

# Beyond the Tandem Model: reframing academic librarian supervisory roles in LIS internships through management, teaching and mentoring

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## ABSTRACT

*Library and information science (LIS) internships rely heavily on academic librarian supervisors, yet their supervisory roles remain under-examined and weakly theorised. Models of clinical supervision, including the Tandem Model, were developed outside librarianship and have rarely been tested in LIS or in non-Western settings. This study examines how academic librarian supervisors enact their roles during LIS internships at three public universities in Malaysia, and how those roles align with and diverge from established supervision theory. A qualitative case study was conducted with 13 academic librarian supervisors. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis, supported by ATLAS.ti version 22. Three role domains were identified: management (planning, organising, directing and controlling); teaching (task structuring, instructional design and strategic learning); and mentoring (psychosocial support, career support and professional development). The findings confirm the Tandem Model's planning core but show supervision extending across a full management cycle, which exposes a supervisory boundary gap where supervision is strong inside the library but weak where the library meets the university. The model also omits mentoring, which supervisors regarded as central, and its application required adaptation to a collectivist context that balances directive guidance with relational, respect-based support. The study also reveals clear weaknesses: the absence of formal supervisory training, uneven faculty coordination and variation in mentoring. The findings are synthesised into a Practice Model of Effective Supervision in LIS Internship and a findings-derived self-check for strengthening practice.*

**Keywords:** LIS internships; Academic librarians; Supervisory roles; Mentoring; Tandem Model of Clinical Supervision; Malaysia.

## INTRODUCTION

Internships are a defining feature of professional education in library and information science (LIS). They give students supervised exposure to real library work and a chance to translate classroom knowledge into practice before they enter the profession. The quality of that

experience rests largely on one figure: the academic librarian who supervises the intern on site. The supervisor decides what the intern does, how the work is taught, how performance is judged, and how much guidance and encouragement the student receives. Where supervision is purposeful and well-structured, internships build confidence and readiness; where it is improvised, the same placement can leave students under-stretched and unsure of their direction.

Despite this central position, the supervisory role of academic librarians is poorly specified in the LIS literature. Studies of internships have tended to focus on programme design, student satisfaction and the value of work-based learning (Arif et al., 2018; Nutefall, 2012), while the supervisor is often treated as a background presence rather than as an object of study in their own right. Earlier accounts of practicum supervision in librarianship describe tasks and responsibilities (Banks & Lents, 1992; Borin, 2001; Nugent, 1998), but they rarely connect those responsibilities to a coherent theory of supervision. As a result, there is no widely shared framework that explains what good LIS internship supervision involves or how its different functions fit together.

This gap matters in Malaysia, where public universities supply a large share of the country's LIS graduates and academic libraries host interns almost continuously throughout the academic year. Malaysian LIS internships are well established in practice (Janaki Sinnasamy & Nor Edzan Che Nasir, 2015), yet little is known about how the librarians who run them understand and perform their supervisory work. Models of supervision that might illuminate this practice, such as the Tandem Model of Clinical Supervision (Milne & James, 2005), were developed in clinical psychology and have not been tested in LIS internships or in a collectivist cultural setting.

Part of the difficulty is that supervision in internships bundles together quite different kinds of work. Deciding what an intern will do and judging how well they do it is administrative work. Showing an intern how to catalogue or how to handle a reader enquiry is teaching. Helping an anxious student settle in, or advising them on whether to pursue further study, is mentoring. These are not the same activity and treating them as one obscures both the range of what supervisors do and the points at which their practice is uneven. Distinguishing these strands is therefore a precondition for understanding, and improving, the quality of internship supervision.

This study addresses that gap by examining how academic librarian supervisors enact their roles in LIS internships at three public universities in Malaysia, and by asking how far an established supervision model can account for what they do. The study is guided by one main research question: What roles do librarian supervisors undertake in the management, teaching, and mentoring of the LIS internship programme?

Academic librarian supervision in LIS internships is best understood as three integrated roles - management, teaching and mentoring - yet the supervision model most readily available to interpret it, the Tandem Model of Clinical Supervision (Milne & James, 2005), accounts for only part of this work. Each of the three roles stands in a defined relation to that model: management extends its planning core into a full cycle, teaching operationalises its experiential-learning engine, and mentoring occupies a domain the model does not represent. The data show supervisors performing a full management cycle where the model describes only planning, investing in mentoring that the model does not represent at all, and adapting its directive style to a collectivist setting. The full management cycle in turn exposes a specific structural weakness, which we name the supervisory boundary gap: supervision is strong inside the library but weakens at the point where the library meets the university, specifically in the controlling

function, where supervisors have little oversight of coordination with the students' faculty. The study therefore both validates the model at its core and extends it, consolidating the result in a Practice Model of Effective Supervision in LIS Internship. The contribution is empirical, in offering a grounded account of academic librarian supervision, and theoretical, in showing where an established model holds, where it fails, and how it must be revised for this context. The remainder of the paper reviews the relevant literature and theoretical framework, describes the qualitative methodology, presents the findings across the three role domains, discusses them in relation to the Tandem Model, and concludes with the study's contributions, limitations and directions for future research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **LIS internships and supervision**

Internships, practicums and industrial training are long-standing components of LIS education, valued for bridging theory and practice and for socialising students into professional norms (Arif et al., 2018; Bird et al., 2015; Janaki Sinnasamy & Nor Edzan Che Nasir, 2015). The literature consistently identifies supervision as the factor that most shapes the quality of these placements (Malik & Ameen, 2010). Early practitioner accounts describe the supervising librarian as responsible for orienting students, assigning and explaining tasks, monitoring progress and providing feedback (Asher & Alexander, 2006; Baird & Mollen, 2019; Nutefall, 2012), and more recent work has begun to map supervisory activities and to call for clearer supervisory competencies (Brannon, 2015; Dahl, 2011; Khan, 2021; Khan & Qayyum, 2019). These accounts are useful but largely descriptive. They list what supervisors do without explaining how the various functions relate, and they seldom draw on a theory of supervision to interpret practice.

Two further limitations are relevant here. First, much of this work treats supervision as a single undifferentiated activity, collapsing administrative, instructional and relational tasks into one category. Yet these tasks draw on different competencies and serve different purposes, and conflating them obscures where supervisors are strong and where they struggle. Khan and Qayyum (2019) review of LIS practicum supervision points in the same direction, noting how loosely the elements of supervision have been specified. Second, the literature is dominated by Western settings. Little is known about how supervision is practised in collectivist cultures, where hierarchy, respect and relational obligation shape professional interaction in ways that may not be captured by frameworks developed elsewhere. This study responds to both limitations by separating supervisory work into distinct role domains and by examining it in a Malaysian context.

A useful way to read supervisors' administrative work is through the classic management functions of planning, organising, directing and controlling. Although this vocabulary is rarely applied to internship supervision in the LIS literature, it captures something the descriptive accounts imply but do not name: that running an internship is itself an act of management, in which the supervisor designs the placement, arranges and delegates the work, guides interns through it, and monitors and corrects performance (Giesecke & McNeil, 2010). Reading supervision as management also connects LIS practice to the broader supervision scholarship in the helping professions, where supervision is theorised as an administrative, educational and supportive activity at once (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002), and to LIS efforts to improve the practicum experience through better-structured placements (Bird et al., 2015; McGurr & Damasco, 2010). Framing supervision this way allows the present study to show how far supervisors' management work extends beyond the planning emphasis of existing supervision models. The teaching dimension of the role is equally under-theorised, even though librarians

widely report instructional work as central to their identity (Julien & Genuis, 2011), and even though internships are, at bottom, structures for experiential learning (Moore, 2010; Nicholas, 2016).

