

Multifaceted stakeholder engagement model for implementing doctoral theses and dissertations recommendations in the real world

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ABSTRACT

Academic research is quantitatively and qualitatively considered as the foundation for furthering the future investigation and improve practice in any field. At the same time, the results of doctoral research is not disseminated in public domain due to various reasons of policies such as copy right, IPR, time lag, publication procedures. Recommendations are not implemented due to various policy issues as well. This article aims to explore the challenges that impinge implementation of PhD recommendations in their relevant fields. The research also aims at developing a model that guides both the PhD candidates and supervisors to successfully implement recommendations of their studies to make the world a better place to live in. Data was drawn, using a cutting-edge qualitative instrument, from selected 2020 to 2022 PhD graduates. Open ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used to collect data from the students. Data collected were analyzed thematically and the results showed that there is lack of engagement between the researchers, supervisors and the relevant stakeholders. This is mainly caused by the researchers focus on degree completion and lack of proper guidance from supervisor and universities. The Multifaceted Stakeholder Engagement Model proposed would ensure the engagement of important stakeholders in the implementation of thesis recommendations. The model encourages researchers to take cognisance of the audiences likely to be interested in study findings in advance. This can result in suitable packaging and targeted communication of findings and recommendations. Other strategies for avoiding the barriers that can negatively impact implementation of research evidence include getting assurance on the relevance of the research problem from stakeholders as early as the research is being designed. It is also important for the DPhil candidate/graduate together with their supervisors to spearhead implementation in a bottom up approach rather than wait for other stakeholders, to implement the recommendations in a top down approach.

Keywords: Thesis recommendations, Implementation, implementation framework, genuine inclusive engagement, stakeholder, multifaceted

Introduction

The recommendations section is one of the most important sections of a doctoral study as it points what must be done for research to add value, and further research which could be done. Due attention has to be paid to doctoral recommendations in order to improve the education sector in specific and life in general. Despite significant investment in educational research, challenges remain in translating research outputs into policies and practices that improve the education system. The probable reason is that the university, country and individuals do not understand the value of a DPhil degree, and if they do, they do not take this seriously.

The primary goal of DPhil research is creating new knowledge and contributing to the relevant field. Therefore, after three to five years of research, if the DPhil degree is duly awarded, there should be a significant contribution to knowledge in the field. Assuming due process has been followed between supervisor and DPhil candidate and all the examining structures of the university, there should be high recognition of the new knowledge created. Such recognition of research recommendations must be significant to the DPhil holder, the awarding university and the country with particular reference to the government or private sector where this new knowledge can be applied. In most cases after the long period of study, the DPhil graduate, is exhausted and grateful that they finally got their DPhil degree that, they tend to forget to follow up the implementation of their recommendations. The whole process becomes simply a search for prestige and status rather than developmental process for the individual, the university and the country at large. If all DPhil recommendations were taken seriously, then the candidate, the host university and the country could have developed and advanced to a higher level with every successful DPhil degree awarded by each university.

A lot of knowledge is wasted through lack of implementation. DPhil researchers are generally preoccupied with the process and output of their study while forgetting the potential impact of their endeavours. On the other hand, the universities probably see it as a functional process of enhancing the status of the university; having produced and certified many DPhil holders. The country suffers most since the ideas generated are intellectual capital that the country needs to solve its problems and advance its system. The findings could be used by other countries as well.

Statement of the problem

Many recommendations have emanated from DPhil researches but have not brought about any meaningful change to practice as implementation of research recommendations has failed to take off once the candidates graduate. The research that comes to mind is the Zimbabwean Nziramasanga Commission of 1999 whose recommendations were only implemented 15 years after the commission of enquiry had completed its investigation. The same is happening with the many of the DPhil research recommendations on development aspects of life. Little has been done to assess the relevance of researches that are being carried out and why they are not implemented after the recommendations are presented. Chances that this trend will continue are real if candidates and supervisors are not equipped to take centre stage in ensuring that relevant stakeholders are engaged and recommendations implemented and monitored in earnest. The paper was motivated by the need to contribute to the current discourses on effective implementation methods in translating evidence-based findings into practice.

