & Randall, 2012; Jazvac-Martek et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2009). This has been so because finding suitable doctoral research supervisors to match students' areas of research interest (Fetene &Tamrat, 2021; Gardner, 2010; Gardner & Holley, 2011; Hunter & Devine, 2016), academic teaching loads, and administrative commitments coupled with internal and external service requirements often inhibit the quality of doctoral supervision (Barnes, 2010; Barnes & Austin, 2009; Duke & Denicolo, 2017; Jairam et al., 2012). Other previous studies such as Blessinger (2016); and Duke and Denicolo (2017) also drew attention to faculty attrition, retirement of experienced supervisors, and employment redundancies imposed by economic down-turn to have led to frequent changes in supervisors. The issues listed above have caused undue delay and stress to students (Fetene &Tamrat,

2021). The lack of high-quality supervisory skills, unhealthy supervisor-student relationships, and limited ongoing supports have also accounted for the main reason so many doctoral students abandon their courses (Foot et al., 2014; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Pyhältö & Keskinen, 2012). Again, some doctoral students become dissatisfied with their courses due to poor preparation and support to publish their findings, abuse of power by supervisors, and the lack of preparation for career after university (Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019; Posselt, 2018).

Foot et al. (2014) further observed that, because learning and identity development are much related, when students enter a doctoral program, they are exposed to multiple academic social activities which make them go through series of identity transitions concurrently right from the beginning. Doctoral students try to build their identities by trying to become scholars, members of the academic community, and affiliates of a particular discipline all at the same time. The ease with which doctoral students begin to form new identities may determine their decision to either continue their studies or drop out even when they are near to completing their studies (Golde, 2005). Notwithstanding the many setbacks bedeviling doctoral education, another body of previous studies mentioned factors which promoted high-quality doctoral learning experience as mentoring of doctoral students (Blessinger, 2016), transparency about course length, expectations and career outcomes, development of employability skills during candidature, continuing professional development of supervisors, and the creation of inclusive and supportive research communities as well as student peer support groups (Bao et al., 2018; Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019).

SUMMARY

This section on the literature review has two parts. The first part focused on the theoretical literature of Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) concepts of habitus, capital, and field. The concepts were examined in isolation and linked to this research on doctoral students' learning experiences. The second part examined empirical literature on issues confronting doctoral training on the global scene. Of all the scholarly perspectives gleaned in the second part, it appears no research has applied Bourdieu's concepts to a study on a new doctoral curriculum in Ghana. Equally missing in the empirical literature is information on how supervisor master dispositions could be transformed and utilized for better engagement and supervision of doctoral students to acquire the necessary skills for their future professional work. These are the two gaps the current research intends to fill.

METHODOLOGY

This research used the qualitative approach based on the phenomenographic design to get an insight into different ways in which doctoral students experienced and thought about the structure and content of a new doctoral curriculum introduced by a Ghanaian university. The design provides an opportunity to collect context specific data on challenges associated with practices within a learning institution with a view to improving them (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Considering the subjective accounts of participants and researchers in qualitative research, we were mindful of our own biases and values and those of the research participants (Chavez, 2008) and therefore adopted a reflexive approach to conduct the research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

STUDY CONTEXT

This study took place in a Ghanaian university that has been growing steadily in research and teaching within the last 20 years (Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019). The university currently has a student population of over 38,000, comprising full-time and part-time students as well as distance education, affiliate, and international students from over 70 countries pursuing various programs. In 2014, the university developed an ambitious plan with the goal to becoming a world-class research-intensive university in 2024 by using its over 30 international affiliations within Africa, Europe, and North America to drive collaborative research.

The university operates a collegiate system and currently has four colleges: College of Basic and Applied Sciences, College of Education, College of Health Sciences, and College of Humanities. Schools, Institutes and Centres are housed within their respective Colleges, many of which are subdivided into Departments. The Colleges are led by Provosts, and the Schools and Institutes are administered by Deans or Directors while the Centres and Departments are managed by Principals and Heads, respectively. Doctoral programs, examination, and ratification of thesis for the award of the Ph.D. are administered centrally by the School of Graduate Studies.

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

We adopted the accidental sampling technique (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2008) to invite 18 doctoral students at the university to participate in the research. The criterion involved current doctoral students of the university willing and available to participate in interviews. The participants were ten males and eight females, with an average age of 47 years, pursuing doctoral programs in different fields such as Law, Classics, African Studies, Development Economics, Sociology, Philosophy, Theatre Arts, and Computer Science. The length of time participants spent on the program as full-time students ranged from 1 year to 5 years.