Positioning these placements within current scholarship reinforces the point. Recent work frames internships as a form of work-integrated learning (WIL) in which workplace supervisors act as co-educators responsible for direction, feedback and assessment, and in which the quality of that supervision varies widely across placements (Janssens et al., 2024; Penman et al., 2023; Robinson et al., 2025). In LIS specifically, recent studies continue to map the competencies that practicums develop while leaving the supervisor's own role under-specified (Duran-Riquelme et al., 2024). A parallel literature on internship supervisors reports that they often receive little preparation for the role and struggle to tailor placements to individual students and to mentor them effectively (Schneider et al., 2024). These current debates sharpen the gap this study addresses: the supervisor remains the pivotal yet least theorised figure in work-based LIS education.

### **Mentoring in librarianship**

Mentoring is often discussed alongside supervision in librarianship, but the two are not the same. Supervision is concerned with the oversight and evaluation of work, while mentoring is a developmental relationship oriented toward the growth of the person (Booth, 1996; Hicks et al., 2010; Hussey & Campbell-Meier, 2020). Kram (1985) foundational account distinguishes the psychosocial functions of mentoring, such as acceptance, counselling and friendship, from its career functions, such as sponsorship, exposure and coaching, and treats role modelling as a way of transmitting professional values. In academic libraries, mentoring is widely valued as a means of professional formation and is associated with the development and retention of new professionals (Harwood & McCormack, 2008; Jacobi, 1991; Lacy & Copeland, 2013; Reale, 2013). Yet it sits awkwardly within models of supervision that focus on task and assessment. This tension is precisely what the present study brings into view: supervisors in LIS internships do substantial mentoring work, but the supervision model most readily applied to them does not account for it.

### **The Tandem Model and experiential learning**

The Tandem Model of Clinical Supervision (Milne & Dunkerley, 2010; Milne & James, 2005) offers a structured way to think about supervision as a dynamic, two-person system. The model likens supervision to riding a tandem bicycle. The supervisor steers from the front, exercising leadership and appropriate authority, while the supervisee follows and learns. The front of the tandem represents the supervisor's core tasks of assessing the learner's needs and setting clear learning objectives. The rear wheel represents the supervisee's experiential learning, drawing directly on Kolb (1984) account of learning as a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Progress depends on the two riders moving in coordination toward shared goals.

The model is attractive for LIS internships for three reasons. It foregrounds the active, experiential nature of work-based learning that internships are designed to provide. It gives supervision a structured vocabulary centred on needs assessment and objective setting. And it has been validated in clinical and educational settings, lending it credibility as an analytical lens (Milne & James, 2005). At the same time, the model was built for clinical psychology, where supervision is one-to-one, formally trained and tightly bounded. Whether its emphasis on needs assessment and experiential learning is sufficient to describe the broader, more diffuse work of LIS internship supervision is an open question.

Kolb (1984) experiential learning theory deserves particular emphasis in this setting, because the internship is, at root, a structure for turning experience into learning. An intern who catalogues a record, reflects on what went wrong, grasps the underlying rule and then applies it to the next record is moving through Kolb's cycle in miniature. The supervisor's teaching choices, how tasks are structured, demonstrated and differentiated, determine whether interns complete that cycle or stall within it. A placement that offers only repetitive work, for instance, supplies concrete experience but starves the later stages of reflection and active experimentation. This makes the teaching domain integral to the model's value in internships, and it explains why limited task variety, where it occurred in this study, was not a minor inconvenience but a constraint on learning itself.

This study uses the Tandem Model, with Kolb's experiential learning theory as a supporting frame, both as an interpretive lens and as a claim to be tested. The analysis asks whether supervisors' practice fits the model's core, where it exceeds that core, and what the model omits. As the findings show, the model captures the planning heart of supervision well, but it does not account for the full cycle of management work that supervisors perform, nor for the mentoring that they treat as central.

Figure 1 summarises this framework, showing the Tandem Model core and its experiential-learning engine, the three role domains through which supervision is enacted, and the supervisory boundary gap at the library–faculty edge that the study identifies.

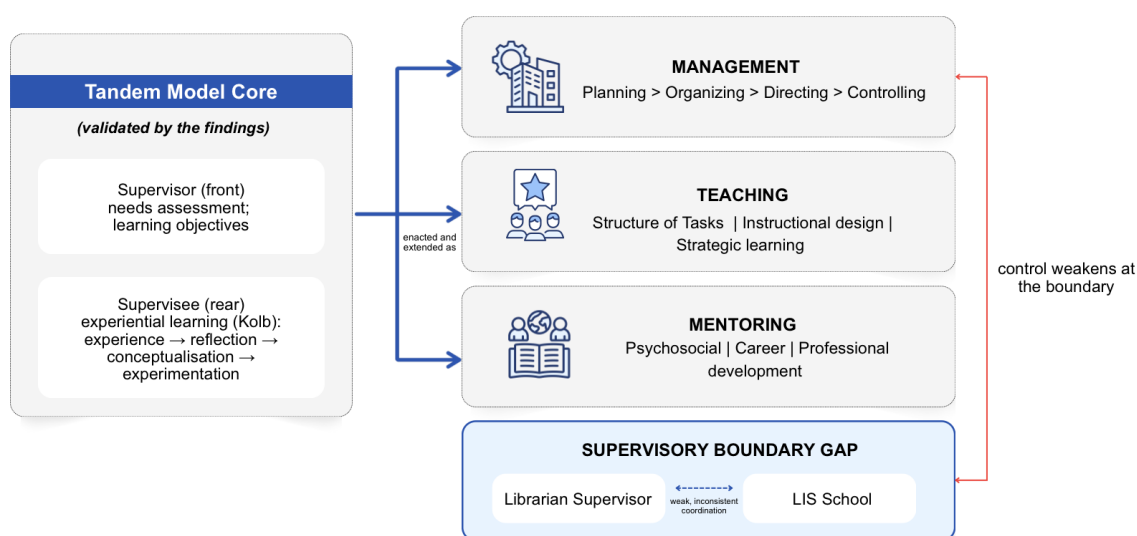


Figure 1: Conceptual framework: the Tandem Model core and its extension into three supervisory roles, with the supervisory boundary gap

## METHODS

### Research design

The study adopted a qualitative case study design (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009), suited to examining a contemporary practice in its real-world setting and to producing the rich, contextual understanding that the research questions require. The case was the supervision of LIS internships by academic librarians at three public universities in Malaysia. A qualitative approach was chosen because the aim was to understand how supervisors interpret and enact their roles, rather than to measure the frequency of predefined behaviours. The unit of analysis was the supervisory practice of the academic librarian, and the boundary of the case was drawn around

librarians who held direct, current responsibility for interns placed in academic libraries at public universities. Bounding the case in this way kept the focus on the supervisory relationship itself and allowed the three role domains to be examined in depth across a range of departments and levels of experience. Following Yin (2009), the design is best described as a single, holistic case study: the case is the supervision of LIS internships by academic librarians in Malaysian public universities, and the three universities served as embedded sites providing a range of departments and experience rather than as separate cases for cross-case comparison. The three universities were selected purposively because they are established public universities that run structured LIS internship programmes and place interns in their own academic libraries, which made them information-rich settings for studying supervisory practice.

