

**The nature of postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the
completion of doctoral studies in education: An exploration in two
African universities**

BY

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G5.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/ dissertation/ thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Postgraduate supervision and particularly the student-supervisor relationship in doctoral studies has recently become a topic of great discussion in the academic arena. The relationship between the student and the supervisor is central to the successful completion of doctoral studies. Production of more PhDs in Africa is of great significance, seeing that there is a growing need for highly trained researchers to support the national social, economic and environmental goals of African countries. However, statistics show that the completion rate of doctoral studies in Africa is still very low. As such, the focus of this study was to explore the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the completion of educational doctoral studies in two African universities, namely, Nelson Mandela University in South Africa and Moi University in Kenya.

In order to answer the main research question: *“What is the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities?”* a qualitative approach was used, located within an interpretivist paradigm and positioned as an intrinsic interpretive case study. Convenient and purposive sampling was utilised to select participants who had recently completed their doctoral studies in education within the last five years. An individual semi-structured interview and drawings were used to generate the data with ten participants, five from each of the two Universities. The data was analysed thematically and the model for interpersonal supervisor behaviour of Mainhard, Roeland, Tarkwijk and Wubbels (2009), was used to make meaning of the findings. The findings were discussed under four areas, namely, expectations of the student-supervisor relationship, experiences of the student-supervisor relationship, negotiating the student-supervisor relationship and perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies. These findings revealed that there were moments of cooperation or opposition, as well as instances of

dominance or submission in the student-supervisor relationship. However, it appeared that negotiation was at the centre of the relationship, as it was evident that it strengthened the affiliation between the student and the supervisor and thus created a harmonious working relationship, while the lack of proper negotiation created discontent and opposition between the student and the supervisor. The conclusions from the findings were used to generate implications which could be helpful to university management in improving postgraduate supervision and in so doing, promote the success rate of doctoral studies in African universities.

KEYWORDS

African universities

Doctoral graduates

Doctoral students

Doctoral studies in education

Postgraduate

Student-supervisor relationship

Supervision

Supervisor

ACRONYMS

CERM-ESA	East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management
CUE	Commission for University Education
FAUSA	Federation of Australian University Staff Association
MU	Moi University
NRF	National Research Foundation
NIHSS	National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences
NMU	Nelson Mandela University
UK	United Kingdom

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Juliet Rugut. I thank her for the dedicated support and love as a wife and as a mother to our children.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Supervision refers to a process where the supervisor oversees a research project (Lee, 2008). During this process the supervisor works with the research student through the provision and guidance of academic reading, developing logical and critical thinking, as well as providing guidance pertaining to the various writing requirements associated with the academic writing (Halse, 2011; Hodza, 2007). Despite the importance of postgraduate supervision, it is a pedagogy which appears to be poorly understood (Jones, 2013). The relationship between the doctoral student and the supervisor is key to successful completion of doctoral studies within the expected time (Jones, 2013). This relationship is seen as a two-way interaction process, where the student and the supervisor are expected engage each other professionally with respect and in an open mind (Hodza, 2007).

The Federation of Australian University Staff Association (FAUSA) has described the student-supervisor relationship as an important channel for passing knowledge across generations. In this channel, the research supervisor plays a key role in training, empowering and facilitating doctoral students to become independent researchers and to make a difference in their lives (Radloff, 2010). Doctoral graduates who are well equipped with research skills could be resourceful scholars who could contribute to the academic community and the society at large (Radloff, 2010).

Unfortunately, there is no specific method or an established procedure for a successful supervision nor student-supervisor relationship, and few academics would settle on a formula or a recipe of carrying out an effective supervision (James & Baldwin, 1999). There are

obviously some practices that are expected in any supervision, but ultimately it's about building a constructive student-supervisor relationship (Nita, 2015). It is my argument that the learning environments in African universities have different features when compared to universities in other parts of the world. Such differences arise from its specific African context, culture of education, policies and resource constraints in the universities; and therefore it is necessary to understand the student-supervisor relationship in African universities within an African context.

Apart from the context dynamics, postgraduate supervision is undoubtedly a very complex pedagogy in higher education. The quality of the supervisory relationship is fundamental for the student to succeed (Galt, 2013). Doctoral graduates who successfully completed their postgraduate studies within the expected time frame are likely to have had supportive interaction with their supervisors (Litalien, 2015).

It therefore seems probable that the understanding of the nature of student-supervisor relationship in the completion of educational doctoral studies in African universities could enable the formulation of context specific recommendations that could be used to enhance student-supervisor dynamics that could improve the completion of doctoral studies in Africa.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the recent years, the student-supervisor relationship has been highlighted as a critical aspect in postgraduate supervision and the achieving of higher degree certification. The relationship of the student and the supervisor is now seen as central to the successful completion of postgraduate studies (Jones, 2013).

Africa is in need of more researchers who can be involved in knowledge creation to solve African problems. However, statistics shows that the completion rate of doctoral studies in Africa is still very low (Cloete, Sheppard, Bailey & MacGregor, 2015). Research has also

shown that the completion of doctoral studies could be improved (Kiley, 2011). To achieve this, supervision practices in the African setting need to be explored to understand the role it plays in the completion of doctoral studies.

While a number of studies have been undertaken on postgraduate student-supervisor relationship elsewhere, there are few documented studies that have established the nature of the relationship in the context of African universities. What forms the best practices for student-supervisor relationship elsewhere may not be the case in the context of African universities because of resource constraints, culture, and other factors. There could be some commonalities but also differences within the student-supervisor relationship as compared to other parts of the world that should be understood.

Exploring the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in an African university context and from an African perspective, could enable the formulation of context specific recommendations that could be used to enhance the student-supervisor dynamics in doctoral studies hence improving the completion of doctoral studies in education in Africa. This study is therefore focused on the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the completion of educational doctoral studies in two African universities.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

Considering the problem stated, I formulate the main research question as follows:

What is the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities?

In order to answer this main research question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

- i. What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?
- ii. What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?

- iii. How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?
- iv. What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?

1.4 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study was carried out in two African universities, *i.e.* Nelson Mandela University (NMU) in South Africa and Moi University (MU) in Kenya. NMU is located in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa whereas MU is located in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The completion of doctoral studies in the two countries is very low like in many other African countries. Statistics shows that South Africa currently produces 1500 PhDs per year (Cloete et al., 2015) while Kenya produces 200 PhDs every year (Nganga, 2014). This is lower compared to the required PhD holders in these countries. South Africa intends to make considerable investment towards increasing PhD production to 5000 PhDs per year by 2030 (Cloete et al., 2015) while the commission for university education in Kenya has proposed that the country should be able to produce 1000 PhDs per year by 2030 (Nganga, 2014).

Doctoral studies (full time) are to be completed within two to four years at NMU and three years in MU. In supervising postgraduate students, both masters and doctorates, academics are encouraged to have at least two students or not more than six students at one time in NMU. While in MU the maximum number of students an academic shall supervise in any given academic year is eight, three doctorate students and five masters (Commission for University Education [CUE], 2016). The completion rate of PhD studies in the faculty of education in NMU and MU varies every year, but appears to be low when considering the number of staff who can supervise. This can be seen from the number of graduates produced by the faculty in a single year in each of the two universities. For example, NMU graduated 10 PhDs in 2015 in the faculty of education (NMU, 2015) while MU graduated 3 PhDs in the faculty in 2014 (MU, 2014). It is within this context of supervision that the study is undertaken.

To explain the choice of NMU and MU as my study sites, it is important to note that this study was done under the scholarship of the Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management for East and Southern Africa (CERM-ESA). NMU in southern Africa and MU in east Africa are among the five partnering universities in the CERM-ESA project. As such, it was convenient for me to carry out this research in the two partnering Universities. In addition, the statistics above give a clear indication that the completion of doctoral studies in Kenya and South Africa need to be improved.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

This section gives an explanation of the terms used in this study.

1.5.1 Postgraduate

In practice, postgraduate refers to a course of study undertaken after completion of a first degree. In this study, it is used to refer to studies that lead to obtaining a doctorate.

1.5.2 Student-supervisor relationship

A relationship exists between the research student and his/her supervisor during the entire period of research to the time the student is awarded the degree, often times continuing after the awarding of the degree. The supervisor works with the student by guiding and directing the entire process of knowledge production. In this study, the student-supervisor relationship refers to the relationship between the supervisor and a doctoral candidate.

1.5.3 Doctoral studies in education

These are programmes in the field of education which are usually offered in the faculties of education at universities. In this study, doctoral studies in education refer to a doctoral study in any field of education.

1.5.4 African universities

African universities refer to universities within Africa as a region. In this study African universities refer to MU in Kenya (East Africa), and NMU in South Africa (Southern Africa)

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A research design is a plan or strategy which is used to carry out research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). To answer the research questions, a qualitative approach was used, located within an interpretivist paradigm and positioned as an intrinsic interpretive case study.

1.6.1 Qualitative research approach

The research approach taken in this study is qualitative. According to Nieuwenhuis, (2007) qualitative research depends on human experience and as such, the concern of a qualitative researcher is to establish how people make sense of their experiences and their lives (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Qualitative approach enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the research problem (Ochieng, 2009) and therefore, the data generated through a qualitative research is more convincing as compared to that of a quantitative research. Looking at the research problem in this study; the expectations, experiences and perceptions of those recently graduated in doctoral education studies could be understood better if explored through their own explanations (See also 3.2).

1.6.2 Research paradigm

This study is located in the interpretivist paradigm. The fundamental belief of an interpretivist framework is that reality is socially constructed and that multiple experiences and conceptions of reality can be apprehended (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Informed by the research question which explores the nature of the student-supervisor relationship by looking at the expectations, experiences and perceptions of doctoral graduates, it was found appropriate for this study to be positioned in the interpretive paradigm (See also, 3.3).

1.6.3 Research strategy: Case study

This study is positioned as an intrinsic interpretive case study. A case study has been defined by Creswell (2007) as an exploration of a specific happening bounded by context or place and time. Intrinsic interpretive case study describes, analyses and interprets a specific phenomenon (Fouchè & Schurink, 2014). The researcher in interpretive case study aims to interpret the data by developing conceptual categories without adding own judgement to the phenomena found in the data (Fouchè & Schurink, 2014). This study is bounded to describing, analysing and interpreting the experiences of the student-supervisor relationship in the two African Universities who graduated within the last five years (See also 3.4).