Data were collected online over three months, from January 2021 to April 2021, using a semi-structured interview protocol. The tool had a single section with a blend of four close-ended and nine open-ended items (See the Appendix). While the close-ended items elicited responses on relevant demographic information of participants, the open-ended items focused on the university's new handbook for doctoral studies published in 2014 and students' insider perspectives and experiences regarding the new doctoral curriculum of the university. Before using the tool, two colleagues reviewed it, and the outcome confirmed its accuracy in meeting the objectives of the research.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all the interviews were conducted individually and electronically via the Zoom platform, and each took approximately 35 minutes. Based on the consent of the participants, all the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and saved in a protected clouds space. An expert panel reviewed the transcripts, and revisions were made before drafting the research report.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were inductively analyzed using a thematic procedure (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process began with reading through the transcripts repeatedly to create a coding system. Next, the codes were categorized to arrive at emergent concepts that would reflect the core objectives of the research (Creswell, 2009). The concepts subsequently guided the development of themes based on Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) theorization of capital, habitus, and field explicated in the literature review section. The search for new categories and themes continued until no further information could be found, thus providing the basis for summarizing the data. Trustworthiness of data analysis was achieved by comparing our independent coding to determine the final codes, develop a chart, and theme the data. While analyzing the data, we were conscious of our own biases and subjectivities, thus making us reflectively conduct audit trails with the data set to ensure participants' narratives were not lost in the transcriptions and our meaning making (Glesne, 2016).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's ethics committee on humanities before the research commenced. The research was thoroughly explained to the participants, including the advantages and disadvantages of using an online platform to conduct research. All participants, having been satisfied with the explanatory form, signed and returned their copies. Participation in the study was voluntary. To protect the anonymity of participants, we coded the data using pseudonyms to represent participants in direct quotes we made to substantiate the themes.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This research explored the learning experiences of doctoral students with a new doctoral curriculum introduced by a Ghanaian university. The aim of the new curriculum was to keep pace with global reforms in the higher education sector and employer market requirement. Semi-structured interviews with the participants led to uncovering of student experience issues.

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF DOCTORAL CURRICULUM

Thesis duration

The findings of this study indicate positive perspectives regarding the quality of the new doctoral curriculum. Participants thought that increasing the duration of their doctoral studies from three to four years gave them a better opportunity to develop the skills needed to meet future career challenges.

> I think the change from 3 to 4 years is fine. The additional year makes us adequately prepared to face and survive future competitions in the job market from other PhD holders trained by renowned universities. … Additional year, enable us to cover more areas in our doctoral studies. We stand to benefit as well-groomed PhD holders. (Development Economics, PhD student)

Similarly, a second-year female Law student noted that "the 4-year doctoral studies gives more time to be well prepared before completing my studies." Another student linked the extension of years to enhancing their theoretical knowledge which was highly needed in developing a robust thesis in preparation for examination.

> The 4-year doctoral studies has helped me a lot because I used the first two years to understand the theoretical issues related to my area of specialization thereby building my capacity to prepare a good thesis and for my future career. (Adult Education and Human Resource Studies, PhD student)

Coursework component and comprehensive examination

The participants also commented positively on the introduction of course work in the new doctoral curriculum. One of the female participants in her fourth year pursuing a PhD in Computer Science claimed that "the coursework helped in refreshing my memory on research methods which enhanced the thesis writing process." Similarly, a third-year male Sociology PhD student, asserted, "The course work component is very important and helpful. … Yes, it met my personal expectations as it equipped me with the requisite skills and competence needed for industrial employment." Again, another participant aged 48 in his fourth year pursuing Classics reiterated, "The course work enables me to understand the broad range of research methodologies and how they apply in the practice of academic research."

A third issue that emerged from this study regarding program quality is the comprehensive examination component of the new doctoral curriculum. The examination is taken in the second year after a successful completion of the course work component in the first year, which serves as a precursor to the change of status from a doctoral student to a doctoral candidate when a candidate can commence thesis writing. The results indicate that participants view this component of their learning experience. as useful by stating variously that it "equips students with oral presentation skills to prepare for future presentations such as viva voce" (Development Economics, PhD student), "gives students an opportunity to obtain constructive feedback from faculty as to how to be better presenters" (Law, PhD student), and "gives students an opportunity to refresh their minds on what they've learnt in their course work and also prepare them on the path of the thesis writing" (African Studies, PhD student).

Thesis writing and supervision

In the new doctoral curriculum, students are expected to identify potential lead supervisors prior to enrolment. Supervisors must also be accredited by the Board of Graduate Studies and have at least two years teaching and research experience in a university or an equivalent institution, including a research and publications record. Participants in this research were positive about these new changes.

> I think thesis supervision is now better than in the old PhD program looking at the way students used to complain. … Because of the additional one year making the new doctoral studies four years, supervisors now have enough time to do quality supervision work. (Sociology, PhD student).