Objectives

The research was guided by the following three objectives;

1. To unpack the concept of 'implementation'
2. To identify reasons why research recommendations (including those found in theses) are not implemented?
3. To develop a robust model with which to implement thesis recommendations.

Review of related literature

The review of related literature is divided into four sections namely; the theoretical framework the concept of implementation, reasons why recommendations are not implemented, and lastly, different ways of ensuring implementation of research recommendations.

Theoretical framework

This qualitative study was guided by the Contextual Interaction Model developed in the Netherlands in the early 1980s. Parsimonious and realistic, the Contextual Interaction Theory (CIT) was constructed to explicate the vital interaction between actors in the policy implementation process (Diori, 2021; Owen, 2008; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). It summarises all the implementation variables into three core constructs: the Motivation, Information, and Power of actors which had been identified as the key factors that have the greatest impact on implementation outcomes (Owens, 2008). The theory states that motivation urges actors to be ready to participate; information is defined as the level to which an organisation understands the tasks and exchanges information and know how to act upon the task (Owens, 2008). Power, the third variable, guarantees actors a greater influence on policy implementation, and depends on the resources they own (Bressers et al., 2016; Owens & Bressers, 2013). Owen (2008) states that the theory of Contextual Interaction rests on three main principles.

1. Firstly, it assumes that the mechanisms and results of a policy process are not solely a product of inputs but actors' information, motivation, and power.
2. Secondly, the theory assumes that policy implementation encompasses three possibilities: the completion of implementation per se, implementation avoidance, and some endeavours to change the goals of a given policy implementation.
3. Thirdly, the contextual interaction theory assumes that the actors in a given interaction, are likely to work together if they, at least, have a history of working together on other issues.

The variables of information, motivation, and power are central to every interaction process and enjoy high explanatory power as far as the process dynamic is concerned (Owens, 2008). That justifies the reason why the contextual interaction theory is chosen as the theoretical framework of this study.

Concept clarification: Recommendation implementation

The word 'implementation' means different things to different scholars depending on their own perspectives and policy realms. According to Diori (2021) and Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), to implement a policy/recommendation is to carry it out, to accomplish, fulfil, produce, or complete the policy. Other definitions of the word 'implementation' stress a number of concepts ranging from 'process', 'interaction', 'adoption', to 'task realisation'. In the context of this study, recommendation implementation is viewed as the delivery of any recommendation, plan or action (Burke et al., 2012). It

is a complex, technical, and highly interactive process which often calls for consensus-building (Mthethwa, 2012).

Why are DPhil recommendations not implemented?

Few studies were conducted to analyse the factors hindering the implementation of research recommendations in the public sectors. In a study that the MWT reviewed literature on challenges face by management in implementing recommendations in Zimbabwe (Wadesango et al., 2017).

Factors such as financial constraints, staffing issues and bureaucracy system of the public service set up were mentioned as contributing factors to the hindering of implementation of audit recommendations. The review of related literature identifies five challenges which hinder implementation of these recommendations namely: fault finding recommendations, non-feasible recommendations, non-commitment to results, researchers' lack of faith in their recommendations and need for change and lastly lack of resources to promote action.

1. Fault finding recommendations

These are recommendations which do not state specifically the action to be undertaken for example, "teacher to receive further training." According to Aikins (2012) and Wadesango et.al (2017), these recommendations are not well supported by facts or they do not flow logically from the facts. McNellis (2011) cited in Wadesango et.al (2017) states that "research recommendations must not convey how to develop a system, but they should be specific about the system that needs improvement and the objectives that should be achieved by the change". McNellis (2011) contends that where thesis recommendations are not convincing, it is only natural that management will not implement the recommendations. With specific reference to audit recommendations, Svanstrom (2016) argues that the lack of effective training for auditors to enable them to understand that audits, especially internal audits, are systems audits not people audits leads to poor quality audit recommendations. In the same vein, all researchers need to realise that the moment recommendations are people-centred the stakeholders feel attacked hence lose interest in implementing the recommendations. Svanstrom (2016) emphasises that non-specific recommendations lead to non-compliance. It is also important to note that recommendations that attack individuals and not policies also hit a dead end.