1.6.4 Data gathering methods

The following methods were used to generate the data:

1.6.4.1 Semi-structured individual interview

Semi-structured interview is a verbal conversation that has the aim of gathering relevant information to the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). It provides original and rich information for understanding a phenomenon (Gomm, 2004). Ten individuals were interviewed in-depth in this study to provide first-hand information about the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the two African universities. The strength of using a semi-structured interview is that, it provides an opportunity for the interviewer to seek clarity on issues raised by the participant and thus avoiding any misinterpretation (Ritchie & Lewis 2003) (See also 3.7.1).

1.6.4.2 Drawing

Drawing is a method for eliciting attitudes and beliefs, as well as creating discussion around an issue of concern (Theron, Mitchell, Smith & Stuart, 2011). It helps a researcher to get access to the aspects of knowledge which would be very hard to express in words and might be

ignored or remain hidden (Theron et al., 2011). In this study, ten participants were engaged in making the drawings and writing the captions (See also 3.7.2).

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data in this study. This is a method of identifying patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Preliminary data analysis took place simultaneously with data generation during the interview. The data was prepared for analysis by scanning the drawings and transcribing the interviews into written form. The captions given by the participants and the transcriptions were coded to generate the categories and themes (See also 3.8).

1.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, the researcher is required to validate the findings to ensure that it is trustworthy. According to Schurink, Fouchè and De Vos (2014) and Shenton (2004) the findings of qualitative research should be credible, applicable, dependable and confirmable. I draw on these to ensure the trustworthiness of my study (See also 3.10).

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Conducting a research in an ethical manner is of utmost importance. I first sought permission for ethical clearance from the Nelson Mandela University's Ethics Committee and the permission was granted (See appendix A). Secondly, I ensured that the rights of the participants were adhered to. Every participant need to be aware of his/her rights in order to make an informed choice of participating or declining to take part in the study (Struwig & Stead, 2001). These rights include: right to privacy, right to full disclosure about the research, right not to be harmed physically, psychologically or emotionally, right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study. These rights were made clear to them and observed. All the

required procedures also were followed to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner (See also 3.11).

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will be of significance in the following ways: It will contribute to the literature in the field of education and related disciplines; the knowledge generated in this study will be used to enable a better understanding of the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in African universities and will go a long way towards building productive student-supervisor relationships in doctoral studies. Ultimately a productive relationship could assist in improving the completion of doctoral studies in African universities. Finally, the findings could promote more fruitful research partnerships between the doctoral students and their supervisors.

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is located in teaching and learning in higher education, particularly in postgraduate supervision as an area of study. The focus is limited to the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship.

The study was conducted in two African universities, MU and NMU.

1.12 PLAN OF THE STUDY

This study consist of five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Orientation of the study

This chapter provides an introduction and broad overview of the study. It focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, context and clarification of concepts. The methodology is briefly introduced.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter explores the literature to provide a theoretical perspective on student-supervisor relationship. The major areas which have been discussed include; the status of postgraduate studies, postgraduate supervision, postgraduate student-supervisor relationship, trends in doctoral studies and postgraduate supervision. The theoretical framework is also explained in this chapter

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter focuses on the research approach, paradigm, the methods and procedures use to generate data and the data analysis. It also explains participants, sampling, ethical issues and trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Findings and discussion

The findings of each of the four sub-research question are presented in this chapter. These findings are then discussed and recontextualised within the literature.

Chapter 5: Summary and conclusions

This chapter provides a summary of the findings and the conclusions and implications drawn from the themes. It will also capture theoretical contribution, recommendations for further research and the limitations of the study.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This study has been committed to focusing on the nature of postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in an African setting which contributes to successful completion of educational doctoral studies in African universities. The study utilised the design, methodology and methods presented to explore the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the two African universities. The findings of this study provide a clear view of the student-supervisor

relationship dynamics in postgraduate supervision in the faculties of education of the two universities. Other faculties possibly stand to benefit from this study by using what applies to their situations. Apart from adding to the literature in the field of higher education and related disciplines, the study will be a reference and motivation for similar studies in other faculties of the two universities or in other African universities. In the next chapter I present the literature review which provides a theoretical perspective on the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENT-SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP IN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Nations around the globe are in need of scholars and lifelong researchers who can be involved in knowledge creation to meet national and global challenges. Governments are recognising that the foundation of a productive and prosperous country is to have a well-educated population, especially doctoral graduates who can be involved in research and also take the lead in coming up with new and better ways of dealing with various aspects of the development of a country. In order to increase doctoral graduates, there must be quality postgraduate supervision which is one of the invaluable areas of higher education.

The focus of this study is the student-supervisor relationship in postgraduate supervision and the completion of doctoral studies. The relationship between the supervisor and the doctoral student is paramount to the completion of doctoral studies. Research indicates that the most important factor in students' decisions to continue and complete their doctoral studies or to withdraw is their relationship with their supervisors (Jones, 2013; Kiley, 2011). Several studies have also revealed that successful supervision is anchored in a quality student-supervisor relationship (Abiddin, 2009; Galt, 2013; Hodza, 2007; Nita, 2015) and yet there is no established procedure for effective supervision nor student-supervisor relationship. Different supervisors seem to approach the student-supervisor relationship differently.

The literature review in this section aims at putting across a theoretical perspective of the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship. It draws on literature from three main bodies of

knowledge which include postgraduate studies (Grant, 2014; Litalien, 2015), postgraduate supervision in higher education (Hodza, 2007; Jones, 2013) and the relationship between the student and the supervisor (Galt, 2013; Nita, 2015). The literature is explored on the basis that there are concerns in most institutions of higher learning, and more so, in African universities about the need to improve the quality of supervision, particularly the nature of the student-supervisor relationship, with a view to increasing the success rate of doctoral students in Africa.

2.2 THE STATUS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

The term ‘postgraduate studies’ is used in the context of this research to refer to doctoral studies while the term ‘status’ is used in this section to refer to the state of postgraduate studies at a certain period in time. The status of postgraduate studies is different across the world, as well as different at different universities in the same part of the world, however, there are also some commonalities across the world and in different universities. This section discusses the status of postgraduate studies, first globally, then in sub-Saharan Africa, and finally in Kenya and South Africa, as the sites of the current study.

2.2.1 Postgraduate studies globally

Nurturing talent in higher education is seen as essential in the current complex and rapidly changing world. According to Abiddin and Ismail (2011) governments today are recognising the importance of higher education producing more doctoral graduates. This is especially because of the growing need for research to support the national social, economic and environmental wellbeing of a country and at the same time responding to the complicated global problems and challenges in the social, environmental and economic sectors. For a nation to prosper there must be people with the necessary expertise to initiate and drive innovations (Barry, Larsen & Pieper, 2010). PhD graduates are considered as people with such knowledge and expertise required for the success of a nation.

Therefore, to have an edge in national development, many countries are aiming at increasing the production of doctoral graduates per year. At the moment China, which is an emerging world economy, is the highest producer of PhDs per year in the world, having overtaken the United States in 2008 (Majumder, 2014). China is producing up to 100,000 PhDs per year (Majumder, 2014) while the United States of America produces slightly over 50,000 PhDs per year (National Science Foundation, 2015). Brazil in Latin America graduates 13,000 PhDs per year being the leading country in the production of PhDs in South America (Nathalie, 2016). India being a middle income country produces 17000 PhDs per year (Hemali, 2013) while Australia has about 10,000 PhDs graduating every year (Group of eight Australian Universities, 2013).

Production of PhDs is also linked to postgraduate student attrition which is a problem affecting universities all over the world (Hunter & Devine, 2016). There are differences in the rate of attrition across continents and in different countries. For example, in the United States of America doctoral attrition rate is high with an estimated 40% to 50% of candidates never finishing their studies (Litalien, 2015). In the United Kingdom, according to a report published in 2013, 72.9% of students who began full time doctoral studies in 2010-2011 were estimated to obtain their degree within seven years (Jump, 2013). A study in Australia by Abiddin and Ismail (2011) indicated that about 60% of new doctoral students who started studying in 1992 would have completed their studies in 2003. This means that most students would complete their studies eleven years from the initial enrolment, and hence suggests an attrition rate of 40%. Canada, however, seems to have a low postgraduate student attrition rate of 20% compared to other countries which have a rate of up to 40% (Galt, 2013).

2.2.2 Postgraduate studies in Sub-Saharan Africa

The African continent has very few doctoral graduates and according to Namuddu (2014, p. 26) “Africa must look at ways to train thousands more PhD students on the continent”. He was referring to the statement made by Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma the then African Union Commission Chair who stressed the need for more doctoral graduates in Africa. Postgraduate studies in Sub-Saharan Africa is however faced with numerous challenges, which include: paucity of skills to train PhDs, lack of supervision capacity, inability to fund postgraduate studies and brain drain. These challenges are discussed in this section.

According to Mouton (2011) one of the main challenges is the limited number of PhDs produced in the region. He points out that there is a paucity in the development of basic research skills that hinders appropriate training of doctoral students to be future scholars. Mouton (2011) links this with the lack of highly trained academics in universities who have the experience of training the doctoral students and incorporating them into the scholarly world of research. The problem of lack of supervision capacity also slows down the completion rate of the few candidates who join doctoral programmes (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). Most doctoral students then take long to graduate because the few available supervisors are busy with administrative work or are out on other university business and have little time for their doctoral students (Grossman & Crowther, 2015).

A further challenge is that many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have policies which hinder the independence of universities and as such, it negatively affects improvements in these institutions (Imma & Calvet, 2012). This also affects the standards of teaching, supervision and research in universities (Imma & Calvet, 2012). The emancipation of institutions of higher learning to have complete autonomy is an ongoing process in the region which is yet to be fully achieved and there is a need to reform the systems (Imma & Calvet, 2012).

The countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are developing countries which are not necessarily stable economically (Mouton, 2011) and this is often linked to the challenge of funding postgraduate studies. A study carried out by a group of scholars (Caillaud, Experton, Fevre, Foko, Gioan, Johnstone, Marcucci, Righetti, Saint & Salmi, 2009) indicate that poor financing of higher education is another problem of postgraduate studies in sub-Saharan Africa. The quality of teaching and training researchers is negatively affected by the poor financing (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2008).

The other challenge in the higher education system of sub-Saharan Africa is brain drain (Kaba, 2011). There are many postgraduate students from Africa who graduate in other continents like Asia and Europe, but fail to return to their countries of origin (El-Khawas, 2004). This has made brain drain an endemic problem in sub-Saharan Africa as it appears that the region is losing a large number of the best knowledgeable specialists to other countries outside Africa (Kaba, 2011). This makes it difficult to develop professionals with the skills and knowledge to join the knowledge society in sub-Saharan Africa.