Another student commented on the quality of supervisor feedback because of this accreditation policy:

> I think the feedback we get now on our thesis is more detailed, rigorous, and comprehensive than what we had before because the supervisors fear that if they don't do a good job, they would lose their accreditation, and losing accreditation to supervise doctoral thesis could affect their promotions. (48-year-old female in the second year offering Law)

AREAS OF DISSATISFACTION

Duration

Some of the participants felt that the additional year was needless because faculty who are teaching and supervising doctoral candidates are slowing down student progress toward completion due to the additional year.

> I would wish the duration of my doctoral studies were maintained as 3 years. … Despite the extension of duration to four years, we still [PhD students] have less contacts with faculty as we expect making it difficult to complete on time, unfortunately. (Classics, PhD student)

Similarly, another participant stated, "The change in the duration of the doctoral studies from three to four years is a waste of time because many students including me are not happy with the four years" (Development Economics, PhD student). In fact, the additional year was perceived by the concerned students as a waste of time and additional financial burden on students.

> I feel burdened by the extra year as it adds additional financial cost to the PhD studies, yet faculty take advantage of the extension of the duration to delay students, and when we complain, we hear them say after all, there's more time to finish us off in our studies. (Theatre Arts, PhD student)

Course work and comprehensive examination concerns

Some participants were concerned with the course work component of the new doctoral curriculum and regarded it as "more teacher-centred which gave little room for critical thinking … required at the doctoral level. (Philosophy, PhD student). Another student claimed, "the course work did not prepare students for employment as the concentration was more on generic research skills." (Classics, PhD student).

In terms of the comprehensive examination, a 39-year-old male in his third year of Adult Education and Human Resource Studies was of the view that:

> Writing laborious examinations at the end of each semester and then taking a comprehensive examination with oral presentation are too much for students to bear. The comprehensive exams should be scrapped to leave only the end of semester examination as done in the previous doctoral curriculum.

A similar view was expressed by a male student in his third year in African Studies program suggesting that "the comprehensive exam aspect of the program puts enormous pressure on the student because it comes shortly after the two semester exams."

Supervisor issues

Many students in this study expressed concerns regarding supervisor attitudes, work ethics, and feedback. A student of Philosophy did not see any improvement in thesis supervision work in the new curriculum because:

> there are still no effective checks on supervisors to make them accountable and more responsible. … some supervisors still delay in giving students feedback despite the additional year given to them to do effective supervision. I am yet to receive feedback on my work which I sent to my main supervisor about a month ago. As it is now, the spotlight is only or more on the student than the supervisor, which makes students struggle in the program. (Theatre Arts, PhD student)

Narrating her frustration, a female student who had already spent 5 years in the new four-year doctoral studies exclaimed:

> Supervisors have two years to assist students write thesis in this new doctoral curriculum, but nothing has changed. … Supervision needs improvement. Some supervisors don't know their stuff. I think the lead supervisor should be strong in the research approach used by the student. For example, if the student is using a quantitative approach, then the lead supervisor should be strong in that approach to be able to guide the student and the team because other members of the supervisory team tend to rely on what the lead supervisor says. Also, it should be made compulsory for supervisors, particularly the lead supervisor, to sit in seminars to listen to their students' theses presentations. (Development Economics, PhD student)

The importance of supervisors attending student seminar presentation was presented by another student.

> Sometimes if a student receives feedback from seminar panels only for supervisors to disagree with the advice later when the student meets with them to discuss the outcome of the seminar, leaves the student confused as to whether to stick to what his/her supervisors say or what the panel has said. (Adult Education and Human Resource Studies)

Concerns were also raised by student regarding student-supervisor relationships which some consider as abusive.

> Students should be allowed to choose their ow supervisors but if the university insists of matching supervisor expertise to a student's research area, then the Head of Department should take into consideration personalities of the supervisory team and how well they can work together with the students. Focus should not only be on accreditation. (Classic, PhD student)

Students also raised issues of conflicting feedback they often received from their supervisory teams who tended to work independently:

> Supervisors are not working as a team and often feedback is conflicting and frustrating … when the student makes changes suggested by one supervisor, the other would say that was not his/her instruction, we are going round in circles which delays our work … a stressful journey indeed! (Theatre Arts, PhD student)

The participants were also concerned about lack of mentoring in developing parts of their thesis into publication. In addition, they revealed that they had difficulties accessing conference grants and building academic networks with others. For example, a student noted, "mentoring is a major issue

even with this new system … I wish I were mentored effectively on writing and publishing in good journals before completing my studies" (Law PhD student). Another student claimed, "I've heard about travel grants for conferences and have applied but not successful" (Theatre Arts, PhD student).

DISCUSSION

In this study we used Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field to help us make sense of doctoral candidates' experiences of their doctoral education. We also used the concepts to analyze the concerns of the doctoral students. Generally, each of the forms of capital reflected resources that can be utilized to support doctoral students acquire their degrees in a timely manner. This also means transforming supervisor and student habitus within the field of doctoral studies.

