

**Review Form 3**

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| Journal Name:            | <b>Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies</b>            |
| Manuscript Number:       | <b>Ms_AJESS_122286</b>  |
| Title of the Manuscript: | <b>New Graduation Condition: A Nudge Towards Doctorateness?</b> |
| Type of the Article      |   |

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**PART 1: Review Comments**

| <b>Compulsory</b> REVISION comments   | Reviewer's comment   | <b>Author's Feedback</b> <i>(Please correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)</i> |
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| <p>Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. Why do you like (or dislike) this manuscript? A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.</p> | <p>This manuscript addresses a critical aspect of doctoral education by exploring the impact of a new graduation condition that mandates the publication and presentation of papers as a prerequisite for graduation. This topic is highly relevant to the scientific community, particularly in the context of higher education in developing countries. The study provides valuable insights into how such requirements can serve as a nudge towards achieving "doctorateness," a concept that is crucial in doctoral education. The research contributes to our understanding of the practical implications of academic policies on doctoral students' development and readiness for academic careers.</p>  |  |
| <p>Is the title of the article suitable? (If not please suggest an alternative title)</p>   | <p>The title "New Graduation Condition: A Nudge Towards Doctorateness?" effectively captures the essence of the study. It is concise and clearly indicates the focus on the new graduation requirement and its impact on achieving "doctorates." However, it might benefit from a bit more specificity, possibly by mentioning the context (such as the geographical location or the specific institution in focus), to attract a more targeted audience.</p>  |  |
| <p>Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here.</p>  | <p>The abstract succinctly summarizes the study, outlining the background, research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and recommendations. However, it could be strengthened by providing more details on the methodology, such as the sample size and the specific methods of data collection (interviews, surveys, etc.). Additionally, the abstract should mention the specific implications of the study for doctoral programs or policies, which are currently only implied. Clarifying these points will help readers quickly grasp the significance and applicability of the study's findings. Overall, the abstract is clear but could be enhanced with more precise details to fully encapsulate the study.</p>  |  |
| <p>Are subsections and structure of the manuscript appropriate?</p>   | <p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <p>The introduction provides a broad overview of the expansion in higher education in Africa and its associated challenges, particularly in Nigeria. The context is well established, emphasizing the need for quality in higher education to address the continent's challenges. The introduction transitions well into the specific focus of the study—the new graduation requirement for doctoral students to publish and present papers before graduation. However, the introduction could benefit from a more explicit statement of the study's objectives and the research questions earlier in the text. Currently, these are introduced after a lengthy discussion of the broader context. A more structured introduction, beginning with a brief overview of the study's specific focus before delving into the background, would enhance readability and provide a clearer roadmap for the reader. Additionally, the introduction could be more concise, avoiding repetition of points about the expansion of higher education and its challenges. Streamlining this section will make it more engaging and focused on the study's contribution to the discourse on doctoral education.</p> <p><b>2. Literature Review:</b></p> <p>The literature review is comprehensive, covering key concepts such as doctorateness, threshold concepts, and liminality. The review draws on a wide range of sources, providing a solid theoretical foundation for the study. The discussion on the definition and components of doctorateness is particularly well-developed, highlighting the complexities and challenges doctoral students face in achieving this status. However, the literature review could be improved by organizing the content more logically. The discussion on different theories and concepts, such as doctorateness,</p> |  |