2.2.3 Postgraduate studies in South Africa

South Africa is working towards increasing the number of doctoral graduates to meet the country's demands in higher education teaching and research. In the African continent, South Africa is currently the leading producer of doctoral graduates (Cloete et al., 2015). The government of South Africa anticipates to make a considerable investment in improving the production of PhDs; this involves providing financial support to postgraduate students and increasing the number of academics to improve supervision (Cloete et al., 2015).

Despite being the leading country in the production of PhDs in Africa, South Africa has her own challenges in postgraduate studies. A financial challenge constitutes the single biggest obstacle to producing more postgraduate students in the country (Grant, 2014; Mouton, 2016).

The challenge is more prevalent among black African students who are not able to finance their studies (Mouton, 2016). Low progression from undergraduate to postgraduate studies is another challenge in the country (Grant, 2014). For those students who manage to get to PhD level there is still the problem of retention and completion of the doctoral studies (Mouton, 2016).

South Africa seems to have a high attrition rate of doctoral studies when compared to other countries globally (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). This can be seen from the number of doctoral graduates produced in the country as compared to those produced by the developed nations. While doing the comparison, Motshoane and McKenna (2014) found that the United States has 201 doctorates per million people and produces up to 50,000 PhDs per year, Brazil has 52 doctorates per million and produces 12,000 PhDs per year, while Australia has 264 doctorates per million of the population compared to South Africa which has 26 doctorates per million and produces 1500 PhDs per year (Cloete et al., 2015). A study in 2011 and 2012 in South Africa shows that the graduation rate among doctoral students in public universities is 12 percent (Murdoch, 2013).

In the field of education, the completion of doctoral studies in education in South Africa appears to be low. Grant (2014) states that the majority of students who enter a doctor of education programme or master of education programme in South Africa do not complete their studies. Grant outlines that most of the postgraduate students in the faculty of education comprise of mature-aged professionals who choose to study on a part time basis because they hold permanent employment in schools, department of education offices or in education non-governmental organisations (Grant, 2014). These students have to balance the responsibilities related to their careers, their families as well as their studies (Grant, 2014). This is a major factor that affects the throughput rate of education doctoral graduates in South Africa.

2.2.4 Postgraduate studies in Kenya

Kenya is one of the African countries with very few doctoral graduates (Ayiro & Sang, 2011). Currently Kenya has less than 8,000 PhD holders which are very few compared to a demand of 30,000 doctorates required as academics to teach in Kenyan Universities (Chumba, 2015). The country produces 200 PhDs every year (Nganga, 2014) although the Commission for University Education in Kenya has proposed that the country should be able to produce 1000 PhDs per year by 2030 (Nganga, 2014). The commission also requires all university lecturers to be PhD holders by 2018 (Nganga, 2014).

Postgraduate studies in Kenya faces several challenges. One major challenge is inadequate supervision where supervisors pay little attention to their students because they supervise several students at the same time (Gudo, Olel & Oanda, 2011). Ayiro and Sang (2011) found that over 64% of doctoral students complain about a strained relationship with their supervisors which affects their progress and completion of their studies. Both the students and their lecturers admit that there are a lot of supervision problems in Kenya (Ayiro & Sang, 2011). Ayiro and Sang (2011) also identified a lack of research culture in the country which does not encourage doctoral students in carrying out their research. There is also the problem of non-completion or taking too long to complete the doctoral studies (Gudo et al., 2011). The percentage of non-completion is seen to be too high, sometimes going above 50% while those who are retained take very long before completing their doctoral studies, often more than six years, instead of the expected three years (Ayiro & Sang, 2011).

Like South Africa, the completion rate of education PhD students in Kenya is very low (Gudo et al., 2011). Most of those who register for doctoral studies in education are part-time students who have other responsibilities related to education (Ayiro & Sang, 2011). They are professionals who hold formal employment and most of them work in universities as lecturers,

or in high schools while others hold administrative positions in government or private institutions which make it difficult for them to complete their doctoral studies within the expected time (Nganga, 2014). Given such a situation where students are busy with other responsibilities coupled with factors like a poor student-supervisor relationship, it takes a long time for part-time students to complete their studies while others withdraw during the process (Nganga, 2014). Clearly the status of postgraduate studies in Kenya and South Africa need to be improved, particularly in terms of postgraduate supervision, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3 POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

Postgraduate supervision refers to a process where the supervisor oversees a research project, in this context, guiding the doctoral student in academic reading, logical and critical thinking to generate knowledge, as well as overseeing the entire process of writing the thesis (Firoz, Quamrul & Mohammad, 2013). The quality of the supervisory relationship is key to the success of doctoral students in completing their studies within the expected time (Galt, 2013; Jones, 2013). The role of the supervisor in the whole process is to facilitate the academic development of the doctoral student (Hodza, 2007).

In the following sections various aspects of postgraduate supervision which includes supervision as a pedagogy and the nature of postgraduate supervision are unpacked.

2.3.1 Supervision pedagogy

Supervision pedagogy refers to a form of supervision which emphasises the teaching and learning process (Firth & Martens, 2008). It makes supervision a part of an active engagement between the doctoral student and the supervisor. The teaching and the active engagement are essential elements of the student-supervisor relationship.

In this section, two aspects of supervision pedagogy will be discussed, namely, supervision as a pedagogy; and the role of supervision pedagogy.

2.3.1.1 Supervision as a pedagogy

Supervision can be regarded as an advanced and complex teaching process in which knowledge production is vital (Emilsson & Johnsson, 2007). Firth and Martens (2008) defined supervision as a specialised form of teaching with its own established roles and responsibilities which will be elaborated in subsequent sections. The process of supervision becomes effective and productive when it is viewed as a pedagogy where the teaching element is also a learning component in the research process (Gill & Bernard, 2008). The views of these scholars bring a different perspective to the traditional view of supervision where emphasis is on the procedures and design of the study rather than teaching.

There is a need to emphasise the teaching process in supervision (Petersen 2007). This requires that the process of supervision is viewed as a pedagogy (Emilsson & Johnsson, 2007). Supervision pedagogy involves teaching the students how to develop their research problem, the expected way of writing the proposal and the ethical considerations (Emilsson & Johnson, 2007). It also includes teaching the research students how to review their literature as well as the methods of analysing the data generated (Emilsson & Johnsson, 2007). According to Dixon and Hanks (2010) research students work better when they are engaged in an interactive teaching process where knowledge is shared between the research student and the supervisor.

2.3.1.2 The role of supervision pedagogy

Supervision as a pedagogy aims to assist the research student in the research journey in several academic related aspects which form part of the research process. The doctoral students are taught several skills which they need to use in carrying out their research and as a result, the students are in a position to work more smartly and manage their research project without

digressions or confusion (Dixon & Hanks 2010). This, however, depends on the supervisor's approach. The 'hands on' supervision approach emphasises the teaching process in supervision (McCallin & Shoba, 2012). In this approach, the doctoral students are taught the necessary skills and are closely directed to carry out their research and complete their studies in time (McCallin & Soba, 2012). Some supervisors take a 'hands off' approach to supervision which leaves students largely to work on their own with less teaching and direction (Sinclair, 2004). The approach works best when the doctoral student is knowledgeable, self-confident, independent and skilled to direct his or her own work. This approach is in most cases associated with slow and non-completion of PhD studies (McCallin & Shoba, 2012).

Supervision pedagogy promotes timely completion of PhD studies (Lee, 2008). The teaching process brings the student and the supervisor closer and enables every step in the research process to be attended to in time (Lee, 2008). This promotes a quality student-supervisor relationship and timely completion of doctoral studies (Lee, 2008). According to Firth and Martens (2008) supervision pedagogy ensures that the research student has a progressive research writing. The supervisor monitors the student's progress to avoid stagnation at some stages and as such promote timely completion. Many institutions and higher education funders emphasise the need for timely completion of the doctoral studies (McCallin & Shoba, 2012).

2.3.2 The nature of postgraduate supervision

The purpose of postgraduate supervision is to develop the doctoral student to be an independent researcher. There have been attempts by supervisors and institutions to improve the quality of postgraduate supervision over time. Supervision is carried out in different ways with the expectations of offering quality supervision for the success of doctoral studies.

This section will elaborate on two aspects of postgraduate supervision in higher education, namely; models of supervision; and supervisory approaches in postgraduate studies.

2.3.2.1 Models of supervision

Supervision models refer to forms in which supervision takes place and it entails the roles and the nature of interaction in the relationship between the student and the supervisor (Beer & Mason, 2009).

There are different models of supervision in postgraduate studies, namely; supervisor-apprentice model, co-supervision model and the cohort supervision model. These models are discussed in this section.

2.3.2.1.1 Supervisor-apprentice model

The supervisor-apprentice model, also referred to as the traditional model, involves a one-to-one relationship between the student and the supervisor (Mackinnon, 2004; McCallin & Shoba, 2012). It is a one-to-one supervision model in which the supervisor prepares the student for independent research (McCallin & Shoba, 2012). In this model, the student who is the trainee learns from the supervisor who is the knowledgeable expert in the field (Nulty, Kiley & Meyers, 2009). It requires that the supervisor meets with the student regularly to discuss the progress of the student. In this process, the supervisor engages in mentoring and coaching the student (McCallin & Shoba, 2012).

The strength of this model is that it is a face-to-face model which provides an opportunity to both the supervisor and the student to clarify unclear concepts and negotiate meaning in the writing of the student (Beer & Mason, 2009). It also offers the opportunity to read the facial expressions and other body signals during the discussions between the student and the supervisor (De Beer & Mason, 2009). The weakness of the model is that if the supervisor is overcommitted with administrative and other academic activities it is possible that the student takes a longer time to complete the study due to the lack of regular contact and direction (McCallin & Shoba, 2012).

2.3.2.1.2 Co-supervision model

The co-supervision model is a form of supervision in which two or more supervisors work together to oversee a student's research project (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). The co-supervisors are appointed formally as a team to work with a postgraduate student. The selection of the co-supervisors is based on their expertise in a specific field of research (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). In the panel, there is a principal supervisor who is the head of the supervisory team and has the overall responsibility for directing the research project and ensuring the quality of supervision (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). This form of supervision has served well as an alternative form of supervision to the traditional model of supervision as it enriches the research project with specialised knowledge and diversity of opinion (James & Baldwin, 1999). According to Grossman and Crowther (2015) the co-supervisors led by the principal supervisor should agree on the role and contribution of each member towards the research project.

The strength of this model is that the student's work is critiqued by different supervisors who also provide a blend of ideas to support the research project (Grossman & Crowther, 2015; James & Baldwin, 1999). It also provides an opportunity for the supervisors to learn from each other (James & Baldwin, 1999). The model, however, may be a disadvantage to the student when there is a disagreement related to the research work among the supervisors (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). In the midst of disagreement, there is a possibility of the student being confused especially when the supervisors provide conflicting advice to the student (James & Baldwin, 1999).