2. Non feasible recommendations

Aikins (2012) states that poor quality recommendations are not feasible when they do not take into account legal and practical constraints that would make their implementation possible or likely. Armittage (2011), states that non-feasible recommendations are not considerate of the realistic limitations that organizations face such as financial constraints. The concerned ministry or organisation will not be inclined to implement a recommendation unless it is reasonable, proper and will benefit the organization.

3. Non commitment to findings

Wadesango et al. (2017) agree with Aikins (2012) that a commitment to results is perhaps the most important but least tangible requirement for ensuring that the research recommendations are realised. Getting action on the recommendations depends on the commitment emphasis and priority given to recommendations by the individual and organisation. Aikins (2012) argues that both the researcher and the concerned organisation should be active participants in the implementation of thesis recommendations but when both entities are not committed the recommendations remain non-

implemented. Korje (2016) says that researchers are not committed to results when they do not believe in their recommendations or the need for change, promote action, and understand the organizational environment. More so most DPhil graduates cooperate and help the organisation or ministry in implementing the recommendations. Aikins (2012) found that a committed researcher will do what they need to do to make sure that action required for implementation of recommendations is undertaken.

4. Researcher non-belief in their recommendations and need for change

Aikins (2012) cited in Wadesango et al. (2017) states that when researchers are not convinced that their recommendations are of the highest quality and, if acted upon, will produce the desired improvements, they are unlikely to devote the extra effort needed to get the recommendations implemented. However, implementing some key recommendations may take considerably more time, maybe even three or more years after the completion of their studies. Aikins (2012) further argues that when researchers are not determined enough to track the implementation status of their recommendations, reassert the need for action or reevaluate ways to get recommendations done, then the whole recommendation process becomes irrelevant.

5. Researchers' lack of resources to promote action

Rubin (2012) says "this is whereby researchers do not use effective communication channels like face-to-face approaches in a clear, concise and organized manner to determine how findings and recommendations can best be presented to promote acceptance. Meyers (2012) remarks that this could mean unwillingness to use imagination and initiative to get beneficial results. He further assert that getting results need persistence. Unfortunately some researchers do not have the resources to make follow up calls and visits to ensure that action is taken upon their recommendations. Burke (2012) concurs that that researchers might be motivated enough to have their work recognized and but are frustrated by the long processes involved.

It is important to note that the reasons highlighted in the reviewed literature tend to focus more on the nature of recommendations and not on lack of guiding principles on implementation thesis recommendation. The current reflections therefore offer a model which can guide DPhil researchers in ensuring that their recommendations are recognised.

Models of implementation

Since there is little literature on how to implement thesis recommendations, this paper borrows Diori's (2021) integrated deductive models of policy implementation derived from economics. The models are mostly top-down approaches of policy implementation in that they are associated with excessive guidance and regulations, and tend to achieve the institution's goal rather than meeting local needs and concerns (Diori, 2021; Hudson et al., 2019; Mthethwa, 2012). Deductive models of policy implementation are said to be parsimonious and more precise in studying complex social interactions. Deductive models seem to present some important strengths and limitations. Very often, according to some critics, they appear too sophisticated, especially for models that evolve from the economics literature. In some cases, they deal carefully with the complex character of decision making, by relying on objectively-rational assumptions which sometimes even calculate the pros and cons on the basis of lucrative gain.

Another potential limitation of most deductive models is based on the presumption that the policy will be implemented as decided upon, a point that is contradicted by a mass of existing research findings (Mthethwa, 2012). Finally, deductive models of policy implementation seem to focus implicitly on a one-actor decision-making. Again, this does not mean that all deductive approaches are top-down-

models, but rather, that the implementer owns the final word even when other stakeholders are consulted (Khan & Khandaker, 2016). To Diiori (2021) the following variables have a positive impact on a policy outcome:

1. **Effective Leadership:** leadership is the prime factor that determines a policy outcome. It is the first variable of the integrated model because it clearly satisfies the criterion of “power” around which all the other variables fall. Effective leaders are essential to the success of every policy or programme.
2. **Right organisation structure:** effective leaders use good organisational structures to effectively manage both the implementation process and the organisational resources. Having the right organisational structure helps to streamline the implementation activities, improve decision-making, and personnel performance. It also helps motivate policy participants since it creates a conducive work environment and harmony among the political actors throughout the policy execution.
3. **Clarity of goals and objectives:** clarifying policy goals and objectives helps to articulate the programme’s orientation and the nature of the service needs. It also helps build common understanding and consensus among staff members and other stakeholders about essential policy activities and expected outcomes.
4. **Clear and detailed task assignments:** detailing and clarifying tasks or assigning tasks and establishing accountability help keep policy actors focused and devoted to their tasks. Clear mission, tasks or responsibility assignments; and clear policy goals and objectives are part of the variable of information, another key implementation factor needed for any candidate model to be effective.
5. **Adequate and effective use of resources:** by resources, we mean all human, financial, and material aspects that can be deployed for the accomplishment of a policy mandate. A good structure and resources management necessarily lead to effective performance and ignites actors’ motivation. Effective leadership, good organisational structure, adequate and effective use of resources and clear goals and tasks assignments can stimulate both staff members and other policy participants.
6. **Commitment of front-line implementers:** though the integrated model is cogent as far as “power” and “information” are concerned, the commitment of front-line implementers is needed for a successful policy implementation. Engagement or commitment of front-line actors is caused by the ability of top hierarchy which itself usually comes from good leadership. Good leaders delegate power to their most trusted front-line subordinates so as to control their behaviour and get them more involved in the task realization.

The main implication here is to consider the use of an integrated model, one that combines the strength of all of the rational, management, organisational development process, political, bureaucratic process models, but none of their weaknesses. Such a model has the potential to be a more nuanced, more effective, and complete theory of policy implementation. While a good leader inspires his or her associates, gets the needed resources and effectively utilizes them; the detailed and clear policy goals and objectives they spell out could stir staff members’ readiness to fully participate.

While the model appears plausible, it is difficult to use on thesis recommendations because even though they are meant to inform policy, the challenge on their implementation begins with failure to be considered for policy formulation. The first stage towards implementation of thesis recommendations, therefore, begins with ensuring that the recommendations are acknowledged for policy formulation;

hence the need for a model which involves the role of the researcher and supervisor in ensuring recognition of their recommendations.

Methodology

The research design of this study is an exploratory case study. An exploratory case study design is useful when the research aim is to develop new insights about a phenomenon that has not been sufficiently researched (Ferreira & Lind, 2023). This design was chosen as it allowed in-depth subjective reasoning in an unrestricted manner of the implementation levels of DPhil recommendations by the recent graduates, their attitudes and experiences towards implementation of their recommendations (Lekunze & Strom, 2017). In addition, the exploratory case study was appropriate as it allowed an examination of specific individual graduates and supervisors in their contexts to raise issues that affected them regarding implementation of their thesis recommendations.

Participants

A total of sixteen (16) participants, ten (10) DPhil graduates who graduated in 2020 to 2022 and their six (6) supervisors. The participants were Zimbabwean DPhil graduates drawn from five universities; three from Zimbabwe and two from South Africa. This allowed the research to generate data from different higher education contexts from which Zimbabweans acquire their DPhil qualifications. Using random sampling, two (2) Zimbabwean graduates were picked from each university (Faculty of education). Random sampling was used in this qualitative study given that all DPhil theses are concluded by giving recommendations to different stakeholders. Convenience sampling was used for the selection of supervisors. By virtue of being a supervisor to a selected graduate, one automatically became a participant. However, four out of the five South African supervisors were not reachable for the study. This was done to allow easy access to the university policies and easy triangulation of data. Consistent with ethical practice, the study did not use the real names of participants in order to protect their identities so that information was not traced back to them.

Table 1 summarises the demographic data of the participants.

Age	40 to 50 3	51 to 60 9	60 & above 4
Gender	Male 10	Female 6	
Country of study	Zimbabwe 12	South Africa 4	
Year of graduation	2020 2	2021 3	2022 5

Data collection

Semi-structured questionnaires were used to generate data from all the sixteen (16) participants then six (6) were interviewed depending on the responses on their questionnaires. The data collection instruments were designed to allow the participants to express their experiences in trying to implement thesis recommendations as well as the challenges encountered. The questionnaire and interview protocol were validated through pilot studying the instruments with five graduates and three supervisors from a context similar to the research study. The researchers did the administration and retrieval of questionnaires within a period of one week. The interviews were then carried out a week after the

questionnaires were completed. Consistent with qualitative data collection strategies, the researchers created a research journal, writing notes and connecting ideas, thus recording the participants' reflections (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). Data from the in-depth interviews were captured using a digital recorder and notes with the observed ethical principle of informed consent.