The university in question changed to a new doctoral curriculum program to improve the institutional capital (Bourdieu, 1986) so that it could better respond to students' cultural capital and dispositions needed to function in related fields of practice. This is in line with international trends which have seen a remarkable transformation to align doctoral degrees with national priorities and global employment demands (Frick, 2019; Guerin, 2016). The findings demonstrate that human institutions are driven by habitus and the pursuit of different forms of capital that are relevant to their socio-economic needs (Coccio, 2018; Loomis & Rodriguez, 2009).

The findings further demonstrate satisfaction with the contents of the university's doctoral handbook published in 2014 as the change to a new curriculum seemed consistent with the global call to introduce reforms to improve the quality of doctoral programs (Bao et al., 2018; Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019). However, the doctoral students expressed mixed perspectives on their experiences with the newly introduced curriculum. For example, the introduction of the additional year as a quality measure was resented by some doctoral students because it created additional economic costs. As scholarships are difficult to access in Ghana, costs associated with the additional year of studies seemed to create a challenge for some of the students in their quest to achieve their objectified capital (certificates).

Bourdieu (1986) draws attention to the interplay between different forms of capital and how a person's capital determines their personal positioning in social fields. Pinxten and Lievens (2014) reiterate that capital "can be converted into one another and that the use and the acquisition of a specific capital form depends on the other forms of capital (p. 1097). This means, the doctoral students' concern regarding more cost to be incurred as a result of one more year of doctoral studies should have been given a serious attention since the ability to pay was linked to the acquisition of the degree.

Although doctoral degrees confer economic, social, and cultural benefits on graduates, their acquisition is associated with considerable financial costs, which many brilliant but needy students cannot afford. Indeed, mobilizing funds from the industry, alumni and philanthropists for scholarships can help address some of the cost concerns.

One of the findings of this study also indicates that, generally, supervisors' inability to provide timely feedback to students overshadowed any benefits that the introduction of the additional year could offer. The finding seems to suggest that the supervisors were unable to attach importance to time. Timing in the fields of doctoral studies is imposed by superior agents in those fields (Atkinson, 2019). Furthermore, attitudes toward time come from a person's habitus making them view and value time as the result of a socialization process. Atkinson (2019), analyzing Bourdieu's (1984) conceptualization of time, stated that "possession of the major capitals defining the social space – economic, cultural and social capital – defines one's relative distance from necessity, an important element of which is time" (p. 7). Studies have shown that quality and timely feedback in the doctoral journey is key to timely completion of doctoral degrees and not necessarily the duration imposed by institutions (Duke & Denicolo, 2017; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Gardner & Holley, 2011; Hunter & Devine, 2016).

Introducing a course work component in the new doctoral curriculum of the university was an important initiative to help students acquire relevant employment and research skills as noted in the literature (See Austin, 2002; Barnett et al., 2017; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Selmer et al., 2011). However, in this research, the findings indicate that the participants were dissatisfied with the faculty-centric approach to delivering the courses, which denied students the opportunity to actively participate in learning activities to develop critical thinking and inquiry skills needed for research and future careers. This assertion resonates with Bourdieu's (1984) idea of hierarchy, power, and competition in fields through inclusion, privileging, oppression, and exclusion, just to name a few. There are genuine student concerns here because, in the absence of training and mentoring support for publications, students may find it challenging to develop embodied cultural capital: values and skills, and ways of thinking (habitus) (McCune & Hounsell, 2005) that could help them perform in their future fields of work. It is important to state that doctoral certificates may lose their value if graduates fail to develop the dispositions that guarantee improved performance on their preferred careers.

Revisiting Bourdieu's concept of field as relational implies that doctoral students' positioning in their institutions depends on their relationships with assigned advisors. It appears that if advisors fail to recognize their students as colleagues with similar amounts and composition of the different forms of capital, their practice tends to be exclusive and punitive (Bourdieu, 1984). Power dynamics in supervisor-student relationships can lead to practices that include some students more than others in institutions.

Indeed, the lack of timely feedback, which was echoed as one of the major concerns of these students, may also be interpreted along the lines of faculty teaching loads (Boulos, 2016). Faculty workload is perhaps ubiquitous, as a burgeoning body of the literature found that huge teaching loads significantly hamper doctoral training because of limited time for faculty to effectively supervise doctoral thesis (Barnes, 2010; Barnes & Austin, 2009; Blessinger, 2016; Duke & Denicolo, 2017; Jairam et al., 2012). This may be another area of investigation in future research. Consistent with previous studies (Cornér et al., 2017; Duke & Denicolo, 2017), this research found that poor supervision often compelled students to change multiple supervisors, which adversely affected timely completion of thesis. As noted by earlier research, in severe cases poor supervision leads to student attrition (Bao et al., 2018; Fredua-Kwarteng & Fredua-Kwarteng, 2019).