2.3.2.1.3 Cohort supervision model

The cohort supervision model is a recent model introduced to promote the production of knowledge in doctoral education research (De Lange, Pillay & Chikoko, 2011). It is a model that many institutions today are embracing in the doctoral research process (Botha, 2014). This

model is an alternative to the traditional one-to-one supervision model and as such, usually involves a group of students in the same phase of their studies learning together as a community in a collective learning process (Botha, 2014). The students in a cohort work as an academic community and they have the advantage of putting together their efforts by contributing different ideas to support their research projects (De Lange et al., 2011). The supervisors also share their expertise in the process to complement each other and thus make the model rich (De Lange et al., 2011). Apart from promoting the scholarly development of both students and supervisors through collective learning and intellectual independence, the cohort model also offers social and emotional support to the group members (Botha, 2014). The value of working as a community is that it provides support to the students throughout the research process, which could lead to an improvement in the academic writing of the students and also appears to increase completion rates (Botha, 2014).

The limitation of the cohort model is that working as a group creates the possibility of disagreements among the research students or the supervisors due to possible differences in opinion and ideas (Govender & Dhunpath, 2011). There is also potential pressure on the supervisors who might feel compelled to support the research students in the cohort (Govender & Dhunpath, 2011; Ali & Kohun, 2006). Ali and Kohun (2006) argue that working in a group may be more demanding to the supervisors and the research students as it requires regular commitment to the group activities and deadlines.

2.3.2.2 Supervisory approaches in postgraduate supervision

During the process of the supervisory relationship, a supervisor engages in a number of diverse supervisory approaches. Gatfield (2005) has identified four preferred operating approaches to postgraduate supervision, namely; (i) laissez-faire (ii) directional (iii) contractual and (iv) pastoral. These approaches can be utilised at different stages of the research process depending on the expectations of the student and the supervisor. The approaches are discussed next:

2.3.2.2.1 Laissez-faire approach

The laissez-faire approach is a supervisory approach where the supervisor plays a minimal role in the research project (Gatfield, 2005). The supervisor gives a lot of freedom to the student to carry out the research with very little guidance (Mainhard, Roeland, Tarkwijk & Wubbels, 2009). Some supervisors choose to use the laissez-faire approach throughout the research project while others may prefer this approach only at the beginning of the research project (Mainhard et al., 2009; Gatfield, 2005). Gatfield (2005) suggests the use of this approach at the beginning of the research project when a student is still in the process of searching for the thesis topic and may not need much direction or support from the supervisor.

2.3.2.2.2 Directional approach

A directional approach is a close monitoring supervisory approach (Rettig, Lampe & Garcia, 2000). Directive supervision is essential when the student needs more guidance and close monitoring from the supervisor (Gatfield, 2005). In this approach the supervisor takes an active role in guiding the student and ensuring the quality of the research project (Rettig et al., 2000). Supervisors tend to use this approach when the student requires more structure in his or her work and as such, the supervisor will provide direction on a more regular and interactive relationship (Gatfield, 2005; Rettig et al., 2000).

2.3.2.2.3 Contractual approach

The contractual approach is a consultative form of supervision where the supervisor provides both direction and support (Gatfield, 2005). According to Gatfield (2005) the contractual approach works better when the research project is already shaping well at the later stages of the research. During the time of data generation and analysis, the student has become more familiar with his or her research project. At this point, the role of the supervisor is mostly consultative, offering direction, opinions and suggestions to structure and refine the research project (Gatfield, 2005; Rettig et al., 2000). The working relationship at this stage is mutual

and both the supervisor and the student share their ideas on how to strengthen the research project (Rettig et al., 2000).

2.3.2.2.4 Pastoral approach

Pastoral approach is a supervisory approach where the supervisor provides emotional support to the research student in addition to academic support (Schulze, 2012). It is an approach that acknowledges the student as a person as well as being a learner (Martin, 2014). The pastoral approach may be utilised together with other approaches to motivate and empower the student in carrying out the research (Gatfield, 2005; Schulze, 2012). The emotional support provided by the supervisor serves to boost the confidence of the research student to take more responsibility in pursuing the research project (Gatfield, 2005).

In every model and approach that is utilised in postgraduate supervision, the relationship between the student and the supervisor is of critical importance. The following section will therefore elaborate on the relationship aspect between the student and the supervisor in postgraduate studies.

2.4 POSTGRADUATE STUDENT-SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP

The student-supervisor relationship refers to an association between the student and the supervisor or supervisors during the study period. The relationship between the doctoral student and the supervisor is key to successful completion of postgraduate studies within the expected time frame (Jones, 2013). Doctoral graduates who successfully completed their postgraduate studies within the expected time frame are likely to have had supportive interaction with their supervisors during the research period (Litalien, 2015).

Several aspects of the student-supervisor relationship will be elaborated on in this section, these are; (i) developing and maintaining the student-supervisor relationship (ii) being a

supervisor and being a research student (iii) conducive environment for the student-supervisor relationship and (iv) the expectations, experiences, negotiations and perceptions of success in the student-supervisor relationship.

2.4.1 Developing and maintaining the student-supervisor relationship

A successful student-supervisor relationship can only be developed by the student and the supervisor (Bourhis, 2014). The relationship will usually work best when the student and the supervisor are honest and respectful to one another (Nita, 2015). It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to work towards a fruitful and harmonious relationship (Bourhis, 2014). Whenever there are misunderstandings or differences in opinion, it is important for both the student and the supervisor to negotiate and have an understanding before the disagreement degenerates into a more serious conflict that could negatively affect the progress of the doctoral student (Bourhis, 2014). A harmonious relationship between the student and the supervisor is a recipe for success for the development and progress of the postgraduate student towards timely completion of the research study (Halse, 2011).

The roles and responsibilities of the student and the supervisor should be clearly established early on in the supervisory relationship (Peterson, 2007). Both members should spend some time at the beginning of the research project to consider how the relationship will work (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). This is valuable for developing a lasting and collaborative relationship during the study period (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). The relationship between the student and the supervisor plays a critical role in the success of the students' research project and as such, it requires a firm foundation which needs to be set right at the beginning of the project (Jones, 2013).

Sharing of supervisory experiences among colleague supervisors plays a critical role in developing a quality student-supervisor relationship (Phillips & Pugh, 2000). Supervisors have

different experiences which will be elaborated in the sections that follow. Sharing these experiences among colleague supervisors creates awareness of how different student-supervisor relationships develop (Radloff, 2010). These experiences also bring out the challenges and the interventions in relationships which could form valuable information for developing future student-supervisor relationships (Phillips & Pugh, 2000). It appears therefore that sharing supervisory experiences could contribute important ideas for developing a fruitful relationship between the supervisor and the student (Radloff, 2010).

Communication is also key in establishing and sustaining a productive student-supervisor relationship (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013). Both the supervisor and the student need to get on together and be able to communicate openly and freely (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013). Open communication enables the student and the supervisor to negotiate a suitable supervisory approach that accommodates the expectations of each member (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). It is necessary for the student and the supervisor to communicate in a friendly way in order to arrive at an agreeable working structure (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). Appropriate communication provides a supportive relationship where the student is able to do more thorough work and produce a quality thesis (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013).

2.4.2 Being a supervisor

Being a supervisor refers to taking up the duties and responsibilities associated with supervision of a postgraduate research project (Halse, 2011; Jones, 2013). The supervisor is expected to understand and execute his/her role in the research process. A study carried out by De Boone (2014) indicates that one of the major roles of the supervisor is to be a research advisor. According to De Boone a research advisor is a knowledgeable and experienced academic who is largely responsible for mentoring and guiding a research student. To be a good advisor, the supervisor needs to be conversant with the area that the student is working in

and the literature available in that field (Halse, 2011). It is also important for the supervisor to understand the history of research in the field of study and the debates surrounding that field (Hasrati, 2005).

A study by Abiddin, Hassan and Abdul (2009) also gives some insight into the roles of the supervisor. In their study, Abiddin et al. (2009) identified several supervisory roles which include offering support to the student, critiquing the student's work and offering advice and consultation. The supervisor is also expected to monitor and evaluate the students' progress throughout the study (Abiddin et al., 2009; Malfroy, 2005). Supervisors have described the role of monitoring and evaluating the student's progress as an important task in supervision which promotes student growth and development (Malfroy, 2005; Price & Money, 2002). It enables the student to remain focused on the research project and at the same time develop critical and independent thinking (Halse, 2011).

Supervisors play the role of developing the research students to be independent scholars who can carry out research on their own (McCallin & Shoba, 2012). According to Radloff (2010) it is the role of the research supervisor to train, empower and facilitate the research student to become an independent scholar. Supervisors have accumulated experience in research which is essential for training the research students to gain different research skills (Lee, 2007). Most students hold the belief that when the supervisor takes the role of sharing their knowledge, skills and experiences with them, they gain the courage to face the challenges associated with research (Price & Money, 2002). Research students who are well equipped with the knowledge of research have the potential of becoming independent researchers in their careers (Radloff, 2010).

Supervisors are seen as gatekeepers who have authority to control the process of the research project (Kaye, Oliver, Reeve & McNichols, 2010). Lee (2007) argues that a supervisor is a

gatekeeper to the learning resources and expertise knowledge in research. It is the discretion of the supervisor or the supervisors to choose which gates to open at various stages of the research process. This includes the type of learning resources and specialised research skills made available to the student at different points of the research project (Lee, 2007). For the systematic progress of the research student, it is the responsibility of the supervisors to assess what the student needs at each stage of the research project (Kaye et al., 2010).

The supervisor plays an important role in managing the student-supervisor relationship and as such he or she is expected to exhibit the qualities that will enable successful supervision (Backhouse, Cross & Ungadi, 2015; Galt, 2013; Halse & Malfroy, 2010). Abiddin et al. (2009) suggest that a supervisor should be flexible and open minded in working with the research students as this promotes a friendly and supportive relationship between the student and the supervisor. The supervisor also should be in a position to tolerate the weaknesses of the students and show concern for their growth and development (Abiddin et al., 2009). While critiquing the student's work, the supervisor should be considerate and avoid negative criticism, but at the same time provide honest feedback to the student (James & Baldwin, 1999). These qualities are important for achieving a successful student-supervisor relationship in postgraduate studies (Abiddin et al., 2009).