Data analysis

After collecting the qualitative data through field notes and diaries, we grouped the data into codes. These were used to develop themes that responded to the three research questions. Verbatim comments from participants were also included to support each theme raised during the data analysis process. To ensure trustworthiness in this research, two data generation strategies, in-depth interviews and semi-structured questionnaires, were used for data triangulation.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

The research aimed at finding the reasons why recommendations from DPhil research thesis are rarely implemented despite the effort which is invested into the studies by both the DPhil candidates and the supervisors. The findings from the semi-structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews were categorised into themes based on the three main research questions. The presented data were a summary of the participants' responses as they gave their lived experiences of trying to implement DPhil thesis recommendations.

1. The concept of 'implementation'

The first research question aimed at unpacking the concept of implementation. To ensure that the DPhil graduates are aware of the concept the researcher asked them of their understanding of the term implementation in both the the questionnaire and the interview.

The graduates revealed a reasonable understanding of the term implementation. Graduate 1, 2 and 7 concurred that, *'implementation is the process of putting a recommendations or plan into practice.'*

Graduate 7 further explained, *'for the most part we conduct research to find answers or seek to understand the things we still don't know. After getting answers that we seek, we need to put those answers into practice to improve innovation, policy development, problem solving and public awareness.'*

The responses confirmed that the researchers are aware that their researches are meant to bring change to different aspect of education. These sectors included curriculum development, teacher development, educational management and even classroom instruction. As a follow up question the graduates were asked if it is crucial to implement recommendations from DPhil thesis. The responses were mixed. The general answer being the reason behind the research in the first place. If research is carried out to inform policy development, solve problems and innovation then the implementation has to be done at a macro scale to benefit the concerned stakeholders, institutions, a country or even the world as a whole. On the other hand some DPhil candidates carry out research to test hypothesis, for knowledge expansion, academic and professional growth. The second category of research might not have recommendations to be implemented at a large scale, the impact of such research will be personal and affects a small group of people.

2. Reasons why thesis recommendations are not implemented

Research revealed that most Zimbabwean DPhil studies, especially in education are self funded. This means that the candidates begin their studies without engaging the parent Ministries; Ministry of Primary and Secondary education and or Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. This means that the major stakeholders are not taken on board from the onset. DPhil candidates only visit the ministries

to seek permission to enter the schools/ colleges/ universities for data generation. The process is routine hence the ministries do not pay much attention to the undertaken researches. One of the supervisors indicated,

Probably if our candidates get areas of study from the parent ministries and other major stakeholders, the stakeholders would remain interested in the results which they believe will solve their problems and inform decision making.

The findings confirm Diori's implementation model (2021). Implementation is very difficult when leadership and frontline implementers are not actively involved from the onset. With the self funded candidates the situation is worsened by lack of resources as confirmed by Burke (2012) and Myers (2012).

Secondly the findings revealed that DPhil candidates rarely engage these key stakeholder in their research until after graduation. This again weakens the stakeholder interest in the recommendations. Once the stakeholders lack interest in the recommendations there is likelihood that the recommendations will not be implemented. One of the graduates indicated that one of the major stakeholders in here research was Curriculum Development and Testing Center (CDTS), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education responsible for curriculum development and testing services. She lamented that,

Before I started data collection, I visited CDTS, the then Director showed a lot of interest in my research area, unfortunately I never visited him again. After graduation I went back with my study only to find out that the director had retired and the new director had no interest at all in my study. I strongly feel that if I had remained in touch with the office then replacement would not affect me so much.

The issue of stakeholder engagement seems to be recurring. It is so pertinent in ensuring successful implementation of thesis recommendations. The findings confirm reviewed literature on the importance of stakeholder engagement before, during and after the research.