Another finding was that, although satisfied with available library resources, the students were concerned with the lack of access to funding (financial capital) to attend conferences as well as non-existence of mentoring and other support programs to publish their works. The failure to publish may be detrimental, particularly to doctoral students whose main goal is teaching and research, since one of the requirements for academic position is a publication record. Beyond the objectified capital (formal certificate) as Bourdieu (1984) puts it, there are other things that confer advantages on postgraduate students. They include the acquisition of embodied cultural capita (knowledge and skills) for their professional career (Confait, 2018). Studies have shown that many universities have included in their doctoral curriculum thesis with published work to enhance and prepare students for their relevant professions (Frick, 2019; Guerin, 2016; Jackson, 2013; Lee, 2010; Niven, & Grant, 2012). We argue that doctoral training could benefit from programs that actively encourage supervisors and students to share experiences on professional practice, such as developing research programs leading to scholarly publications. This implies that supervisors and doctoral students should work collaboratively to reduce power relations and perceived negative practices such as delays in providing feedback (Fetene &Tamrat, 2021). Ghanaian universities would also benefit immensely from training and encouraging the implementation of thesis by publication because it would give their students a good start in their future professions. Encouraging and supporting students to publish during their doctoral studies provide a sense of progress and help students to successful navigate the process of writing (Bogle et al., 201; Frick, 2019). A mentoring program for doctoral students could involve authentic learning about the expectations and norms of academic publishing (Confait, 2018; Lee, 2010).

This knowledge could also be transferred to their professions when they complete their doctoral studies (Blessinger, 2016; Jackson, 2013).

The findings of this research reinforce the idea of doctoral education as a socializing process (Felder et al., 2014). According to Brim's (1966) classic definition, socialization is "the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society" (p. 3). In respect of Bourdieu's (1986) work, the finding draws attention to the fact that the organizational aspect of universities should not focus solely on policy for doctoral education but also ensure that supervision and processes that lead to timely completion of quality doctorates, for example, levels of student engagement, involvement, and preparation for the profession, are implemented and monitored to enhance the student experience. This would mean a bold agenda for transforming the institutional culture (habitus) of both faculty and graduate students through a new form of socialization where power differences are minimized.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to utilize Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) concepts of capitals, habitus, and field to explore and critically analyze doctoral students' learning experiences with a new doctoral curriculum introduced by a Ghanaian university. The findings indicate that, although doctoral students going through the new curriculum were generally satisfied with many aspects of their programs, the additional cost associated with duration of course, the lack of quality and timely feedback from supervisors, and the difficulty accessing conference funding were big issues standing in their way to achieve their ultimate goals. In particular, the lack of mentoring for publications in professional journals posed a greater challenge for those who aspired to become academics in their future career. The strongest message gleaned from this study is that the quality of supervision is still crucial for the timely completion of doctoral degrees. Additionally, there is the need for Ghanaian universities to develop strong partnerships with industries so that their doctoral students can develop key knowledge (capital) and dispositions (habitus) required in the workforce (fields of employment) before they graduate. Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) conceptual tools help us to understand the acquisition of doctoral degree as entangled in the web of capital, habitus, and field. To improve doctoral students' learning experiences, it is necessary first to develop a student-supervisor relationship on mutual respect, clear timelines for achieving supervision targets, and commitment to achieving the targets. In Ghana, concerns have been expressed about the lack of innovation in doctoral training. We recommend the implementation of the thesis by publication model because, as noted in the discussion, it motivates students to publish during their doctoral studies and keeps them abreast of their progress. It also prepares them for future occupations, especially in academia. There is also the need to include information on the ethics of academic publishing in mentoring programs because the skill acquired could be applied to future occupations.

One of the study's limitations is that the sample was selected from one university in Ghana, hence, the findings cannot be generalized to doctoral students in other universities. Therefore, future studies may compare doctoral programs and student experiences across several Ghanaian universities. Moreover, a graduate destination survey and readiness to start a job after PhD can be conducted. The second limitation is that our participant selection was limited to students, a factor that excluded supervisors. This potential exclusive selection might have denied us a holistic perspective on the issues we have researched and discussed in this paper. A future study may draw on multiple perspectives to provide depth and breadth of knowledge in the doctoral curriculum of the university so that targeted improvements can be made to enhance the doctoral experience for both students and faculty. Doctoral degree policies and future research may also focus on tools that help to transform supervisor habitus and the kinds of support that work for individual students. Notwithstanding the limitations, this research's main contribution to the body of knowledge is the use of Bourdieu's concepts as the-

oretical lenses to analyze the results, thereby providing an alternative relational understanding of doctoral training, experiences, and challenges. The research may also benefit universities in monitoring the quality of doctoral students' experiences.