2.4.3 Being a doctoral student

A doctoral student has several responsibilities to undertake in order to obtain the doctorate. The primary obligation of the doctoral student is to carry out the research (Zainal, 2007). The student is expected to drive the research process with the guidance of the supervisor (Phillips & Pugh, 2000). This requires the doctoral student to develop and embrace self-directness in the research process (Zainal, 2007). Lessing and Schulze (2003) state that the research student should show dedicated effort to gain the skills that are required in the process of knowledge

production and writing of the thesis. The research skills, which have been elaborated in the earlier sections (see section 2.3), are fundamental techniques that need to be mastered by research students (Lessing & Schulze, 2003).

It is the responsibility of the doctoral student to own the research project (Abiddin et al., 2009). The student should have a strong commitment to explore the literature on the research topic. He/she should also demonstrate the willingness to read and critique the recommended texts and other relevant materials (McAlpine & Nortion, 2006). It is paramount for the doctoral students to have a deep interest in their research topics which they identified and developed themselves with the supervisor's guidance (Hodza, 2007). The students should also make effort to understand the scope of the PhD, which may include the expected period of completion for part time and full-time study and the necessary expertise for carrying out the research. (Abiddin et al., 2009).

A research student is required to attend and participate in seminars, conferences and workshops with the help of their supervisors (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). Participating in research training opportunities is important in the development of research students (McAlpine & Nortion, 2006). Such academic forums are avenues that present several ways of doing research (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). It is advisable for research students to see the research journey as professional development and as such, they should be ready to work with their supervisors and write papers for publication which they can present in the academic forums (Abiddin et al., 2009).

The doctoral student also has the responsibility to network with other experienced researchers (Zainal, 2007). Apart from working with the supervisor, the research student should network with other experienced researchers and fellow research students working in the same field of study (Phillips & Pugh, 2000). Working with other researchers offers a greater support during

the research process (Abiddin et al., 2009). It enables the research student to learn new knowledge and skills from experienced researchers and from other research students (Lessing & Schulze, 2003).

2.4.4 Conducive environment for the student-supervisor relationship

A successful student-supervisor relationship requires a conducive environment where the student and the supervisor work together in harmony (Hodza, 2007). Hodza outlines that a conducive environment is where the research student is dedicated to the working relationship and the supervisor also shows undivided concern for the student. This ensures that a positive and a productive relationship between the student and the supervisor is maintained. Undivided concern refers to a situation where the supervisor cares about the students and attends to their needs in the research process (Shariff, Ramli & Ahmad, 2014). When the needs of a student are not attended to, it creates an environment of blame and disagreement between the student and the supervisor. Such a situation breaks the focus of the research process and strains the student-supervisor relationship (Shariff et al., 2014). The doctoral student should be ready also to reciprocate to the supervisor's concerns by heeding their advice (Jones, 2013), this promotes a healthy working relationship.

Scholars have also found that consistent rules and procedures create an orderly environment for the student-supervisor relationship (Halse & Malfroy, 2010; Hodza, 2007). The rules and regulations are crucial in the cultivation of a firm and fruitful student-supervisor relationship. Supervisors should stand by the institutional and negotiated rules and procedures when dealing with the students (Petersen, 2007). They should not apply the rules in a manner that suits their own interests and programmes (Halse & Malfroy, 2010). It is also important to note that all students should be treated equally and fairly with the same rules and procedures without any discrimination (Shariff et al., 2014). When all students are treated equally, fairly and with

justice using the same rules and procedures, then positive attitudes and relationships are fostered, which will facilitate positive interaction between the supervisor and the student (Shariff et al., 2014).

Watt and Chiappetta (2011) identify the understanding of responsibilities as crucial in creating a conducive environment for the student-supervisor relationship. It is necessary for the student and the supervisor to understand and take up their responsibilities in the relationship (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). Clearly, both the supervisor and the research student carry the responsibility of creating and sustaining a suitable environment that enhances a good working relationship (Jones, 2013). Even though there are some common duties and responsibilities for both the student and the supervisor, there are also some specific roles for each of them. Institutions place different duties and responsibilities on the supervisor and the student and as such a healthy relationship is achieved when both perform their part of the research task in a harmonious way (Bourhis, 2014).

A conducive environment for the student-supervisor relationship needs to be set from the beginning of the study (James & Gabrielle, 1999). This involves getting the right student and supervisor partnership (Litalien, 2015). The appropriate match between the student and the supervisor can be achieved when the student is given an opportunity to choose the supervisor (James & Baldwin, 1999). The student should consult and negotiate with the prospective supervisor to explore their interests and set a stage for a productive working relationship (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). They should establish a rapport that enables them to communicate freely and work comfortably for the success of the research project (Litalien, 2015).

2.4.5 Expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

Expectations refer to the student and the supervisor's anticipations of the student-supervisor relationship during the research process. Students and supervisors have several expectations of

their relationship during the research period. This section outlines the expectations of doctoral students and their supervisors in the student-supervisor relationship.

2.4.5.1 Doctoral students' expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

Doctoral students have a lot of expectations of their relationship with their supervisors. The expectations concern progressing well throughout the period of the study. This could vary at certain points, as each student has unique needs and personality.

Candidates joining the doctoral programme expect to receive an induction to the institution and the programme (Pole, Sprukkereef, Burges & Lakin, 2006). Even though there are handbooks or induction programmes provided by universities to candidates joining the doctoral programme, many students expect their supervisors to give advice about the formal requirements of the entire doctoral process (Spear, 2000). They expect that this should be part of the basic orientation into the institution. Students look at their supervisor as the principal link to the faculty, and as such, they expect them to provide an induction into the institution and the faculty requirements (Ali, Watson & Dhingra, 2016; Cadman, 2010). Supervisors can save students a lot of time and expenses by making sure that they are inducted into the general processes of conducting the research. This involves induction into the departmental policies and availability of resources for fieldwork. It may also include the ethical clearance and timeframes or procedures for extension of the study period and other concerns throughout the study (Spear, 2000).

Choosing the research topic is a major problem to many students enrolling for doctoral studies. Most of the doctoral students usually expect their supervisors to guide them in choosing the research topic (Nulty et al., 2009). They look forward to their supervisors to advise them on a topic that is of sufficient intellectual depth and can be researched within the timeframes prescribed by the university (Friedrich-Nell & Mackinnon, 2014). It is prudent for supervisors

to advise students on appropriate topics and the anticipated time that it could take to research that particular topic (Friedrich-Nell & Mackinnon, 2014; Nulty et al., 2009). This is crucial because some funding agencies make it a requirement, or encourage timely completion of doctoral studies (McCallin & Shoba, 2012).

Doctoral students have also indicated that they expect direction and guidance from their supervisors on what the PhD entails (Gill & Burnard, 2008; Pole et al., 2006). In a study by Pole et al. (2006) doctoral students were asked directly what they expected from their supervisor during their research. Most of the students admitted that they knew very little about the PhD and its requirements. While explaining their uncertainty and confusion, many of the students' major expectation from the supervisors was direction and clear guidance (Pole et al., 2006). They look to their supervisors to provide direction for the learning process, especially on specific tasks to be undertaken and how to do them (Gill & Burnard, 2008). A student interviewed in Pole et al.'s study, stated "I expect my supervisor to direct me and tell me to do absolutely everything" (Pole et al., p. 53). Students seem to depend on their supervisors during their PhD studies, they believe that their supervisors are very knowledgeable and that they know a lot about their areas of study and thus rely on them for guidance (Ali et al., 2016; Gill & Burnard, 2008).

McClure (2005) argues that PhD students would like their supervisors to show interest in their research projects. When both the student and the supervisor have a common interest in the research topic, it promotes an exchange of ideas resulting in a generally supportive and productive research environment (Dixon & Hanks, 2010). It also appears that if supervisors show interest in the student's work, they inspire them to work smartly in their research projects (McClure, 2005). Some supervisors have little or no interest in the students' work, instead,

they tend to give a higher priority and interest to their own research work compared to the students' research projects (McClure, 2005).

Nita (2015) found that students expect to have regular contact with their supervisors during their study period. Erratic or infrequent contact with supervisors is one of the complaints that is common among doctoral students (Nita, 2015). This is due to the busy schedules of supervisors who have other responsibilities like teaching, administration, or many students to supervise or even engaged with other tasks outside the university (Spear, 2000; Nita, 2015). Smallwood (2004) argues that some supervisors seem to consider students they supervise as an afterthought where students are tolerated rather than given priority. This is a problem which is experienced by some PhD students leading to dissatisfaction in the relationship (Smallwood, 2004). In an effort to solve this problem, some universities have established a formal requirement for regular meetings between students and supervisors, as well as arranging how the student will be supervised if the supervisor is away for some time (Spear, 2000).

Students look to their supervisors to provide timely and constructive criticism of their written drafts (Sayed, Kruss & Badat, 2006). Most students have complained that their supervisors are slow in reading the submitted work (Galt, 2013). According to Galt (2013) some supervisors take a lot of time to read and give feedback on the students' work. Furthermore, it is the expectation of many students that supervisors provide critical feedback (Sayed et al., 2006). The supervisors' critique is an important factor that provides a blend of ideas to strengthen the student's research project (James & Gabrielle, 1999). However, it is important that the critique should not become destructive or discourage the student (James & Gabrielle, 1999).

While also looking at timely feedback, Grant (2005) realised that whenever students sent their written drafts to the supervisors, they wait for the feedback with anxiety. During this time of anxiety and waiting, students rarely do anything constructive to add to their work (Grant, 2005;

Galt, 2013). It is the feedback that enables them to progress. Ali et al. (2016) note that supervisors should consider students' expectations and provide appropriate feedback on time. When the feedback is given on time, it has a tremendous potential for enhancing learning (Galt, 2013). It can allay the student's anxiety and strengthen their conviction that they are heading in a successful direction (Ali et al., 2016; Grant, 2005).

Students also expect their supervisors to provide them with adequate materials for learning during the research process (Malfroy, 2005; Sayed et al., 2006). Provision of literature materials on the field of study is crucial for the student in developing their thesis (Sayed et al., 2006). Students expect that their supervisors will expose them to a variety of learning materials and academic forums like seminars and conferences, which offer appropriate and special avenues for intellectual development (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). Many students would consider their participation in major conferences as critical opportunities for their academic development (Lessing & Schulze, 2003).

There is also an expectation by students that their supervisors should advise and negotiate with them in respect of any joint publication during or at the end of the doctoral study (James & Gabrielle, 1999; Sambrook, Stewart & Roberts, 2008). For any given publication, it is important to recognise the contribution of both the research student and the supervisor (James & Gabrielle, 1999). A dissatisfaction among some doctoral students is the failure to recognise their contribution to the research done during their doctoral work (Friedrick-Nel & Mackinnon, 2014). In some cases, supervisors have presented the student's work in academic forums without due credit to the student (Spear, 2000). In other instances, the supervisor's input could be insignificant but his/her name has been inserted into the publication while the student has been excluded despite the enormous contribution (Spear, 2000).