The third reason for non implementation as raised in the study was submitting a voluminous thesis 200 to 400 pages long (preliminary pages and appendices included). After three to five years of research, the graduate is so proud to carry the voluminous report as evidence of the hard work. In addition the two ministries of education request that the graduates submit their final thesis to the head office. The size of the thesis would obviously put off any busy person. Graduates should probably give the stakeholders a small document with the abstract, findings and recommendations. The small document would stimulate interest, and if they are impressed, then they would request for the whole document. The third barrier pointed on ignorance. The candidates somehow create the barrier in a bid to impress the stakeholders.

The fourth mistake raised by both the supervisors and the graduates leading to lack implementation of thesis recommendations is failure to share interim findings and recommendations with key stakeholders. Instead of waiting for the final document, it would help if candidates engage the key stakeholders by updating them on the interim findings as the study progresses. This could be done through developing conference papers from the study. This concurs with Rubin (2012) that lack of resources impinges on implementation of recommendations. As discussed earlier on Zimbabwe rarely provide funding for DPhil students, they struggle to pay tuition and carry out the research. In such circumstances candidates focus more on program completion at the expense of persuading implementation of recommendations.

The graduates also blamed the supervisors for not adequately advising them. One graduate indicated, *'my supervisor was much more experienced and qualified in Consulting skills, Interpersonal skills, Monitoring and Evaluation. Because of the pressure I was going through during the DPhil journey, I was almost insane. He was the sane partner, he should have spearheaded the engagement of stakeholders and ensure that they were kept abreast with our progress.*

In support of the above another graduate added,

My supervisor was and is a goal getter and a pace setter. If he sets his mind on something he pushes as hard as possible to get it. There are deadlines that I met not because I was a hardworker but because I was pushed until I had no option but to perform. If he had set his mind on implementation of the thesis recommendations, I am sure we could have achieved it.

The third graduate shared the blame between his supervisor and himself,

I have to confess that we did not invest time and effort into the implementation of the recommendations. Implementation of recommendations was not part of our plan as we were planning and executing the research. I must admit, on my part it was out of ignorance. I thought that once I submit the thesis, the ministry would pay attention and implement the recommendations. I strongly feel that this is where my supervisor and the research unit should have come in with their advice. They had vast experience in the area and if change had to be achieved then they were supposed to be the agents of change.

Four graduates who had graduated from South African universities and supervised by South African supervisors admitted ignorance on how to engage the stakeholders to ensure interest in the study to allow easy implementation. On the other hand the supervisors were not conversant with the Zimbabwean systems hence their focus was on academic progress and making sure their supervisees graduate.

Both the graduates and supervisors blamed the Postgraduate Degrees Unit at their different universities. The directorates are responsible for the MPhil and DPhil students. They monitor and advise the candidates throughout their DPhil journeys. They monitor progress and appraise candidates on the requirements they have to fulfil before graduation. According to the graduates, the directorates from their different universities never mentioned the significance of engaging stakeholders during the research journey and how they could make an impact in the education sector by implementing the recommendations. The graduates felt that the role of this unit must not end with graduation. The directorate must organise conferences, invite key stakeholders and let their candidates present their findings and recommendations. This way they will extend the role of the university from being a repository of knowledge to that of innovators. Knowledge itself is not power, the power comes from the utilisation of the knowledge in the real world. The university would contribute to improvement of the world and lifestyle in general if it assist its students realise their dreams of bringing change to the education sector and nation at large. This can also market the candidates for employment as research fellows and consultants. This can also secure donor funding for the candidates who generally struggle to pay their tuition.

Recommendations

After having long indepth interviews with the graduates and their supervisors, we came to identify the weakness of the system in which the candidates operate and the centrality of stakeholder engagement. We carried out a lot of research and consulted other senior researchers and faculty members. We assessed the generated data and came up with recommendations. We also designed a model that can be used to ensure implementation of DPhil recommendations. Our qualitative research yielded five recommendations:

1. DPhil supervisors and higher degrees directorates should advise candidates that thesis recommendations can be divided into two – the low hanging fruits and those at the top that are difficult to reach. The first ones are those recommendations that can be implemented easily. These do not require a lot of expertise, time and other related resources. The second class of recommendations need long term planning, expertise and resources. If the recommendations

are submitted at the same time there is always danger of the stakeholders giving excuses based on the required resources.