REFERENCES

Adika, G. (2003). Internet use among faculty members of universities in Ghana. *Library Review*, 29-37. https://doi.org/10.1108/00242530310456997

Adusah-Karikari, A. (2008). *Experiences of women in higher education: A study of women faculty and administrators in selected public universities in Ghana* [Doctoral dissertation, Ohio University].

Appel, M. L., & Dahlgren, L. G. (2003). Swedish doctoral students' experiences on their journey towards a PhD: Obstacles and opportunities inside and outside the academic building. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 47(1), 89–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830308608

Atkinson, W. (2019). Time for Bourdieu: Insights and oversights. *Time and Society, 28*(3), 951-970. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17752280

Atuahene, F. (2015). Higher education finance in Ghana. *International Higher Education*, *50*, 20- 21. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2008.50.7996

Austin, A. E. (2002). Preparing the next generation of faculty: Graduate school as socialization to the academic career. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *73*(1), 94-122. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2002.11777132

Bao, Y., Kehm, B. M., & Ma, Y. (2018). From product to process. The reform of doctoral education in Europe and China. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(3), 524-541. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1182481

Barnes, B. J. (2010). The nature of exemplary doctoral advisors' expectations and the ways they may influence doctoral persistence. *Journal of College Student Retention*, *11*(3), 323-343. https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.11.3.b

Barnes, B. J., & Austin, A. E. (2009). The role of doctoral advisors: A look at advising from the advisor's perspective. *Innovative Higher Education, 33*(5), 297-315. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-008-9084-x

Barnes, B. J., & Randall, J. (2012). Doctoral student satisfaction: An examination of disciplinary, enrollment, and institutional differences. *Research in Higher Education*, *53*(1), 47-75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-011-9225-4

Barnett, J. V., Harris, R. A., & Mulvany, M. J. (2017). A comparison of best practices for doctoral education in Europe and North America. *FEBS Open Bio*, *7*(10), 1444-1452. https://doi.org/10.1002/2211-5463.12305

Bawa, A., Gerdeman, H. K., Jayaram, N., & Kiley, M. (2014). Doctoral education in the era of globalization. In M. Nerad & B. Evans (Eds.), *Globalization and its impacts on the quality of PhD education: Forces and forms in doctoral education worldwide* (pp.129-159). Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-569-4_7

Blessinger, P. (2016). The shifting landscape of doctoral education. *Higher Education Tomorrow*, *4*(7), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2055-364120160000006009

Bogle, D., Dron, M., Eggermont, J., & Willem Van Henten, J. (2011). Doctoral degrees beyond 2010: Training talented researchers for society. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 13*, 35-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.03.003

Boulos, A. l. (2016). The labour market relevance of PhDs: An issue for academic research and policy-makers. *Studies in Higher Education, 41*(5), 901-913.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction*. Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (2013). Symbolic capital and social classes. *Journal of Classical Sociology*, *13*(2), 292-302. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X12468736

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brim, O. G., Jr. (1966). Socialization through the life cycle. In O. G. Brim, Jr., & S. Wheeler (Eds.), *Socialization after childhood: Two essays* (pp. 1–49). John Wiley.

Chavez, C. (2008). Conceptualizing from the inside: Advantages, complications, and demands on insider positionality. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(3), 474-494.

Clarke, S. (2014). Informing pre-registration nurse education: A proposal outline on the value, methods and ethical considerations of involving children in doctoral research. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing, 37*(4), 265-281. https://doi.org/10.3109/01460862.2014.955927

Coccio, M. (2018). An introduction to the theories of institutional change. *Journal of Economic Library, 5*(4), 337-344.

Confait, M. F. (2018). Maximising the contributions of PHD graduates to national development: The case of the Seychelles [Doctoral thesis, Edith Cowan University]. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2060/

Cornér, S., Löfström, E., & Pyhältö, K. (2017). The relationship between doctoral students' perceptions of supervision and burnout. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies.12*, 91-105. https://doi.org/10.28945/3754

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Cross, M., & Backhouse, J. (2014). Evaluating doctoral programs in Africa: Context and practices. *Higher Education Policy, 27*(2), 155-174. https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2014.1

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook on qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Duke, D. C., & Denicolo, P. M. (2017). What supervisors and universities can do to enhance doctoral student experience (and how they can help themselves). *FEMS Microbiology Letters, 364*(9). https://doi.org/10.1093/femsle/fnx090

Dwyer, C. S., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8*(1), 54-63. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105

Dybas, C. L. (2013). The road not taken: Paths to nonacademic careers in the biological sciences. *BioScience, 63*(12), 915-921. https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2013.63.12.2