Students also look to their supervisors to provide some pastoral care, where the supervisor not only provides academic advice but also advice on student's personal challenges (Schulze, 2012). It is important for supervisors to be sympathetic and be ready to help students with their personal problems (McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Schulze, 2012). Some supervisors however believe that they should not get into the personal challenges of their students (Spear, 2000) as it might do more harm than good to the student. They argue that it is advisable for the supervisor to refer the student to the specialised units within the university like the counselling department, where the students can discuss their personal problems (Schulze, 2012).

2.4.5.2 Supervisor expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

Supervisors have several expectations from their students regarding the student-supervisor relationship, this pertains to the doctoral students being in a position to carry out their research and completing their studies.

Friedrick-Nel and Mackinnon (2014) found that supervisors expect the doctoral students to be self-motivated and have the qualities that promote the student-supervisor relationship for the success of the research. The qualities expected of the students include being problem solvers, disciplined, innovative, motivated and comfortable in discussing their own issues with their supervisors (Friedrick-Nel & Mackinnon, 2014; Halse, 2011). Supervisors believe that students with these qualities are able to work independently and produce quality work with minimal guidance from their supervisors (Adkins, 2009).

Supervisors expect that doctoral students should be in a position to come up with the research problem, formulate the research question and design the methodology (Halse, 2011). Once the student has produced the first draft, supervisors take the responsibility to guide and shape the research project (Halse, 2011). In addition, the supervisor also requires that doctoral students should be ready to read widely and explore the relevant literature on the research problem at

hand (Litalien, 2015). They also expect the doctoral students to become independent and mature researchers who are able to carry out the research on their own (Phillips & Pugh, 2000).

Most supervisors look forward to working with doctoral students who make efforts to publish their research (Abiddin et al., 2009). Even though many institutions expect doctoral candidates to publish one or two articles before graduation, it is also the expectation of some supervisors that their students publish their research (Abiddin et al., 2009; Friedrick-Nel & Mackinnon, 2014). Many supervisors tend to work with their students to publish some articles which they can present in academic meetings like conferences and workshops (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). This is important in training the doctoral students to be able to develop research ideas and disseminate it, as part of career development (Abiddin et al., 2009). The hard working students usually exceed the expectation of one or two articles and they graduate with several publications (Abiddin et al., 2009).

The majority of supervisors want their students to complete their theses within the expected time in order to obtain their degree (Litalien, 2015; Pole et al., 2006). To achieve this, supervisors expect the students to be dedicated and committed during the research process. Many supervisors are proud of students who put effort into their work (Ali et al., 2016; Litalien, 2015). With the supervisor support, the hardworking students tend to progress faster and complete their research projects on time (Pole et al., 2006). Supervisors also would like students to accept criticism and feedback on their drafts as this minimises conflict and aids progress to completion of the studies (Pole et al., 2006).

2.4.6 Experiences of the student-supervisor relationship

Experiences, in this context refer to what doctoral students and supervisors encounter in the student-supervisor relationship. This section outlines the experiences of the doctoral students and the supervisors in the student-supervisor relationship.

2.4.6.1 Doctoral students' experiences of the student-supervisor relationship

Doctoral students have varied experiences of their doctoral studies depending on the nature of the student-supervisor relationship. Most researchers agree that a close working relationship between the student and the supervisor is central to the completion of the study (Grevholm, Pearson & Wall, 2005; Lovitts, 2001; Grant & Graham, 1999). Compared to other educational relationships, the student-supervisor relationship can make or break the students' success and career for life if it is not properly managed (Grevholm et al., 2005). In this section I refer to pleasant and unpleasant experiences encountered by the doctoral students.

Krauss and Ismi (2010) noted that students sometimes experience discontent in their relationship with their supervisors. This happens mostly when students have a poor relationship with their supervisors. These authors identified three main causes of student discontent in the student-supervisor relationship, namely, personality factors, professional factors and organisational factors. Personality factors may include interpersonal differences or a personality clash between the student and the supervisor. Professional factors that may cause discontent could be a supervisor who is misinformed on the research topic or who has different research interests to that of the student. Lastly, organisational factors such as the supervisor having too many competing responsibilities or too many students may lead to less attention to the student and as such, the student may feel neglected (Krauss & Ismi, 2010). Such experiences of discontent may lead to failure in completing the PhD (Lovitts, 2001). Students with feelings of discontent in the relationship may choose to drop out or discontinue their studies (Grevholm et al., 2005; Zainal, 2007).

Some students described their relationship with their supervisors as a frustrating experience (Sayed et al., 2006). In the study by Krauss and Ismi (2010) which explored student experiences in the student-supervisor relationship, some doctoral students pointed out frustrating experiences where their supervisors suppressed their opinions, or rejected their work

with unpleasant comments, even when such arose from supervisor suggestions. There are also instances in some relationships where students have been compelled to change their supervisors due to frequent disagreements with their supervisors (Grevholm et al., 2005). In spite of the difficulties, many doctoral students do their best to produce a good piece of work that would impress their supervisor (Sayed et al., 2006).

Morris (2011) outlines the negative critiques experienced by doctoral students in their relationship with their supervisors. According to Morris (2011) some supervisors treat their students with a dictatorial and commanding attitude. Participants in Morris's study narrated how their supervisors talk to them in a demeaning way, dismissing their ideas and rarely acknowledging the good work they were doing (Morris, 2011). Some students have reported how their supervisors express anger towards them by condemning or shouting at them or even yelling at them in front of others to publicly humiliate them (Morris, 2011; Smallwood, 2004; Zainal, 2007). While referring to the humiliation critics, one of the students in Morris' study said "I had my PhD from hell" (Morris, 2011, p. 551).

The power dynamic in the student-supervisor relationship is perceived to be unequal (Grant, 2003). Several scholars (Grant, 2005; Grant, 2003; Morris, 2011) have highlighted experiences of power-struggles between the PhD students and their supervisors. Students have reported bitter feelings of powerlessness in the student-supervisor relationship (Grant, 2003). The power relationship plays a key role in the success of the doctoral student, as well as the satisfaction of the student in the relationship (Grant, 2005). While the relationship between two professionals can occur on an equal basis, the relationship between the student and the supervisor is seen to be 'a teacher-student relationship' and therefore being unequal (Wubbels & Mieke, 2006). Negative experiences in the power relationship can have a profound impact on the student's

research productivity (Grevholm et al., 2005). If the power relationship is not properly managed, it may lead to delay or non-completion of the PhD (Grant, 2005).

Doctoral students have also expressed their experiences of confusion and unrealistic workload demands from their supervisors (McClure, 2005). Some students are left by their supervisors to work on their own while others do not receive the advice they expect from their supervisors and as such students feel abandoned and confused (Grevholm et al., 2005; Smallwood, 2004). Other students have expressed how their supervisors placed unrealistic deadlines for submission of their written chapters during their candidature. They described working long hours, even spending sleepless nights and working during the weekend to meet their supervisors' demands (McClure, 2005).

Bullying is a bad experience that PhD students have complained about in their studies (Lewis, 2004; Morris 2011). Students have reported situations where their supervisors unload their workload pressures on them in the form of insults, intimidations and other forms of bullying (Lewis, 2004; Smallwood, 2004). Unlike the university staff who are protected from staff bullying, research students are not protected by any law in the university and as such, they are vulnerable to any kind of supervisory bullying (Lewis, 2004). Some scholars have grouped doctoral supervisory bullying behaviours into five categories, namely; "threat to professional status, threat to personal standing, isolation, overworking and destabilization" (Morris, 2011, pp. 547-548). Threat to professional status involves humiliations like accusations regarding lack of effort while threat to personal standing can be insults, intimidation and name-calling. Isolation may be in the form of withholding of information or preventing access to opportunities; overworking involves undue pressure and impossible deadlines while destabilisation is failing to give credit when due and repeated reminders of blunders (Morris,

2011). Students experiencing supervisory bullying may take longer to complete their studies, while others may drop out due to humiliations (Lewis, 2004).

Even though many PhD graduates have described going through unpleasant experiences in their studies, many others hold a different view. Some graduates have expressed a positive experience in the student-supervisor relationship (Cadman, 2010; Grevholm et al., 2005; Halse, 2011). They reported that their supervisors offered different comments which gave them direction in their work and enabled them to do their best. Others noted that, even though their supervisors were too busy, they created time to meet with them and discuss their work (Ali et al., 2016; Malfroy, 2005). A study in an Australian university by Cadman (2010) found that students have varied views on their experiences with the supervisors. Some students paid tribute to the commitment of their supervisors, acknowledging their supervisors as guides and mentors. They appreciated having learned many things they had not been aware of through their interaction with the supervisors (Cadman, 2010). These students showed strong attachment to their supervisors by using words like “especially my supervisor”, “I am grateful of my supervisor”, “I got this from my supervisor” (Cadman, 2010, p. 483).

Different cultural backgrounds are another aspect within supervision that supervisors have to acknowledge. This was evident from a study of McClure (2005) when he interviewed postgraduate students of Chinese origin who had newly enrolled for their studies in Singapore. The study found that culture-based differences brought a unique challenge in supervising international students or students of different races and cultures within a nation. The students go through an experience of adjustment and are challenged to fit into the new system (Son & Park, 2014). According to Guerin, Picard and Green (2014) it is advisable to appoint a local mentor or supervisors with intercultural competence who can work well with students of different cultural origin. There is need for supervisors to be intellectually and culturally flexible

in order to accommodate the expectations of different students with different cultural backgrounds (Guerin, 2014).

A study by Backhouse et al. (2015) also gives some insight into the student experiences with their supervisors. In this study, students told stories of experiences with their supervisors who were in the same discipline and the same department, but had widely differing opinions of what the PhD students must do, how they must do it and what the supervisors' role is in the process. Even though there is no set formula for successful supervision, supervisors need to be aware of students' concerns (James & Baldwin, 1999; Ungadi et al., 2015), this enables them to become more mindful of their interaction with the students and hence work towards improving the student-supervisor relationship.

2.4.6.2 Supervisor experiences of the supervisory process

Supervision is a learning experience for both the supervisor and the student as many supervisors admit that they learn a great deal from their students during the supervision process (Firth & Martens, 2008; Jones, 2013; Radloff, 2010). The interaction with each new student affords an opportunity for different experiences which also enhances the learning experience. This involves expanding their knowledge in the specific field of study (Radloff, 2010). Topics presented by doctoral students can be so specific that it is difficult to find a supervisor whose own research encompasses a student-generated research problem (Halse, 2011). However, the student's research problem provides an opportunity for the supervisor to explore the new field with the student and get a deeper understanding thereof, as well as comparing it to his/her own field of research and that of others (Halse, 2011; Radloff, 2010).