2. DPhil candidates must take interest in action research. It is best to get research problems from the relevant stakeholders which, in this case, is MoPSE and Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Once the key stakeholder is involved in the research from the onset then they will be eager to implement the recommendations.
3. The third recommendation is maintaining the stakeholders's engagement by keeping in touch with them throughout the research process. Even when individuals change office their research will be a topical issue assured of transition from one office holder to another.
4. Time factor is very crucial, therefore, DPhil candidates must not wait until they graduate before they start the implementation process. Implementation has to be done whilst findings are still fresh. Once the research is complete and the thesis is undergoing examination, implementation has to begin. The researcher has to start stakeholder engagement and negotiate ways of implementing the recommendations.
5. The researcher must also target presentations and discussion papers based on the research findings and recommendations. This helps in marketing the findings and attracting stakeholders into implementing the recommendations.
6. Research supervisors must not only guide the candidates in research but assist them to engage relevant stakeholders and ensure implementation of research findings.
7. Traditionally universities have only taken interest in the number of DPhil graduates churned out of their system. It is recommended that the university research unit goes further and assist their graduates to push for the implementation of their recommendations. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation must be made **compulsory courses at DPhil level to equip the graduates with** necessary skills for negotiation and consultancy.

Proposed model

The research has revealed that there is a problem pertaining implementation of DPhil recommendations. As indicated in the review of related literature there is no model developed on how to implement the recommendations hence the study ended up borrowing a model from policy implementation to understand and guide the understanding of implementation of research recommendations. The Integrated Deductive Model to policy implementation has its own strengths and weaknesses. Having reviewed and considered the different deductive policy implementation models this research proposes that DPhil researchers adopt a Multifaceted Stakeholder Engagement Model. The model is an inductive approach to thesis recommendation implementation. The theory borrows from the Contextual Interaction Theory discussed earlier on. The major difference is however on the fact that the researcher has to play the central role in the implementation of their thesis recommendations. They need to engage and reengage the stakeholders to convince them on the importance of the recommendation on practice. The model consists of five stages which are discussed in detail below.

1. Identification of the problem

Every research begins with identification of a problem (Silverman, 2020). At this stage the DPhil candidate has to identify their area of interest and narrow it down by focusing on certain aspects of the topic. They need to set boundaries by limiting what they will investigate. Once the research problem is identified the researcher has to work on the proposal. The proposal must be written in such a way that it shows the researcher's curiosity that, as indicated by O'Leary, (2014), is often the driver of good research. Once a winning proposal is in place engagement has to begin in earnest.

2. Stakeholder engagement

The second stage in the proposed model is stakeholder engagement. As highlighted in the Contextual Interaction Theory, three variables that affect implementation are power, information/knowledge and motivation (Diori, 2021). It is important for the researcher to identify these key stakeholders and discuss their intention with them. Those stakeholders with the power to command the implementation of the thesis recommendations should be involved from the beginning, as they have authority to ensure that necessary resources are availed for the implementation. The next stakeholders to engage are those with information, specialists in your area of research who can assist the researcher to convince the ones with power to implement. It is also important to motivate the front line actors since they are the ones who spearhead the implementation on the ground. At this stage the researcher should be ready to adjust their research approach to align with the interests of the stakeholders.

3. Research process

Once the stakeholders have endorsed the research problem and added their input, the researcher has to start his research journey. It is important for them to always update the stakeholders on the progress being made. This can be done through telephone conversations, visits on appointment or even emails. It is vital to keep the stakeholders abreast with all the developments so that their curiosity and interest in the research is maintained, or even increased. It is also important to keep the stakeholders abreast with the research progress in case some issues are overtaken by unprecedented events.