Felder, P. P., Stevenson, H. C., & Gasman, M. (2014). Understanding race in doctoral student socialization. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 9*, 21-42. https://doi.org/10.28945/1947

Fetene, G. T. & Tamrat, W. (2021). The PhD Journey at Addis Ababa University: Study delays, causes, and coping mechanisms. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 16*, 320-337. https://doi.org/10.28945/4744

Foot, R., Crowe, A. R., Tollafield, K. A., & Allan, C. E. (2014). Exploring doctoral student identity development using a self-study approach. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry, 2*(1), 103-118. https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.2.1.103

Fredua-Kwarteng, F. & Fredua-Kwarteng, E. (2019, October 17). Quality doctoral programs are vital for development. *University World News Africa Edition*, p.1. https://www.universityworld-news.com/post.php?story=20191015132242137

Frick, L. (2019). PhD by Publication – Panacea or Paralysis? *Africa Education Review*,16(5), 47-59. https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2017.1340802

Gardner, S. K. (2010). Contrasting the socialization experiences of doctoral students in high-and low-completing departments: A qualitative analysis of disciplinary contexts at one institution. *The Journal of Higher Education, 81*(1), 61-81. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2010.11778970

Gardner, S. K., & Gopaul, B. (2012). The part-time doctoral student experience. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 7*, 63-78. https://doi.org/10.28945/1561

Gardner, S. K., & Holley, K. A. (2011). "Those invisible barriers are real": The progression of first- generation students through doctoral education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 44*(1), 77- 92. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2011.529791

Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). Pearson.

Golde, C. M. (2005). The role of the department and discipline in doctoral student attrition: Lessons from four departments. *The Journal of Higher Education, 76*(6), 669–670. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2005.0039

Gopaul, B. (2015). Inequality and doctoral education: Exploring the "rules" of doctoral study through Bourdieu's notion of field. *Higher Education, 70*, 73–88. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9824-z

Guerin, C. (2016). Connecting the dots: Writing a doctoral thesis by publication. In C. Badenhorst & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Research literacies and writing pedagogies for masters and doctoral writers* (pp. 31-50). Leiden: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004304338_003

Hasgall, A., Saenen, B., Borrell-Damian, L., Van Deynze, F., Seeber, M., & Huisman, J. (2019). *Doctoral education in Europe today: Approaches and institutional structures.* European University Association. https://eua.eu/resources/publications/809:doctoral-education-in-europe-today-approaches-and-institutional-structures.html

Hodges, V., Metcalfe, J., & Pollard, E. (2011). *What do researchers do? Career paths of doctoral graduates 2011.* Vitae: Careers Research and Advisory Centre. https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/what-do-researchers-do-career-paths-doctoral-graduates-2011

Hopwood, N.., Alexander, P., Harris- Huemmert, S., McAlpine, L., & Wagstaff, S. (2011). The hidden realities of life as a doctoral student. In V. Kumar & A. Lee (Eds.), *Doctoral education in international context: Connecting local, regional and global perspectives* (pp. 213- 254). Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.

Hunter, K. H., & Devine, K. (2016). Doctoral students' emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave academia. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 11, 35–61. https://doi.org/10.28945/3396

Jackson, D. (2013). Completing a PhD by publication: A review of Australian policy and implications for practice. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *32*(3), 355-368. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.692666

Jairam, D., & Kahl, D. H., Jr. (2012). Navigating the doctoral experience: the role of social support in successful degree completion. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, *7*, 311-329. https://doi.org/10.28945/1700

Jazvac-Martek, M., Chen, S., & McAlpine, L. (2011). Tracking doctoral student experience over time: Cultivating agency in diverse spaces. In L. McAlpine & C. Amundsen (Eds.), *Doctoral education: Research-based strategies for doctoral students, supervisors and administrators* (pp. 17-36). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0507-4_2

Johnson, R.B., & Christensen, L. (2008). *Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Lamptey, R. B., Boateng, M. S. & Antwi, I. K. (2013). Motivation and performance of librarians in public universities in Ghana. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, *911*.

Lee, A. (2010). When the article is the dissertation: Pedagogies for a PhD by publication. In C. Aitchison, B. Kamler & A. Lee (Eds.), *Publishing pedagogies for the doctorate and beyond* (pp. 137-155). Taylor & Francis. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203860960-7/article-dissertation-pedagogies-phd-publication-alison-lee

Loomis, S., & Rodriguez, J. (2009). Institutional change and higher education. *Higher Education*, *58*(4), 475-489. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9206-0

Major, C., & Savin-Baden, M. (2010). *An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: Managing the information explosion in social science research.* Routledge.