Table 1: Profile of participating academic librarian supervisors (n = 13)

| Participant | Current department or unit | Supervision experience (years) | Highest qualification |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| SUP01       | Administration             | 26                             | Advanced Diploma      |
| SUP02       | Acquisition                | 8                              | PhD                   |
| SUP03       | Information Systems        | 4                              | Master's              |
| SUP04       | Customer Service           | 13                             | Bachelor's            |
| SUP05       | Reference                  | 11                             | Master's              |
| SUP06       | Customer Service           | 7                              | Master's              |
| SUP07       | Acquisition                | 13                             | Master's              |
| SUP08       | Customer Service           | 19                             | Bachelor's            |
| SUP09       | Special Collection         | 7                              | Master's              |
| SUP10       | Indexing                   | 7                              | Bachelor's            |
| SUP11       | Faculty Library            | 25                             | Bachelor's            |
| SUP12       | Customer Service           | 6                              | Bachelor's            |
| SUP13       | Reference                  | 13                             | Master's              |

### **Participants**

Thirteen academic librarians who supervise LIS interns took part. They were selected through purposive sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015) on the basis of direct, current responsibility for supervising internship students, and recruitment continued until data saturation was reached, consistent with qualitative sampling principles. Participants are identified by the codes SUP01 to SUP13 to protect their confidentiality. They worked across a range of library departments and units, including acquisition, reference, customer service, information systems, indexing and special collections. Their supervision experience ranged from 4 to 26 years, and their highest qualifications ranged from an advanced diploma through bachelor's and master's degrees to a doctorate, with most holding a degree in library science. Table 1 summarises the participant profile without including any detail that could identify an individual or institution. Saturation was treated operationally as the point at which further interviews produced no new codes or sub-themes within the three role domains; in practice, interviewing continued until the final interviews were confirming and elaborating existing categories rather than generating new ones (Saunders et al., 2018).

### **Data collection**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews (Kallio et al., 2016) guided by an interview protocol (Appendix 1) that was reviewed by a faculty research ethics committee before fieldwork. Interviews were conducted online, which participants preferred for its convenience and flexibility and which allowed scheduling around their working commitments. Sessions were recorded with consent. The protocol explored how supervisors planned and organised placements, how they taught and guided interns, how they monitored and evaluated performance, and how they supported students' personal and professional development. Several participants were interviewed more than once to follow up on emerging issues. Interview excerpts quoted in this article have been lightly edited for readability, without altering their meaning. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted online through video conferencing. Interviews were held in Malay or English, and participants were free to code-switch between the two languages; each interview was transcribed verbatim, and Malay-language excerpts were translated into English for reporting.

### **Data analysis**

Interviews were transcribed and analysed using Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Coding and theme development were managed in ATLAS.ti version 22 (Frieze, 2020), which supported the systematic organisation and retrieval of coded segments. Analysis proceeded both inductively, staying close to participants' accounts, and with sensitivity to the study's theoretical framing, allowing the data to be read against the management functions and the supervisory concepts that informed the research questions. Codes were grouped into sub-themes and then into the three role domains reported below (Appendix 2); the management, teaching and mentoring structure emerged from this process rather than being imposed at the outset, although it was refined in dialogue with the supervisory literature. In practice, the six phases were operationalised within ATLAS.ti: familiarisation through repeated reading of the transcripts; initial coding by tagging quotations with codes; searching for and reviewing themes by clustering related codes into candidate sub-themes using code groups and network views and checking them against the coded segments; and defining, naming and reporting by fixing the nine sub-themes and three domains and linking each to its illustrative quotations. To be explicit about how the domains and sub-themes arose, the three role domains were broad areas framed in advance by the research questions, whereas the sub-themes within each domain were not imposed from the model but were developed inductively from participants' accounts; thematic analysis accommodates both orientations (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Trustworthiness and ethics**

Trustworthiness was addressed through the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was supported by prolonged engagement, triangulation across participants and sessions, member checking and peer debriefing. Transferability was supported by thick description of the context and participants. Dependability and confirmability were supported by an audit trail of coding decisions maintained in ATLAS.ti. Ethical approval was obtained from the university research ethics committee. All participants gave informed consent, took part voluntarily, and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity; names were replaced with codes, and identifying references to people and institutions were removed from the reported data. Member checking was carried out by returning a summary of each participant's responses, together with the preliminary interpretation, to the participant for verification, and any clarifications they provided were incorporated into the analysis.

## RESULTS

The analysis identified three role domains through which academic librarian supervisors carried out their work: management, teaching and mentoring, as shown in Figure 2. A mapping of each sub-theme to its principal finding and illustrative participants is provided in Appendix 3. Reported below in participants' own words, the domains are presented not as a catalogue of activities but as evidence for two patterns that run across the data. The first is one of excess: supervision consistently exceeded the planning core foregrounded in supervision theory, both in breadth, by spanning a full management cycle, and in kind, by including mentoring. The second is one of unevenness: the quality and consistency of supervision depended heavily on the individual supervisor, because the role was learned through experience rather than through formal preparation. These two patterns frame the analysis that follows and underpin the argument developed in the discussion.

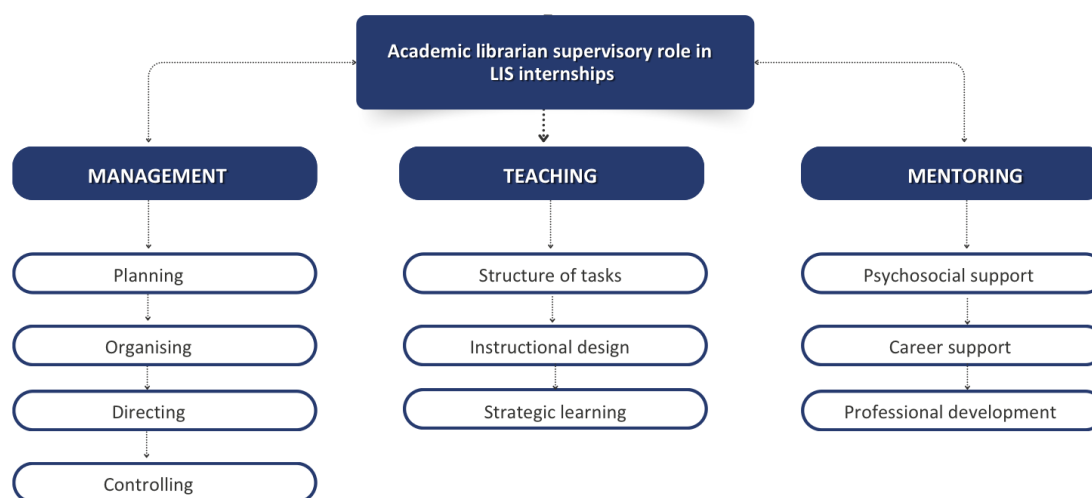


Figure 2: Coding structure across the three role domains

The second pattern is visible from the outset in how supervisors came to the role. Most were experienced librarians who had supervised interns from early in their careers, or had taken on the responsibility on promotion or on leading a division, and some acted as internship moderators who coordinated their department's schedule and content. What they shared was that they had learned to supervise by doing it rather than through any formal preparation in supervision or pedagogy. This experiential route gave them confidence and practical knowledge, but it also meant that there was no shared standard of practice to fall back on, so the strength of a placement depended on the disposition of the individual supervisor. This absence of a common foundation recurs across all three domains and is the thread that connects their weaker moments.

### Management: a full cycle, strong at the centre and weak at the boundary

The clearest evidence for the first pattern lay in the management domain. Supervisors did not approach the internship as a single act of planning, which is the part of management that supervision theory emphasises, but as a complete cycle of planning, organising, directing and controlling. The analytic interest is not that all four functions appeared, but where the cycle was robust and where it failed. It was robust whenever it operated inside the library, and fragile at one specific point, the boundary with the students' faculty, a pattern we develop below as the supervisory boundary gap. Reading the four functions in turn shows how that pattern emerged.