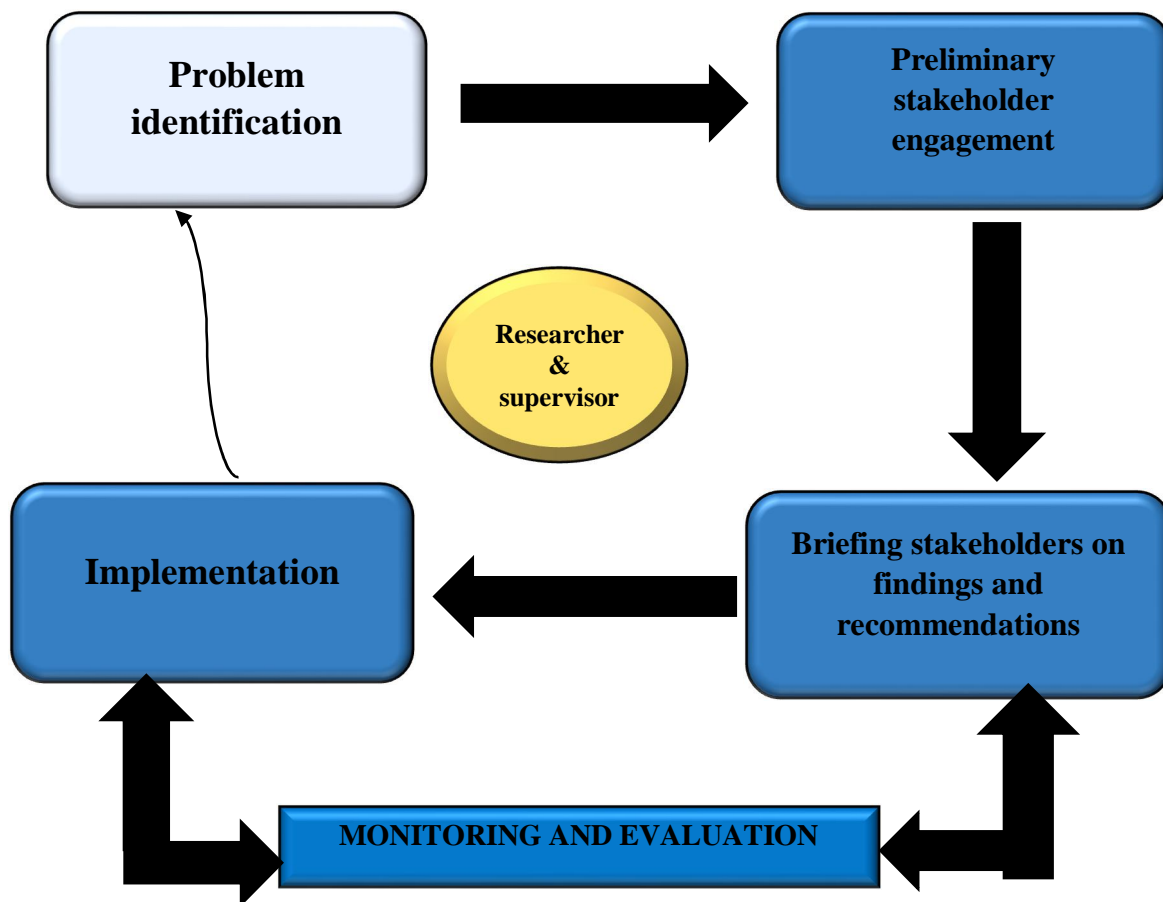
4. Briefing of findings and recommendations

Once the research is over the stakeholders have to be briefed on the findings and recommendations. At this stage it is important to consider face-to-face meetings with the stakeholders. If time and resources permit, it is best to organise a conference with all the stakeholders and present the research findings and recommendations. This allows them to debate, examine and clarify issues with the researcher. Such a conference might be the beginning of the implementation stage. It is important to note that implementation has to start as soon as the research is complete. Generally, the examination period for a DPhil thesis takes approximately six months to a year. While this time is filled with unnecessary anxiety, it is the opportune time to focus on discussions about implementation instead of nursing the anxiety.

5. Implementation

The final stage is implementation which can happen in two stages. There are recommendations that can be easily implemented because of their nature. Others require a lot of expertise, equipment and funding that require a longer period. It is important for the researcher to exercise patience where the recommendations need time to be recommended. They still need to remain optimistic and eager to follow up the progress.

The Multifaceted Stakeholder Engagement model



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