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|  | <p>threshold concepts, and liminality, could be better integrated to show how they interrelate and support the study's research questions. Currently, the review reads as a series of separate discussions rather than a cohesive narrative that builds towards the study's rationale.</p> <p>Moreover, while the literature review includes a wide range of sources, it would benefit from a more critical analysis of the existing literature. For instance, the review could discuss gaps in the current understanding of doctorateness or critique the existing studies that have examined similar graduation requirements. This would not only strengthen the rationale for the study but also position it more clearly within the existing body of research.</p> <p><b>3. Methodology:</b></p> <p>The methodology section outlines the study's design, focusing on a case study approach within a Nigerian university. The decision to use a case study is appropriate given the study's focus on a specific institution's graduation condition. The inclusion of both interviews with supervisors and questionnaires for doctoral students provides a well-rounded approach to data collection, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the new graduation condition's impact.</p> <p>However, the methodology section could be strengthened by providing more detailed information on the sampling process and the rationale for selecting the 2021/2022 cohort of doctoral students. While the section mentions that these students have completed their coursework and are working on their theses, it would be helpful to explain why this particular cohort was chosen over others. Additionally, more information on the questionnaire design, including examples of the types of questions asked, would provide clarity on how the data was collected and how it aligns with the study's research questions.</p> <p>Moreover, the methodology section would benefit from a discussion of the potential limitations of the study. For example, the study relies heavily on self-reported data, which could introduce bias. Acknowledging and addressing these limitations would provide a more balanced and rigorous approach to the research.</p> <p><b>4. Findings and Analysis:</b></p> <p>Comment: The findings section presents the results of the interviews with supervisors and the questionnaire responses from doctoral students. The section effectively highlights the challenges faced by students due to the new graduation condition, particularly their experiences of "stuckness" and the role of liminality in their doctoral journey. The use of direct quotes from participants adds depth to the analysis, providing a clear insight into the students' experiences.</p> <p>However, the analysis could be further developed by linking the findings more explicitly to the theoretical concepts discussed in the literature review. For instance, while the concept of liminality is mentioned, the analysis could delve deeper into how the new graduation condition specifically pushes students into this liminal space and how it contributes to their development towards doctorateness. Additionally, the analysis would benefit from a more structured presentation of the findings. Currently, the section reads as a descriptive account of the data, but a more analytical approach, possibly by categorizing the findings under key themes, would enhance the depth and clarity of the analysis.</p> <p><b>5. Conclusion and Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Comment: The conclusion summarizes the key findings of the study and reiterates the role of the new graduation condition in pushing doctoral students towards doctorateness. The conclusion effectively ties back to the research questions, confirming that the graduation condition does indeed nudge students into liminality and towards achieving the qualities associated with doctorateness. The study's emphasis on early exposure to literature and the challenges of theorizing is a valuable insight for improving doctoral education.</p> <p>However, the recommendations section could be more robust. While the study suggests</p> |  |
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|  | <p>adopting pedagogies that ensure early exposure to literature, it could also provide more specific recommendations for how institutions can support doctoral students in overcoming the challenges of liminality. For instance, recommendations could include specific strategies for supervisors to help students navigate the stuckness they experience or institutional policies that could be implemented to provide additional support during the thesis-writing phase.</p>  |  |
| <p>Please write a few sentences regarding the scientific correctness of this manuscript. Why do you think that this manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound? A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.</p> | <p>The manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound. The study's methodology is appropriate for the research questions posed, and the analysis is grounded in relevant theoretical frameworks. The use of a case study approach within a specific institutional context provides depth to the findings, making them relevant to both academic researchers and policymakers in higher education. The study's conclusions are well-supported by the data, and the discussion offers valuable insights into the challenges and potential benefits of the new graduation condition.</p>  |  |
| <p>Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.<br/>:</p>   | <p>The references are generally sufficient and cover a broad range of relevant literature. However, the manuscript would benefit from the inclusion of more recent studies that have explored similar graduation requirements or the concept of doctorateness in other contexts. This would further strengthen the theoretical foundation and relevance of the study.</p>   |  |
| <p><u>Minor</u> REVISION comments</p> <p>Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?</p>   | <p>The writing style of the manuscript is generally clear, and the arguments are presented logically. However, there are instances where the text could be more concise, avoiding repetition and unnecessary details. Some sentences are lengthy and complex, which could hinder readability. Simplifying these sentences and breaking them down into shorter, more direct statements would improve the clarity of the manuscript.</p> <p>Additionally, the manuscript contains some minor grammatical errors and awkward phrasing, which could be addressed through careful proofreading. Ensuring that the language is polished and free of errors will enhance the professionalism and readability of the paper. The use of technical terms and concepts is appropriate for the target audience, but the manuscript should ensure that all terms are clearly defined when first introduced to avoid any potential confusion.</p> <p>Overall, the manuscript presents a well-structured argument and contributes valuable insights into the role of graduation conditions in doctoral education. With some revisions to improve clarity, organization, and depth of analysis, the manuscript has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field.</p> |  |
| <p><u>Optional/General</u> comments</p>  | <p>The manuscript makes a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion about doctoral education and the development of doctorateness. The findings are particularly relevant for institutions considering the implementation of similar graduation requirements. The recommendations section could be expanded to provide more actionable insights for policymakers and educators. Overall, the study is a valuable addition to the field and, with minor revisions, could be published as a strong piece of research.</p>  |  |

**PART 2:**

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|   | <b>Reviewer's comment</b>   | <b>Author's comment</b> (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here) |
| <p>Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?</p> | <p><i>(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)</i></p> |  |

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**Reviewer Details:**

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| Name:                            | <b>Samuel Kwaku Basoah Boateng</b>   |
| Department, University & Country | <b>Montana State University, USA</b> |