**i. Planning: present everywhere, student-centred rarely**

Planning was universal but conditional. Every supervisor set an agenda, assessed needs and defined the parameters of the placement, which is exactly what the Tandem Model's front cyclist is supposed to do. What the data add is that the content of planning was driven more often by departmental workflow than by what students needed to learn. Agendas were built around the work the division had to get done, captured by SUP08's image of the placement as a checklist of departmental tasks.

*We write down all the tasks and activities in each division, so that no student who comes will miss anything. It is like a checklist for us.*

*(SUP08, 19 years, Customer Service)*

The contrast across the sample was clear. While some supervisors sustained this support even in difficult cases, others reached its limits; faced with an intern who remained withdrawn or unresponsive despite repeated approaches, a few concluded they had done what they could and stepped back. Psychosocial support was therefore real and often generous, but it was neither universal nor uniform, and its depth depended on the individual supervisor.

Needs assessment was real but reactive, with the programme revised when the library changed rather than in anticipation of what a given cohort required, as when SUP01 widened the placement only after the unit acquired new responsibilities.

*We expanded their scope. Previously, students were not trained for museums or galleries, but once we had responsibility for them we added museum and gallery training to the schedule.*

*(SUP01, 26 years, Administration)*

The consequence of workflow-driven planning surfaced as a recurring tension: where a division's work was thin or repetitive, the placement became repetitive too, and supervisors knew it. SUP03's candour is analytically important, because it shows the limit of the Tandem core. Needs assessment had been carried out, but it was constrained by what the division could offer rather than by the learner's development.

*I feel sorry for a student who has to keep doing the same thing, for example uploading the exam paper every day, the same process. But there is nothing we can do about it because we do not have anything else to give them.*

*(SUP03, 4 years, Information Systems)*

The pattern was not absolute. A few supervisors did shape the placement around the individual, adapting tasks to an intern's interests or evident strengths (SUP06, SUP13), which shows that student-centred planning was possible. Such adaptation, however, was the exception rather than the rule: for most supervisors, planning began from the division's workflow rather than from an assessment of what a particular cohort needed to learn.

**ii. Organising and directing: distributing the work, and the first signs of mentoring**

Organising and directing were less contested but analytically revealing. Supervisors organised by distributing teaching across the division rather than carrying it alone, delegating parts of the training to staff according to their duties, and building evaluation into more than one point in the placement so that performance was judged across it rather than at a single moment.

*We have to delegate to everyone, including the staff. Each member has their own part to play in explaining things to the students, based on their level of duties.*

*(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)*

Directing then guided interns through the work, typically by staging practice before live performance and adjusting to the student's grasp, and sometimes by deliberately withholding explanation to push interns towards independent enquiry.

*After explaining a concept such as cataloguing, I immediately give them cataloguing materials to work on, then I check their work individually to gauge their comprehension.*

*(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)*

*Since the interns were not familiar with the library, I asked them to study the library's website. Rather than constantly explaining everything, I prefer to direct them to online resources and encourage independent exploration.*

*(SUP06, 7 years, Customer Service)*

What is notable here is that directing already carried a relational charge that exceeds a purely managerial reading. Supervisors set a welcoming, personal tone at the start of placements, as SUP04 did by opening with questions about the student rather than the work. This is the point at which the management domain begins to bleed into mentoring, a blurring that becomes the central issue of the third domain.

*We give the students a warm welcome when they arrive. Since we already know a little about them, we start by asking about their institution and why they chose this course, which helps them settle in.*

*(SUP04, 13 years, Customer Service)*

### **iii. Controlling: confident inside the library, faltering at its edge**

Controlling is where the analytic claim for this domain becomes clearer. Inside the library, control was confident and well-developed. Supervisors monitored performance closely, often by letting interns work on live systems and real data while retaining final oversight, so that judgements rested on authentic output rather than exercises alone.

*I gave them the authority to edit information on the live website, but I reminded them to be careful and avoid errors, and I always look over their final version.*

*(SUP06, 7 years, Customer Service)*

*They worked with actual, real-time data under supervision. In my division we use real data, so the students needed proper access to it. (SUP05)*

*(SUP05, 11 years, Reference)*

In both accounts, final control lay with the supervisor: interns acted on the live system, but the supervisor checked and signed off the work before it stood, which is how they combined genuine responsibility for interns with retained oversight of the real system.

Control also involved standardising how evaluation was carried out and communicating performance back to interns, so that judgements were consistent and students understood their position. Supervisors then made immediate adjustments when sessions were disrupted or when they were unavailable, so that the programme continued.

*If I am not in the office, I prepare the slides in advance, and my staff deliver the training to the students.*

*(SUP09, 7 years, Special Collection)*

The contrast came at the library's edge. Where control reached towards the students' faculty, it thinned markedly. Across the sample, coordination with academic supervisors was inconsistent and frequently absent: encounters were general rather than evaluative, were routed past the librarian to a head of department or did not happen at all. The point is not that individual supervisors were negligent, but that the system gave them no reliable mechanism to manage this boundary, so the controlling function that worked well internally had nothing to grip on externally.

*When the lecturers come to visit, it is more or less a relaxed conversation. We end up explaining more about the library than about the students.*

*(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)*

*The lecturer rarely comes to the field, and when they do, they meet my head of department rather than me.*

*(SUP03, 4 years, Information Systems)*

*I have never had a lecturer from the faculty come to see me. But that is important.*

*(SUP01, 26 years, Administration)*

The contact that did occur, moreover, carried little evaluative weight. Where supervisors met visiting academics, the exchange focused on tasks and general updates rather than any assessment of the intern's work.

*It is not really feedback at all. The lecturer is more interested in finding out what their students are doing with their time, so we simply inform them of the type of task we require them to perform.*

*(SUP03, 4 years, Information Systems)*

*Our feedback is just general information, not a comment on attitude, knowledge, cataloguing or anything like that.*

*(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)*

What is lost when that visit does not happen is the one occasion designed to join the two halves of the internship. It is where assessment would be shared, where the placement would be checked against the academic learning outcomes the intern is meant to meet, and where the supervisor could raise a concern about an intern with someone who holds academic authority over them. Without it, the librarian carries evaluation and problem-solving alone, and the intern's workplace experience is left disconnected from their academic programme.

Read against the Tandem Model, this is the first decisive finding, and it is worth naming because it recurs as a structural feature rather than an individual lapse. We call it the supervisory boundary gap: supervisors perform a full and competent management cycle inside the library, yet that cycle has no purchase at the boundary where the library meets the university, so control that is confident internally simply runs out at the institutional edge. A planning-only account cannot detect this gap, because it does not conceive of supervision as a cycle with a boundary to manage. The recent LIS calls for clearer supervisory competencies and stronger fieldwork

coordination (Brannon, 2015; Khan, 2021; Khan & Qayyum, 2019) point to the same problem from the outside; the present data locate it precisely, at the point where the controlling function meets the faculty.

The gap is specifically a failure of the controlling function. Inside the library, control works because the supervisor can see, direct and correct the work; at the boundary it has nothing to act on, because the supervisor has neither a reliable channel to the faculty nor authority over the academic side. The thin, non-evaluative and sometimes bypassed contact reported above is therefore not a minor inconvenience but the precise point at which an otherwise complete management cycle loses its external reach.

### **Teaching: experiential learning, enabled or starved by task design**

If management was where supervision exceeded the model in breadth, teaching was where the model's own engine, the experiential learning that Kolb (1984) places at the rear wheel of the tandem, was either driven or stalled. The analytic finding here is that whether interns completed the experiential cycle was not a property of the model but a product of supervisors' task design. Where supervisors structured varied, authentic and differentiated work, interns moved through concrete experience, reflection and active experimentation; where they did not, interns accumulated experience that went nowhere. Teaching, in other words, is the hinge on which the model's experiential promise turns, and that hinge was unevenly oiled.