Supervision has its rewards and difficulties for the supervisor (Cadman, 2010). Supervisors are sometimes faced with the difficulty of supervising lazy and non-committed students (Cadman, 2010). Some supervisors describe situations where their students have failed to cope with

extensive reading which is required of the doctoral students in order to understand the literature of the topic at hand (Cadman, 2010; Radloff, 2010). It seems that doctoral students with low confidence levels are unable to carry out their research even with the efforts of the supervisor to assist them (Phillips & Pugh, 2000). It is however encouraging and rewarding when supervisors work with students who are eager to learn and explore new areas in research (Radloff, 2010).

Supervisors have experienced situations where students behave as if the research project belonged to the supervisor (Halse, 2011; Hodza, 2007). There are several occasions when students wait to be pushed by their supervisor in order to do their work. Some students do not make an effort to meet their supervisors for consultation, instead, it is the supervisor who takes the responsibility to call the student (Adkins, 2009). This can be attributed to the student's background where the student believes that it is the teacher who should monitor students' performance (Halse, 2011). It is therefore necessary for doctoral students to take responsibility and monitor their own performance. They should approach their supervisors to seek advice on how to improve their research project (Hodza, 2007).

Postgraduate supervision provides an opportunity to many supervisors to accomplish joint tasks with their doctoral students (Abiddin et al., 2009). Writing joint articles with students is an experience that has been appreciated by many supervisors (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). These supervisors may not have had time to write the articles on their own. It is common in institutions of higher learning to find supervisors establishing friendship with the students as well as intellectual companionship (Malfroy, 2005). The collaboration between the doctoral student and the supervisor offers strong mutual support as they can encourage each other to explore more in the scholarly world (Lessing & Schulze, 2003).

2.4.7 Negotiating the student-supervisor relationship

Negotiation is a process in which the student and the supervisor come together to discuss some issues concerning the research project. Every communication between the student and the supervisor involves some form of negotiation (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). It is a continuous process in which the student and the supervisor agree on how to work at every stage of the research project (Gurr, 2005). Several scholars (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011; Gurr, 2005; Grant, 2005; James & Baldwin, 1999) argue that lack of negotiation in the student-supervisor relationship may lead to misunderstanding and hence a poor relationship between the student and the supervisor.

The process of negotiating the student-supervisor relationship is an important step in postgraduate supervision that should start at the beginning of the doctoral study (Bozeman & Feenay, 2007; Gurr, 2005). Negotiating the relationship early at the beginning of the research creates a sound foundation on which both the student and the supervisor can build that relationship over time (Gurr, 2005). It sets the stage for potential success and a long-term relationship which enables the student to complete the research project on time (Bozeman & Feenay, 2007). The supervisor and the student should be forthright to discuss all the issues of the academic relationship at this stage. Watt and Chiappetta (2011) argue that a clear negotiated relationship at the beginning of the project appears to prevent years of frustration between the student and the supervisor.

One of the paramount issues that need to be negotiated is the contribution of both the student and the supervisor in the relationship (Grant, 2005). The student-supervisor relationship should be a partnership in which both the student and the supervisor negotiate and re-negotiate their respective contributions to the research project (Pearson & Brew, 2002). This prevents feelings of dissatisfaction in the relationship (Pearson & Brew, 2002). Students commonly complain

that supervisors are not doing their part (Sambrook et al., 2008). Grant (2005) observes that supervisors should appreciate that students derive power from their legitimate positions as clients and thus, they evaluate their supervisor's contribution. It is therefore important for the student and the supervisors to negotiate their level of contribution to the study (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011).

The frequency and the manner in which consultations occur need to be negotiated in the student-supervisor relationship (Detsky & Baerlocher, 2007). There should be a properly managed engagement between the student and the supervisor (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). Students can sometimes find themselves lonely in an erratic relationship where their supervisors are busy and unavailable for consultation (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). It is therefore important for the student and the supervisor to negotiate the frequency of meetings and the way consultations are to be done in the relationship. This gives the student an opportunity to work progressively and harmoniously with the supervisor (Detsky & Baerlocher, 2007).

It is also necessary for the student and the supervisor to negotiate on the academic writing and the time frame for submission of drafts and feedback (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). There should be a negotiated time frame on the frequency of submission of drafts of written work and a time frame of feedback by the supervisor. This provides direction to the student on what to do at a particular time for a specific period of time before moving to the next aspect. It also enables the supervisor to provide timely feedback (Bozeman & Feenay, 2007). Negotiation on the students' style of academic writing should also be done to enable the student and the supervisor to agree on the quality of written work and the extent of the role of the supervisor in editing the student's work (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011).

Negotiating the balance of power is a key issue in a student-supervisor relationship (Grant, 2005; Manathunga, 2007). Power has been defined by Manathunga (2007) as doing what it takes to get others to do what you want and avoid doing what you do not want. Grant (2003) found that in most tertiary institutions, the power of the supervisor and the student is not equally constructed. Typically, the supervisor is perceived to be an established researcher who is highly experienced in a certain field of study while the student is seen as inexperienced and overwhelmed by the research (Grant, 2003). Grant (2005) differs from this point of view and believes that power should be negotiated between the student and the supervisor. According to Grant (2005) students also have expertise power in their personal knowledge and experience together with their developing scholarly knowledge in the field of study, as well as their legitimate position as university clients seeking advice and training.

According to Pearson and Brew (2002) supervisors should enable students to exercise their power in the relationship. Manathunga (2007) argues that the most important aspect of power that is often overlooked is empowerment, which is gaining power by giving it away. Grant (2006) is of the opinion that enabling a sense of agency in the student is the mark of a successful supervisor. Pearson and Brew (2002) point out that if the goal of supervision is to facilitate a student to become a scholar and an independent professional in their field, then enabling students to increasingly exercise their power as successfully functioning researchers is a strategic indicator of good supervisory practice.

Due to the inherent differences in power and authority between the student and the supervisor, it is advisable that the supervisor is the one to initiate negotiations (Gurr, 2005). Despite the power difference, it is essential for the student and the supervisor to be frank and open on issues being negotiated in the relationship (Petersen, 2007). The issues that seem obvious to the supervisor may not be so obvious to the student and this can constrain the relationship

(Gurr, 2005). Negotiations between the student and the supervisor can be challenging, however, openness and clarification of issues during negotiation forms the basis for regular communication and provides direction in the working relationship between the student and the supervisor (Petersen, 2007).

Negotiation is not complete before the student and the supervisor openly discusses the manner in which differences in ideology or opinion will be managed (James & Baldwin, 1999). The student and the supervisor have different personalities, opinions, beliefs and ideologies and it is therefore expected that differences can arise during the study period (James & Baldwin, 1999). There are several causes of differences between the student and the supervisor as discussed earlier in this chapter. It is therefore necessary to have a negotiated way of managing the differences between the student and the supervisor (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011).

2.4.8 Perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies

Doctoral students have different perceptions on what entails a successful completion of doctoral studies. Graduates who have completed their doctoral studies successfully can attribute their success to several factors. These factors are important for consideration in establishing a successful student-supervisor relationship. In this section I focussed on the students' perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies.

Studies by several scholars (Lessing & Schulze, 2003; Manathunga, 2007; Mouton, 2001; Wright, 2003) provide insight into the doctoral students' perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship. These studies revealed that most doctoral students would attribute their success to the guidance of their supervisors. The students referred to the mentorship by their supervisors as the most rewarding aspect of their relationship (Manathunga, 2007; Mouton, 2001). Their

perceptions pointed to a positive relationship with their supervisors which would contribute to their success (Mouton, 2001; Wright, 2003). The doctoral graduates in Lessing and Schulze's (2003) study appreciated the guidance of their supervisors as the driving force that motivated them to successfully write their thesis and complete their doctoral studies. They referred to their supervisors as doing their work efficiently to provide direction and guidance for the success of the research project (Lessing & Schulze, 2003).

A close working relationship that is characterised by frequent meetings and contact between the student and the supervisor has been perceived by many successful PhD graduates as key to successful completion of doctoral studies (Manathunga, 2007). Several scholars agree that regular meetings between the student and the supervisor are some of the most important ways of maintaining progress and a good supervisory relationship (Gill & Burned, 2008; Lessing & Schulze, 2003; Manathunga, 2007). Such meetings provide important opportunities to discuss progress, identify and address problems and explore new ideas. The frequency and duration of meetings will probably vary throughout the study according to the students' needs (Gill & Burned, 2008). Meetings are usually more frequent at the beginning and at the end of the study (Manathunga, 2007). Doctoral graduates refer to these meetings as a source of direction and guidance, most of the meetings being structured in such a way that if any work is to be discussed in the meeting, the student sends the work in advance to give the supervisor sufficient time to read and comment before the meeting (Gill & Burned, 2008).

Timely feedback and positive critique play a big role in the completion of doctoral studies (Grant, 2005; Sayed et al., 2006; Wright, 2003). Many successful doctoral graduates hold the perception that they managed to complete their studies within the expected time because their supervisors provided quick and timely feedback (Martin, 2014). Quick turnover time on chapters submitted encourages students to move faster to the next chapter without losing focus

(Wright, 2003). Apart from timely feedback, doctoral graduates refer to constructive critique from their supervisors as a valuable factor which contributed to their success (Sayed et al., 2006). Positive critique enhances learning and promotes a steady progress of the research student (Sayed et al., 2006).

A relationship where students and supervisors work in a cohort seems also to promote successful completion of doctoral studies (Bista & Cox, 2014). It is perceived by many doctoral graduates that learning communities which encompass students and supervisors in the cohort enables individual students to achieve their goal of completing their studies within the expected time (Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood & Wright-porter, 2011). The cohort involves a group of doctoral students and their supervisors working together as a team to assist one another during the research process (Botha, 2014). Doctoral graduates who learned in cohorts have observed that the cohort relationship is the main catalyst that promoted their success (Bista & Cox, 2014). Students and supervisors in the cohort have the opportunity to interact and share ideas and expertise that go a long way to promote the success of research students (De Lange et al., 2011).

Another perception is that some doctoral postgraduates believe that they completed their studies because of managing to cope with challenges in the student-supervisor relationship (McClure, 2005; Mouton, 2001). This is a common perception among graduates who encountered a negative relationship with their supervisors and therefore, they choose to accept the situation as a way of managing their poor relationship with their supervisors (McClure, 2005). They adapt to the nature of the relationship to enable them to progress and complete the research project despite the challenges (Zainal, 2007). Many doctoral graduates believe that students cannot always get what they want from their supervisors and as such they must be flexible and adjust to any kind of supervision in order to succeed (Zainal, 2007).

