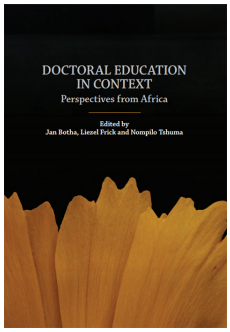
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Supervision in transition: African voices reshaping doctoral education

Doctoral Education in Context: Perspectives from Africa is a timely, significant and much-needed contribution to the global discourse on doctoral education. At a moment when doctoral education is undergoing profound transformation – driven by massification, globalisation and the growing influence of digital and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies – this volume offers a deeply contextual, grounded and authentically African perspective on doctoral supervision and pedagogy.

What distinguishes this book is its multi-voiced, practice-based orientation. Drawing on contributions from supervisors across 16 African countries, the text moves beyond abstract theorisation and foregrounds lived supervisory realities, particularly those of novice and emerging supervisors. This approach is both refreshing and necessary. Much of the dominant literature on doctoral education has historically been shaped by Global North perspectives; this volume disrupts that imbalance by offering an epistemic rebalancing – a repositioning of African experiences as legitimate sites of knowledge production.

The book's structure – organised around (1) the doctoral qualification in Africa, (2) doctoral pedagogy and (3) the supervisor–candidate relationship – enables a layered exploration of doctoral education as both a systemic and a relational phenomenon. Particularly compelling is the way the book reveals the interconnected challenges facing doctoral education on the continent: capacity constraints, uneven supervisory development, infrastructural limitations and tensions between quality and access.

At the same time, the book is not deficit-oriented. It highlights innovations emerging from constraints – such as cohort supervision models, low-tech digital supervision (e.g. WhatsApp) and contextually adaptive pedagogies. These examples resonate strongly with current shifts towards distributed, networked and ecosystem-based models of supervision, which are increasingly central to rethinking doctoral education globally.

From my scholarly perspective – particularly my work on innovative doctoral supervision models, doctoral pedagogies and the emerging role of AI as a co-supervisor – this book offers both validation and provocation. It affirms that the traditional apprenticeship model of doctoral supervision is no longer sufficient in contemporary contexts. More importantly, it provides empirical and reflective grounding for the move towards collaborative, cohort-based and community-oriented supervision approaches, which I have conceptualised in my own work as part of broader supervision ecosystems.

The book also implicitly aligns with my ongoing research into the "horizontalisation" of doctoral pedagogy, in which peer learning, communities of practice and multi-actor supervision structures become central to the doctoral journey. The volume's emphasis on collegial support, supervisor development and relational dynamics echoes the growing recognition that doctoral success is not merely an individual endeavour but a socially embedded and structurally enabled process.

Furthermore, the book's contextual sensitivity to African realities – particularly the tension between increasing doctoral output and maintaining quality – directly aligns with my research on doctorateness and doctoral contribution. It reinforces the need for doctoral education systems that are not only scalable but also capable of sustaining rigorous, original and contextually meaningful contributions to knowledge.

One of this volume's most valuable contributions is its implicit call for pluralising doctoral education models. Rather than prescribing a single "best practice", it invites readers to engage with a range of approaches shaped by local realities. This is particularly important for the Global South, where importing models from the Global North without contextual adaptation has often proved ineffective.

In conclusion, *Doctoral Education in Context: Perspectives from Africa* is more than an edited collection: it is a strategic intervention in the global conversation about doctoral education. It challenges dominant narratives, amplifies underrepresented voices and offers a rich repository of insights for scholars, supervisors, policymakers and institutional leaders.

For readers in Africa and the broader Global South, this book offers both recognition and guidance. For global audiences, it offers an opportunity to rethink assumptions and engage with doctoral education in more inclusive, contextually responsive ways.

As a scholar deeply engaged in reimagining doctoral education for the future, I find this book both affirming and generative. It is precisely the kind of work that advances the field – not through uniformity, but through diversity, dialogue and disruption.

This is a book that should not only be read – it should be engaged with, debated and built upon.

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