#### **i. Structure of tasks: authentic, but variable in reach**

Supervisors built learning on authentic library work, from technical and systems tasks to reference, customer service and projects. At its best this supplied rich concrete experience, as when SUP05 had interns interrogate a live system to work out what it could do, or when project work asked students to combine skills rather than repeat a procedure.

*I give the students the chance to explore the system and assign them tasks to view, compare and list its capabilities, so they understand what each function can do.*

*(SUP05, 11 years, Reference)*

*When I was in the information skills department, I would ask the interns to produce presentation slides and brochures.*

*(SUP01, 26 years, Administration)*

However the reach of these task structures varied with what the division could offer, and this is where the teaching domain connects back to the planning finding. The same workflow-driven planning that produced SUP03's repetitive placement also truncated the experiential cycle, supplying concrete experience while starving the later stages of reflection and experimentation. Authentic tasks were necessary for experiential learning but not sufficient; their educational value depended on whether they were varied enough to let interns move beyond mere repetition.

#### **ii. Instructional design and strategic learning: skilled pedagogy without pedagogical training**

Where task variety allowed, supervisors used recognisable pedagogical strategies to carry interns through the cycle. They differentiated work by ability and interest, reshaping a project around a student's strengths rather than imposing a uniform task, and they paired demonstration with supervised practice so that showing led into doing. That tailoring work to the individual student is both central and demanding is echoed in internship research beyond LIS, where supervisors report personalising the placement to each student's capabilities as one of their hardest tasks (Schneider et al., 2024).

*If a student is interested in IT or enjoys working with websites, I keep the project the same but make it more IT-focused for them.*

*(SUP13, 13 years, Reference)*

*If I need to index some CDs, I show them how to use the system and we do it together. Once they understand, I let them do it on their own.*

*(SUP11, 25 years, Faculty Library)*

Some went further, facilitating strategic learning by setting inquiry tasks that required interns to find things out for themselves and by customising the pace and content of the placement to the individual, an approach close to the inquiry-based practicum that the wider literature commends (Nguyen, 2009). The analytic point is twofold. First, these are genuine instructional skills, the differentiation, demonstration and inquiry that good teaching requires, performed by librarians who widely regard instruction as part of their professional identity (Julien & Genuis, 2011). Second, they were exercised without any pedagogical preparation and therefore unevenly: the depth of strategic, inquiry-led teaching varied considerably across the sample. The model assumes experiential learning will occur; the data show it occurred only where individual supervisors happened to teach in ways that made it possible.

### **Mentoring: the domain the model omits, treated as central**

The most consequential finding is the third domain, because it is the one the Tandem Model does not contain at all. Supervisors invested heavily in mentoring, and they did not treat it as a courtesy at the edge of the role: for many it was the substance of good supervision. Analytically, what the data show is not simply that mentoring happened, but that it took the recognised shape of a developmental relationship, following the psychosocial and career functions and the role modelling that (Kram, 1985) identified, and aligning with how mentoring is understood in the LIS literature (Hussey & Campbell-Meier, 2020; Reale, 2013). This matters because a function that is patterned and theorised cannot be dismissed as incidental to supervision; it is a category of supervisory work in its own right. Table 2 sets out illustrative evidence across the three sub-themes, which are read analytically below.

#### **i. Psychosocial support: real, patterned, but uneven**

Psychosocial support, in Kram (1985) terms, appeared as a consistent effort to make interns feel able to speak, to monitor their wellbeing, and to accommodate difficulty. Supervisors checked in deliberately and read for disengagement indirectly rather than confronting it, and they adjusted demands when students were unwell rather than pressing on.

*If I see someone working slowly, I do not ask directly. I might say, is everything alright, how is the workflow, any challenges, just to understand their situation.*

*(SUP10, 7 years, Indexing)*

*We need to be good listeners in order to guide and assign tasks appropriately. If a student has health issues, we should not pressure them or overload them with work; we must be considerate of their situation.*

*(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)*

At its strongest this support extended well beyond the task, as when a supervisor sustained contact with a seriously ill intern and counselled medical leave (SUP13, Table 2). Yet the same data show the unevenness that runs through the study. Mentoring depended on disposition, and some supervisors reached its limits, which is itself analytically telling: a domain this central was left to individual inclination rather than supported as part of the role.

*We sometimes call students directly if their performance is lacking, but it varies. Even after several calls, if they refuse to change, we feel limited in what we can do. We believe we have given them the guidance they need.*

*(SUP08, 19 years, Customer Service)*

Table 2: The mentoring role: sub-themes and illustrative quotations

| Sub-theme                | Mentoring focus              | Illustrative quotation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Psychosocial support     | Relationship-based mentoring | <i>"I also ask every day, since our workspace is close to them. I ask, 'Is everything okay today? Do you have any problems?' If there are any problems, they can come to me directly."</i><br><i>(SUP12, 6 years, Customer Service)</i>                                              |
|                          |                              | <i>"We had a diabetic student who needed regular hospital visits. When he took a week off due to illness, we stayed in touch via WhatsApp, checking on him and advising medical leave if necessary. Communication and empathy are vital."</i><br><i>(SUP13, 13 years, Reference)</i> |
| Career support           | Career-focused mentoring     | <i>"They need to start thinking about what they will do next, so I guide them: you can start looking for a job, register on LinkedIn, there is always something you can look for."</i><br><i>(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)</i>                                                       |
| Professional development | Profession-based mentoring   | <i>"I share my own journey, starting with my three interviews, how I answered the questions and performed on the tests, through to how the organisation contacted me to begin working."</i> <i>(SUP07, 13 years, Acquisition)</i>                                                    |
|                          |                              | <i>"I explain at the beginning that I want them to be punctual, follow the schedule and respect everyone here, so that we are all on the same page."</i><br><i>(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)</i>                                                                                     |
|                          |                              | <i>"I always tell students that strong communication skills are essential."</i><br><i>(SUP05, 11 years, Reference)</i>                                                                                                                                                               |

**ii. Career support and professional development: forming the professional**

The career and role-modelling functions completed the pattern. Supervisors offered the career support that Kram (1985) describes, coaching interns on job-seeking and further study and positioning themselves as a source of guidance students might not receive from the faculty, sometimes by narrating their own route into the profession (SUP07, Table 2).

*After finishing their studies, students may be unclear about what working in a library involves. If their faculty does not provide this, I will. Who else will? I take on the responsibility of sharing this knowledge.*

*(SUP02, 8 years, Acquisition)*

They also modelled professional conduct and identity, setting expectations of punctuality and respect and framing skills in terms of a competitive market and a profession whose image was changing. Across these sub-themes the supervisors were doing the work of professional formation that the LIS mentoring literature associates with the development and retention of new entrants (Jacobi, 1991; Lacy & Copeland, 2013), rather than the task oversight that supervision models describe.

*I tell them, you need to have these skills because you are competing with others. There are already many graduates in this field, so we advise them on what they need to have.*

*(SUP11, 25 years, Faculty Library)*

The analytic upshot of the three domains is now in view. Supervision exceeded the planning core in two directions at once, outward into a full management cycle and across into mentoring, while its quality everywhere was conditioned by an experiential, individually variable mode of preparation. These are the findings the discussion takes up against the Tandem Model.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings can be read as a sustained test of the Tandem Model of Clinical Supervision in a setting for which it was not designed. The model proves a useful starting point, but the data show it to be incomplete in two respects and in need of cultural adaptation in a third. This section develops that argument and then presents the Practice Model that consolidates it.