McCune, V., & Hounsell, D. (2005). The development of students' ways of thinking and practising in three final-year biology courses. *Higher Education*, *49*(3), 255-289. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-004-6666-0

Merton, R. K., Rader G. G., & Kendall, P. L. (1957). *The student physician: Introduction studies in the sociology of medical education.* Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674366831

Nerad, M., & Heggelund, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Toward a global PhD?: Forces and forms in doctoral education worldwide.* University of Washington Press.

Niven, P., & Grant, C. (2012). PhDs by publications: An "easy way out"? *Teaching in Higher Education*, *17*(1), 105-111. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2012.640086

Pinxten, W., & Lievens, J. (2014). The importance of economic, social and cultural capital in understanding health inequalities: using a Bourdieu-based approach in research on physical and mental health perceptions. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 36*(7), 1095-1110. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12154

Posselt, J. (2018). Normalizing struggle: Dimensions of faculty support for doctoral students and implications for persistence and well-being. *The Journal of Higher Education, 89*(6), 988-1013, https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1449080

Pyhältö, K., & Keskinen, J. (2012). Doctoral students' sense of relational agency in their scholarly communities. *International Journal of Higher Education, 1*(2), 136–149. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v1n2p136

Romera Ayllón, M. R. & Benito Bonito, M. (2013). *How to boost the PhD labour market? Facts from the R&D and innovation policies side.* DES - Working Papers. Statistics and Econometrics. WS ws133127, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Departamento de Estadística. https://ideas.repec.org/p/cte/wsrepe/ws133127.html

Schatzki, T. (2017). Practices and learning. In P. Grootenboer, C. Edwards-Groves, & S. Choy (Eds.), *Practice theory perspectives on pedagogy and education* (pp. 23-43). Springer.

Schmidt, M., & Hansson, E. (2018). Doctoral students' well-being: A literature review. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 13*(1), Article 1508171. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2018.1508171

Selmer, S., Graham, M., & Goodykoontz, E. (2011). Three women's educational doctoral program experiences: A case study of performances and journeys. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 2*(3), 14-25. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/199731

Standing, C. (2010). *How to complete a PhD.* Combined Systems.

Stubb, J., Pyhältö, K., & Lonka K. (2011). Balancing between inspiration and exhaustion: PhD students' experienced socio-psychological well-being. *Studies in Continuing Education, 33*(1), 33-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2010.515572

Walker, G. E., Golde, C. M., Jones, L., Bueschel, A. C., & Hutchings, P. (2009). *The formation of scholars: Rethinking doctoral education for the twenty-first century.* John Wiley & Sons.

Yates, L. (2004). *What does good educational research look like?* Open University Press.

APPENDIX

Interview Protocol for Doctoral Students

1. Please, may I know how old you are?
2. What is your gender, please?
3. May I know your area of specialisation on the doctoral programme?
4. How long have you been on your doctoral study in the University of Ghana?
5. How do you feel about the change of duration of the doctoral programme of the University from three to four years? How happy or otherwise are you with the change? Do you think the additional one year makes you better prepared to meet your future aspirations?
6. Which aspects of the new doctoral programme do you find impressive? Why so?
7. Which aspects of the programme do you wish were revised? Please explain why you make such a wish
8. How do you see the coursework component of your doctoral programme? Does it meet your personal expectations of equipping you with skills and competence needed for industrial employment? And does it prepare you adequately for conducting research independently?
9. As part of the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree in the new programme, you're supposed to write a comprehensive examination as well as do an oral presentation of your proposal in a seminar. How do you like or dislike these components of your study?

10. Could you explain whether this new doctoral programme is giving you or will give you access to better thesis supervision experience? Do you or your colleagues receive prompt feedback on your thesis from supervisors? How helpful is the feedback?

11. Could you share your view on the experiential learning aspect of your doctoral education? Do you think it is necessary? Why or why not?

12. What is your impression about the current thesis examination procedures allowing external and internal assessors to pass thesis prior to viva voce?

13. How satisfied are you with the academic support services in your studies such as access to reference resource materials, research tools and databases, travels to conferences to present your research, and mentoring to write and publish academic materials?

AUTHORS

Dr. Inusah Salifu is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Adult Education and Human Resource Studies, University of Ghana. His research interest is in human resource development and management in education at the tertiary and pre-tertiary levels. His research covers teacher professional development, educational administration/management/leadership, special needs education, and psychological basis for teaching and learning at both levels.

Dr. Joseph Seyram Agbenyega is an Associate Professor in the Counseling, Special Education and Neuroscience Division at Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE), Abu Dhabi, UAE. He is also the research chair at ECAE. Before joining ECAE in 2020, Dr Agbenyega worked in Monash University in Australia for more than 10 years where he served as the Director of Graduate Research in the Faculty of Education. His research interests are in inclusive education, teacher training and doctoral education.