Read against the wider LIS internship literature, the findings both confirm and sharpen what earlier studies have suggested. Descriptive accounts of practicum supervision have long listed the tasks that supervisors perform (Banks & Lents, 1992; Borin, 2001; Nutefall, 2012), and studies of internships in the region have established that Malaysian LIS placements are well embedded in practice (Janaki Sinnasamy & Nor Edzan Che Nasir, 2015). What these accounts have lacked is a way of organising the tasks into a coherent account of the supervisory role. By grouping supervisors' work into management, teaching and mentoring, and by reading each against supervision theory, this study moves the literature from description towards explanation. It also confirms a concern that runs through the internship literature, that placement quality is uneven, and locates the source of that unevenness in the experiential, individually variable way in which supervisors are prepared for the role.

### **Validating and extending the management core**

The Tandem Model places need assessment and the setting of learning objectives at the forefront of supervision, and this core was clearly visible in the data. Supervisors routinely assessed what interns needed and defined the tasks and outcomes of the placement, exactly as

the model predicts. To that extent, the model is validated: its central claim about the planning heart of supervision holds in LIS internships.

The data go further than the model, however. Supervisors did not stop at planning. They organised and delegated the work, directed interns through guided practice, and controlled the programme through monitoring, evaluation and corrective action. In other words, supervision extended across a full management cycle of planning, organising, directing and controlling, of which the Tandem Model captures only the first stage. Reading the findings through Kolb (1984) reinforces this point: the teaching domain, with its emphasis on practice, demonstration and differentiated tasks, supplied the concrete experience and reflection that experiential learning requires (Pang, 2020), but it did so within a managed structure that the model does not describe. The first extension, then, is that effective LIS internship supervision is a complete management cycle, not a single planning act.

This extension is more than a tidy relabelling of tasks. The management cycle exposes where supervision succeeds and where it breaks down. Supervisors were strong in planning, directing and day-to-day control, but the cycle was weakest at its outer boundary, in the coordination between the library and the students' faculty. We term this the supervisory boundary gap: the controlling function reached confidently inside the library but had no purchase at the institutional edge, where several supervisors had no direct contact with visiting academic supervisors and where contact, when it occurred, was brief and general. The gap is analytically important because it is invisible to a planning-only model. A model that stops at needs assessment cannot see it, because it does not conceive of supervision as a cycle with a boundary to manage in the first place. Identifying and naming this gap is one of the study's contributions, because it gives libraries and LIS schools a specific, locatable target for improvement rather than a general sense that coordination could be better. The notion that supervision operates across a boundary is not new to supervision scholarship more broadly, where supervision has been theorised as a form of boundary crossing between institutions and roles (Manathunga, 2007); the contribution here is to locate that boundary empirically in the LIS internship, at the point where the library's control meets the university.

Because the gap is structural rather than a matter of individual effort, closing it calls for mechanisms that make the library–faculty boundary an explicit, shared responsibility. Three measures follow from the findings. First, a shared supervision agreement could set out, at the start of each placement, what the library supervisor and the faculty supervisor are each responsible for, and how and when they will communicate. Second, brief tripartite check-ins at the start, middle and end of the placement would give the library supervisor, the faculty supervisor and the intern a regular point of contact, rather than leaving coordination to occasional, general visits. Third, designating a boundary-spanning coordinator on each side, or rotating that role, would give the connection an owner instead of allowing it to fall between the two institutions. These measures echo calls in the internship literature to build clear communication and feedback structures into programmes rather than relying on them to occur informally (Schneider et al., 2024).

### **The mentoring gap**

The second and more consequential extension concerns mentoring. The Tandem Model offers a strong account of task-based, instructional supervision, but it has little to say about the relational and developmental support that mentoring provides. Yet mentoring was prominent in the data. Supervisors offered psychosocial support, helped interns plan careers, and modelled professional conduct, treating this work as integral to the internship rather than incidental to it. That this support followed the psychosocial, career and role-modelling functions Kram (1985)

identified is what gives the finding its force: it is not stray kindness but a structured developmental relationship. The pattern also echoes long-standing distinctions in the LIS literature between mentoring and supervision (Booth, 1996; Hicks et al., 2010; Hussey & Campbell-Meier, 2020), and it shows that a purely supervisory model leaves an important part of practice unexplained. The mentoring gap is therefore not a minor omission: it is a category of supervisory work that the Tandem Model does not represent and that, in this context, supervisors considered central. This is consistent with recent international evidence that internship supervisors frequently lack preparation for mentoring and find the relational, individualised side of the role the most demanding (Schneider et al., 2024), which suggests the mentoring gap identified here is not peculiar to this setting but is under-supported wherever supervision is treated as task oversight alone.

It is important not to overstate the consistency of this mentoring. The data also showed that commitment to it varied, that some supervisors reached the limits of what they could do for disengaged students, and that supervisors had typically learnt to mentor through experience rather than through any formal preparation. The argument is not that LIS supervisors mentor uniformly well, but that mentoring is a real and significant domain of their role that supervision theory must accommodate.

The implication for the Tandem Model is structural rather than cosmetic. Mentoring cannot simply be appended to the front cyclist's tasks, because it is oriented towards the development of the person rather than the completion of the work, and it operates through a relationship rather than through direction. Accommodating it means recognising a domain of supervision that runs alongside the management and teaching that the model and its experiential core already describe. The Practice Model presented below makes this explicit by giving mentoring equal standing with management and teaching, rather than folding it into either.

### **Cultural adaptation**

The third point concerns context. Supervisors' practice was shaped by a cultural setting that values hierarchy, respect and relational obligation, the high power distance and collectivism that characterise Malaysia in cross-cultural research (Hofstede et al., 2010; Triandis, 1995). They balanced directive guidance, steering the placement from the front of the tandem, with a relational, respect-based and emotionally supportive style that softened that authority. Care for students' wellbeing, attention to face and comfort, and an obligation to support students personally were woven through the accounts, consistent with the interdependent, in-group-oriented self that collectivist settings foster (Triandis, 1995). A model developed for one-to-one clinical supervision in a Western setting does not, on its own, capture this relational texture. Applying the Tandem Model in Malaysian LIS internships therefore requires reading its directive core through a collectivist lens, in which guidance and care are not opposites but are expected to coexist.

This blend of authority and benevolence is recognisable as paternalistic leadership, a pattern documented across Asian and other collectivist contexts in which a leader combines firm direction with personal, almost familial care for subordinates (Aycan, 2006). Reading supervision through this lens clarifies why mentoring loomed so large in the data. In a setting where the supervisor is both an authority figure and a person with relational obligations towards those in their charge, attending to a student's personal circumstances and future is not an optional extra; it is part of what it means to supervise well. The mentoring domain and the cultural adaptation are therefore connected: the same paternalistic expectations that soften the supervisor's directive role also push mentoring to the centre of practice. This is also a boundary condition on the argument. The prominence of mentoring reported here may be culturally conditioned, and

the Practice Model's emphasis on it should be tested before it is assumed to transfer to more individualist settings.

### A practice model of effective supervision

These three points come together in a Practice Model of Effective Supervision in LIS Internship, shown in Figure 3. The model identifies three role domains that effective supervision integrates: management, with its functions of planning, organising, directing and controlling; teaching, through the structure of tasks, instructional design and strategic learning; and mentoring, through psychosocial support, career support and professional development. The three domains converge on the purpose of the internship, which is to support students' learning, and they are most effective when supervisors align them with students' needs.

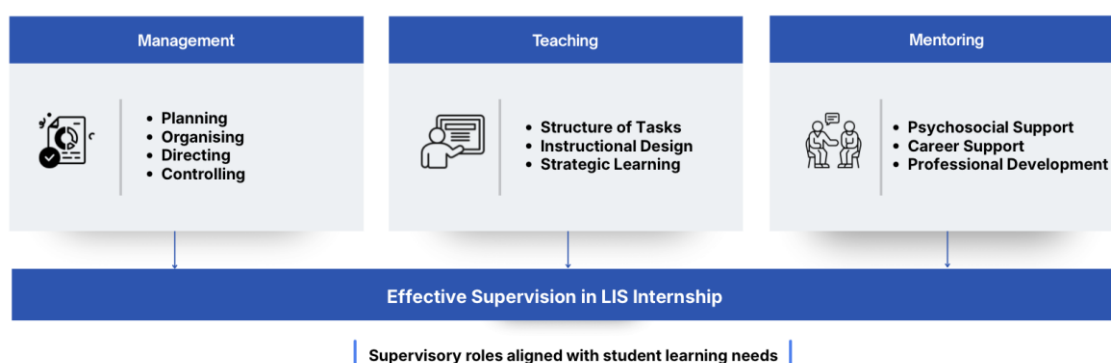


Figure 3: Practice Model of Effective Supervision in LIS Internship

Figure 4 makes the relationship to the Tandem Model explicit. The model's core of needs assessment, learning objectives and experiential learning is retained and validated, but the findings extend it in three ways: by widening planning into a full management cycle, by adding mentoring as a domain the model omits, and by adapting its directive style to a collectivist context. Read in this way, the Practice Model does not replace the Tandem Model but completes it for the LIS internship setting.

The Practice Model has practical as well as theoretical value. It gives library managers and LIS schools a shared vocabulary for what good internship supervision involves, and it points to concrete priorities. Four stand out. First, task variety should be widened, through rotation across departments and through project and research work, so that interns experience the full experiential cycle rather than repeating routine operations. Second, feedback should be strengthened and made regular, so that interns can reflect on and refine their performance. Third, supervisor preparation should be formalised, so that mentoring in particular is supported and developed rather than left to individual disposition; the finding that supervisors learn to mentor by experience alone is an argument for deliberate training in emotional intelligence, feedback and mentoring technique. Fourth, coordination between libraries and faculty should be improved, so that responsibility for the intern is genuinely shared and the boundary weakness identified in the findings is closed. Each priority maps onto a domain of the Practice Model, which is part of the model's usefulness: it locates where a given improvement belongs.

To make these priorities usable, Table 3 distils them into a short set of reflective prompts that supervisors and programme coordinators can put to a placement. The prompts are not a measurement instrument and carry no scoring; they are a heuristic derived directly from the study's findings, with each prompt traceable to the finding it responds to, including the supervisory boundary gap. Their purpose is to turn the analysis into questions a library can ask

of its own practice, and they are offered as a starting point for practice and for future empirical testing rather than as a validated tool.

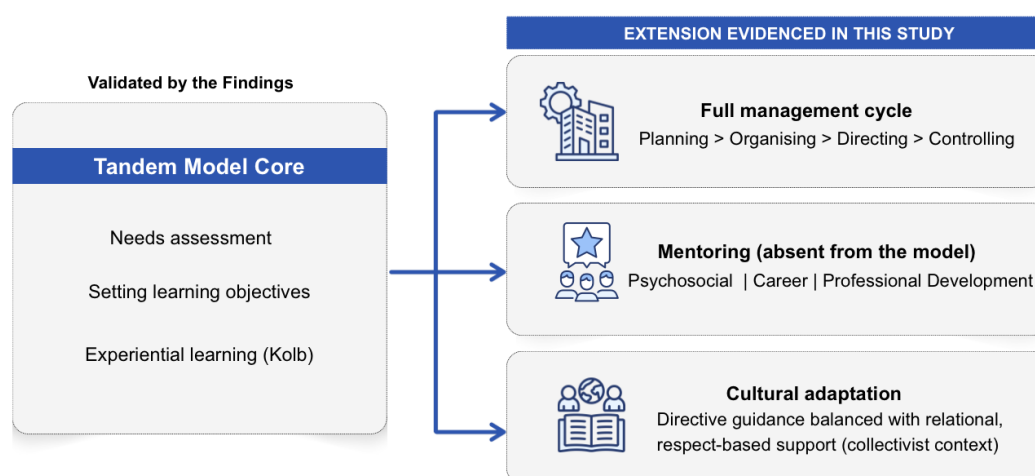


Figure 4: Mapping the findings onto the Tandem Model: what is validated and what is extended

Table 3: A findings-derived self-check for LIS internship supervision

| Domain        | Reflective prompt for supervisors and programmes                                                                                                 | Finding it responds to                                                                         |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Management    | Does the placement plan begin from what this cohort needs to learn, rather than only from the division's workflow?                               | <i>Planning was real but workflow-driven, producing repetitive placements</i>                  |
|               | Is there a working mechanism to coordinate with the student's faculty supervisor during, not just after, the placement?                          | <i>The supervisory boundary gap: control was strong inside the library, absent at its edge</i> |
| Teaching      | Do the assigned tasks vary enough to carry interns beyond repetition into reflection and independent application?                                | <i>Task design determined whether the experiential cycle was completed or stalled</i>          |
|               | Is the work differentiated to each intern's ability and interest, with demonstration leading into supervised practice?                           | <i>Instructional design was skilled but exercised unevenly</i>                                 |
| Mentoring     | Is mentoring (wellbeing, career and professional conduct) a planned, supported part of the placement rather than left to individual disposition? | <i>Mentoring was central yet uneven and inconsistently committed</i>                           |
|               | Are interns given regular, structured feedback they can act on?                                                                                  | <i>Performance communication was present but not systematic</i>                                |
| Cross-cutting | Have supervisors had any preparation for the management, teaching and mentoring roles they are expected to perform?                              | <i>Supervision was learned by experience, so quality turned on the individual</i>              |

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study set out to understand how academic librarian supervisors enact their roles in LIS internships at three public universities in Malaysia, and the extent to which an established model of supervision can account for what they do. It found that supervision operates across three role domains – management, teaching and mentoring – and that these domains both confirm and extend the Tandem Model of Clinical Supervision. Supervisors carried out the model's planning core but went well beyond it, running the internship as a full management cycle, teaching through authentic and differentiated work, and mentoring students in ways the model does not represent. Their practice also required cultural adaptation, balancing directive guidance with relational, respect-based support.

The study makes three contributions. Its theoretical contribution is to extend a clinical supervision model into LIS and into a collectivist setting, identifying the management cycle and the mentoring domain as the principal extensions, naming the supervisory boundary gap as a specific, identifiable weakness that a planning-only model cannot detect, and showing where the Tandem Model holds, where it falls short, and how it must be adapted. Its practical contribution is the Practice Model of Effective Supervision in LIS Internship, together with the findings-derived self-check in Table 3, which offer libraries and LIS schools a structured basis for strengthening internship supervision and preparing supervisors more deliberately than is currently the case. Its methodological contribution is to show how a focused qualitative case study of supervisors, analysed with an established thematic method, can surface the texture of supervisory practice, including its weaknesses, in a way that survey methods are likely to miss.

The study has limitations. It is qualitative and based on a focused sample of supervisors in one national setting, so its findings are intended to be analytically rather than statistically generalisable. It reports the supervisors' perspective; the perceptions of the students they supervise are examined in a companion study and are not addressed here. The self-check in Table 3 is a conceptual aid derived from these findings, not a validated instrument, and empirical validation of it is itself a direction for further work. Future research could test the Practice Model across other contexts, validate and refine the self-check, examine the relationship between supervisor preparation and the quality of mentoring, and investigate the supervisory boundary gap that this study identified. Strengthening supervision along these lines would help ensure that LIS internships deliver the structured, supportive and outcome-focused experience that students need to enter the profession well prepared.

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## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL AND INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENTS

All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and their confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained in accordance with relevant ethical guidelines.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: [Nurul Aida, N.A]; Methodology: [all authors]; Formal analysis and investigation: [Nurul Aida, N.A]; Writing - original draft preparation: [Nurul Aida, N.A]; Writing - review and editing: [all authors].

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**Appendix 1. Interview-guide alignment matrix (librarian supervisors)**

The semi-structured guide was organised by research question and sub-theme. It was pilot-tested with two librarians and reviewed by a faculty research ethics committee; probes were refined iteratively across interviews. Interviews were conducted online in Malay or English and lasted 45 to 60 minutes, over up to two sessions.

| RQ  | Domain     | Sub-theme / focus        | Key interview questions                                                                                                                                                                          | Example probes                                                      |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RQ1 | Management | Warm-up                  | Role and responsibilities in the department; involvement in supervising interns.                                                                                                                 | How long supervising; typical intern cohort.                        |
|     |            | Planning                 | Preparation before interns arrive; roles in planning and designing the programme; collaborative planning with the LIS school; defining learning objectives; engagement, assessment and feedback. | How are needs identified? How are objectives set?                   |
|     |            | Organising               | Helping interns build skills and knowledge; connecting learning goals with programme content.                                                                                                    | How is work allocated among staff?                                  |
|     |            | Directing                | Methods used to facilitate learning; external collaboration with the LIS school; communication with the organisations for effective supervision.                                                 | Guiding closely versus letting interns explore?                     |
|     |            | Controlling              | Improving connections between organisations, LIS school and interns; participating in evaluating programme effectiveness; major strengths and weaknesses of the programme.                       | How is progress monitored? How does coordination with faculty work? |
|     |            | Structure of tasks       | Work tasks and activities assigned to interns.                                                                                                                                                   | Routine versus project or research tasks?                           |
| RQ2 | Teaching   | Instructional design     | Instructional methods used to support learning; teaching approaches with interns.                                                                                                                | Ability-based tasks; demonstrating with slides or video.            |
|     |            | Strategic learning       | Efforts to improve learning through teaching strategies.                                                                                                                                         | Adapting pace; encouraging discovery and decision-making.           |
| RQ3 | Mentoring  | Psychosocial support     | Whether mentoring is a component of supervision; how psychosocial support is provided.                                                                                                           | Support when an intern struggles or is unwell.                      |
|     |            | Career support           | How career support and guidance are provided.                                                                                                                                                    | Career conversations; sharing own path.                             |
|     |            | Professional development | How professional knowledge and skills are developed; perceived impact of mentoring on learning commitment.                                                                                       | Role-modelling conduct and professional image.                      |

## Appendix 2. Coding framework (librarian supervisors)

Developed through Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis in ATLAS.ti version 22. Codes were grouped into nine sub-themes across three role domains. Representative codes are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

| Domain            | Sub-theme                                                                                                                        | Operational definition                                                                                   | Representative initial codes                                                                                  | Illustrative indicator                                                       |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Management</b> | <i>Running the internship as a managed programme spanning the full cycle of planning, organising, directing and controlling.</i> |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                               |                                                                              |
|                   | Planning                                                                                                                         | Setting the agenda, assessing needs and defining the parameters of the placement.                        | Preparation before arrival; designing the schedule; needs assessment from prior cohorts; defining objectives. | A checklist of departmental tasks so no intern misses anything.              |
|                   | Organising                                                                                                                       | Arranging and distributing the work and its assessment.                                                  | Delegating training to staff; classifying activities; structuring assessment points.                          | Each staff member explains part of the work by duty.                         |
|                   | Directing                                                                                                                        | Guiding interns through the work and setting a supportive climate.                                       | Staged practice before performance; encouraging independent exploration; welcoming and orienting interns.     | Explain, then have interns practise and check comprehension.                 |
|                   | Controlling                                                                                                                      | Monitoring, evaluating, communicating and correcting; coordinating across the boundary with the faculty. | Monitoring on live systems; retaining oversight; corrective feedback; coordinating with faculty.              | Editing on the live site under review; little contact with visiting faculty. |
| <b>Teaching</b>   | <i>Teaching through authentic, differentiated and experiential tasks.</i>                                                        |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                               |                                                                              |
|                   | Structure of tasks                                                                                                               | Building learning on authentic library work.                                                             | Technical and systems tasks; reference and customer service; project- and research-related tasks.             | Interns explore a live system and list its functions.                        |

***Beyond the Tandem Model: reframing academic librarian supervisory roles***

|                          |                                                                |                                                                                                           |                                                                        |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Instructional design     | Differentiating tasks and pairing demonstration with practice. | Ability-based tasks; onboarding slides and video; demonstrate then practise; repeated explanation.        | Keep the project but make it more IT-focused for an interested intern. |
| Strategic learning       | Fostering inquiry and customising the learning path.           | Let students discover and explore; student decision-making; personalised explanation; adapting pace.      | Direct interns to online resources to work things out themselves.      |
| <b>Mentoring</b>         | <i>Mentoring interns personally and professionally.</i>        |                                                                                                           |                                                                        |
| Psychosocial support     | Relational, responsive support for wellbeing.                  | Daily check-ins; responsive to communication; assist with problems; empathy in hardship.                  | Ask indirectly if all is well when an intern seems to struggle.        |
| Career support           | Career-focused guidance and perspective.                       | Offer career perspectives; career guidance; describe the profession; future-oriented guidance.            | Advise on further study versus building complementary skills.          |
| Professional development | Role-modelling and professional formation.                     | Advice on professional image; talk through options; acknowledge achievements; appropriate role-modelling. | Set expectations of punctuality, respect and competitiveness.          |

### Appendix 3: Theme-to-evidence matrix

This matrix links each sub-theme to the principal analytic finding reported in the article and to participants whose accounts illustrate it. Participant codes are examples, not an exhaustive list.

| Domain            | Sub-theme                                                                          | Principal analytic finding                                                                                   | Illustrative participants         |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Management</b> | <i>A full management cycle, strong inside the library and weak at its boundary</i> |                                                                                                              |                                   |
|                   | Planning                                                                           | Planning was universal but workflow-driven, so placements could become repetitive.                           | SUP01, SUP03, SUP08               |
|                   | Organising                                                                         | Work and assessment were distributed across the division rather than carried alone.                          | SUP02                             |
|                   | Directing                                                                          | Directing blended staged practice and independent inquiry, already shading into mentoring.                   | SUP02, SUP04, SUP06               |
|                   | Controlling                                                                        | Control was confident internally but thinned at the library–faculty boundary (the supervisory boundary gap). | SUP01, SUP02, SUP03, SUP06, SUP09 |
| <b>Teaching</b>   | <i>Experiential learning, enabled or starved by task design</i>                    |                                                                                                              |                                   |
|                   | Structure of tasks                                                                 | Authentic tasks supplied concrete experience, but variety varied across placements.                          | SUP01, SUP05                      |
|                   | Instructional design                                                               | Differentiation and demonstration were skilled but exercised without pedagogical training.                   | SUP11, SUP13                      |
|                   | Strategic learning                                                                 | Inquiry and customisation were present but uneven in depth.                                                  | SUP06                             |
| <b>Mentoring</b>  | <i>A central domain the Tandem Model omits, following Kram's functions.</i>        |                                                                                                              |                                   |
|                   | Psychosocial support                                                               | Real and patterned but uneven, reaching its limits for some supervisors.                                     | SUP02, SUP08, SUP10, SUP13        |
|                   | Career support                                                                     | Practical, candid career guidance, sometimes sharing the supervisor's own path.                              | SUP02, SUP03, SUP07               |
|                   | Professional development                                                           | Role-modelling of conduct, communication and professional competitiveness.                                   | SUP02, SUP11                      |