Doctoral graduates also attribute their success to positive encouragements in the relationship (Schulze, 2012; Mouton, 2001). They have the perception that positive motivational comments from their supervisors gave them the courage to work smartly and complete their studies within the expected time (Mouton, 2001). They described their supervisors as understanding and as a source of motivation (Lessing & Schulze, 2003), as such, this encouraged them to work extra hard towards their success. Most graduates would appreciate comments from their supervisors like “good luck in your studies; wish you well’ (Schulze, 2012, p. 5). Students believe that such comments might look minor but they provide the emotional support that enables them to regain their composure and the energy to work and complete their research projects (Schulze, 2012). Such perceptions indicate that supervisors should provide support through encouragement and motivation to promote successful completion of doctoral studies (Schulze, 2012).

2.5 TRENDS IN DOCTORAL STUDIES AND POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

Postgraduate supervision and particularly supervision of doctoral students have recently become a topic of great discussion in national and international academic communities (Jones, 2013). The main issues of discussion are how to achieve quality supervision and improve the completion rate of doctoral studies.

Models of supervision have changed over time. In most African countries, it appears that the traditional "apprenticeship" model of supervision is still dominant (Grant, 2014). This model of supervision has a long history and has served as an important vehicle of intellectual inheritance between generations (McCallin & Shoba, 2012). However, the traditional model is no longer seen as the only model of supervision (Grant, 2014). There are new models of supervision like the cohort supervision model and the co-supervision model which are taking shape today

(Grant, 2014). This can probably be attributed to the attempts to improve the quality of supervision and achieve a higher completion rate of doctoral studies (Grant, 2014).

Information and communication technology (ICT) has created a new way of supervision which is seen in the ICT-related supervision models, one of which is the blended model (De Beer & Mason, 2009). A key role of the supervisor in this model is to direct the student to important sources of information, which the student can access via the internet and libraries, after which the supervisor evaluates what the student has learned from the resources (De Beer & Mason, 2009) and has presented in writing in the developing thesis. Though there are fewer face-to-face consultations between the student and the supervisor, the model seems to present an impersonal way of supervision and thus its biggest limitation is a lack of personal touch between the student and the supervisor (De Beer & Mason, 2009). One cannot read the facial expressions and the body language cues as in face-to-face communication (De Beer & Mason, 2009). Nevertheless, the era of technology has indeed opened up ways to do doctoral supervision in spite of the doctoral student and supervisor being far away from each other.

There is increased funding for doctoral studies today in several countries (Bhandari & Mirza, 2016). Many governments and other institutions are involved in funding doctoral students either by grants to universities or to individual students. Europe has several government-funded research councils which offer scholarships to PhD students, one such being the arts and humanities research council (Research Council UK, 2016). In Africa, there are grants and loans given by governments to postgraduate students, for instance in South Africa, the National Institute for the Humanities and Social sciences (NIHSS) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) provide funding for full-time PhDs (NIHSS, 2015; NRF, 2016). There are also regional scholarships like the Commonwealth scholarships for research students (Bhandari & Mirza, 2016).

There is a need to strengthen postgraduate supervision in many institutions of higher learning today (Moloney, 2016). This is evident from the increased workshops on postgraduate supervision (Graduate research school, University of Western Australia, 2017). The main aim of the workshops is to offer innovative courses that provide the support needed by the academics as they handle the complex role of postgraduate supervision (Moloney, 2016). The courses focus on a range of issues of postgraduate supervision like the student-supervisor relationship and approaches to supervision practice (Moloney, 2016).

Another trend is the focus on increasing the number of publications to be produced by a doctoral student before graduating (Sloan, 2013). Some universities today are either encouraging or making it a requirement for the doctoral student to produce at least two publications before graduating (Sloan, 2013). The publications ought to be submitted to internationally accredited peer-reviewed journals. This is one way of improving the quality of doctoral research in higher education (Sloan, 2013).

Earning a PhD by publication is also increasingly becoming popular (Frick, 2016). A doctoral student is required to submit a number of published papers, presented as a coherent whole with an introductory and concluding chapter, instead of a single thesis (Sigaram, 2013; Willis & Cowton, 2011). The student should demonstrate evidence of originality in knowledge contribution within the discipline in the peer-reviewed articles (Frick, 2016; Willis, & Cowton, 2011). The supervisor's role is to provide guidance to the doctoral student, which includes guiding the student on the focus of publications to be submitted and ensuring the quality of the student's work (Singaram, 2013).

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An interpersonal perspective was utilised as an interpretive lens to discuss the findings pertaining to supervision in terms of the relationship between the supervisor and doctoral

graduates in education who recently graduated. The interpersonal theory originated from Timothy Leary's (1957) research on interpersonal diagnosis of personality. Leary developed an interpersonal circumplex model which contained two intersecting dimensions, the influence (dominance-submission) and the affiliation (hate-love) dimensions. The two intersecting dimensions create four quadrants i.e. *dominant-hate*, *submissive-hate*, *dominant-love*, *submissive-love* (See Figure 2.1) and sixteen categories (indicated by letter A-to-P in the middle circle), which characterise patterns of interpersonal behaviour. The theory claims that the two dimensions underlie all social behaviour.

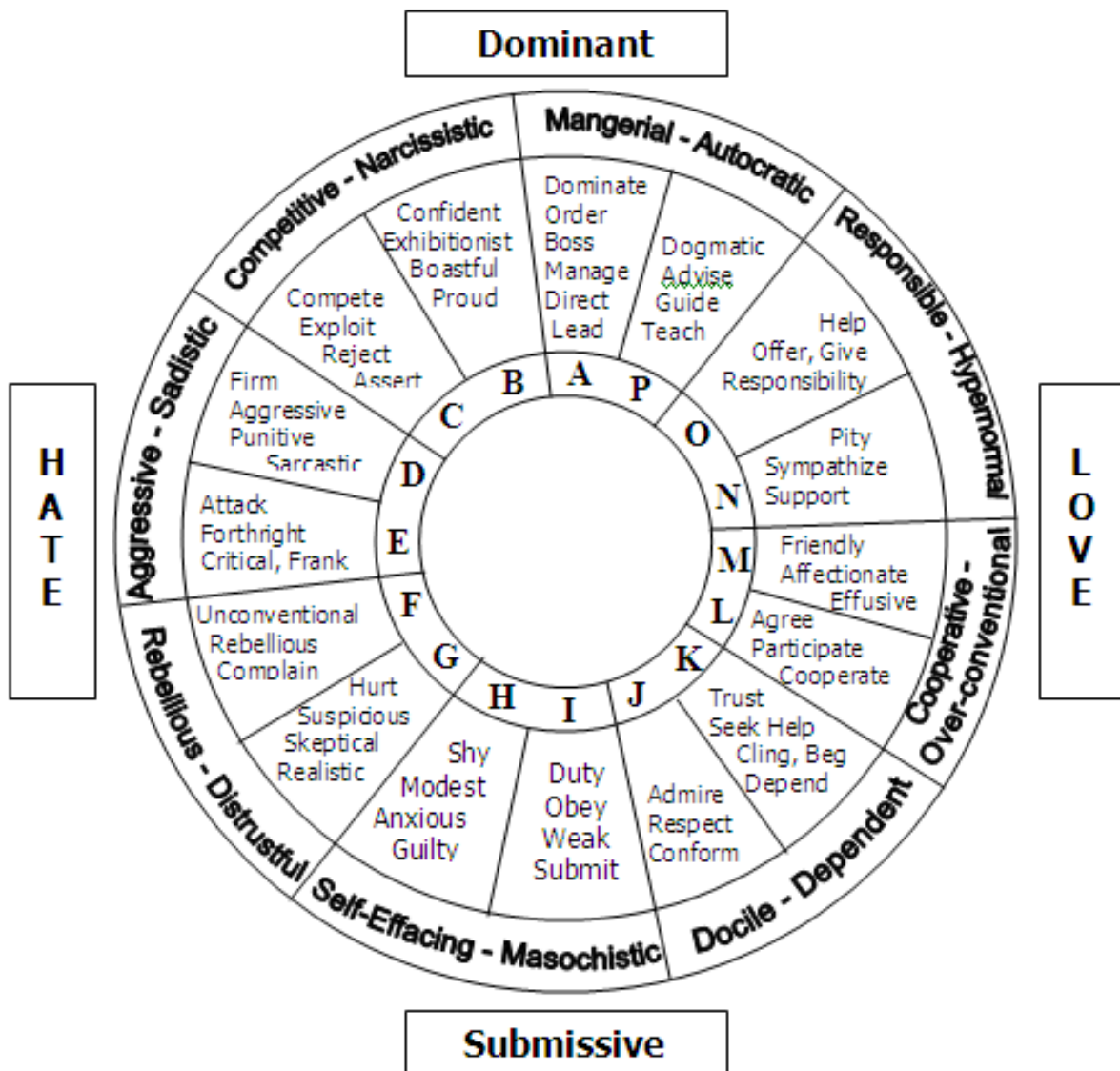


Figure 2.1: Circumplex model for interpersonal behaviour (Leary 1957, p. 65)

Leary's (1957) model was based on a psychological setting and has been widely investigated and proven effective. The model was adopted and modified for the education context by Wubbels and Mieke (2006) to analyse the teacher-student relationship and its effects on academic outcomes. Wubbels and Mieke's model was later adopted without any modification by Mainhard, Roeland, Tarkwijk and Wubbels (2009) to analyse the student-supervisor relationship in doctoral studies, they referred to it as the model for interpersonal supervisor behaviour. Figure 2.2 shows the modified model.

The model for interpersonal supervisor behaviour has two dimensions, that is, *influence* and *affiliation/proximity*. The *influence* dimension is a continuum that ranges from *dominance* to *submission*, it describes the extent to which a particular supervisor influences the student's activities. The *affiliation/proximity* dimension is also a continuum ranging from *opposition* to *cooperation*, it describes the emotional distance or interpersonal proximity between the supervisor and the student. The two dimensions underlie eight types of supervisor behaviour: leading, helping/friendly, understanding, giving students opportunity for independence, being uncertain, being dissatisfied, admonishing, being strict. Each of the behaviours can be described in terms of the two dimensions, for example: leadership contains a higher degree of influence (dominance) and some degree of affiliation (cooperation); uncertain behaviour is characterised by a low degree of influence (submission) and moderately low affiliation (opposition) while admonishing behaviour is characterised by some degree of influence (dominance) and a very low degree of affiliation (opposition)

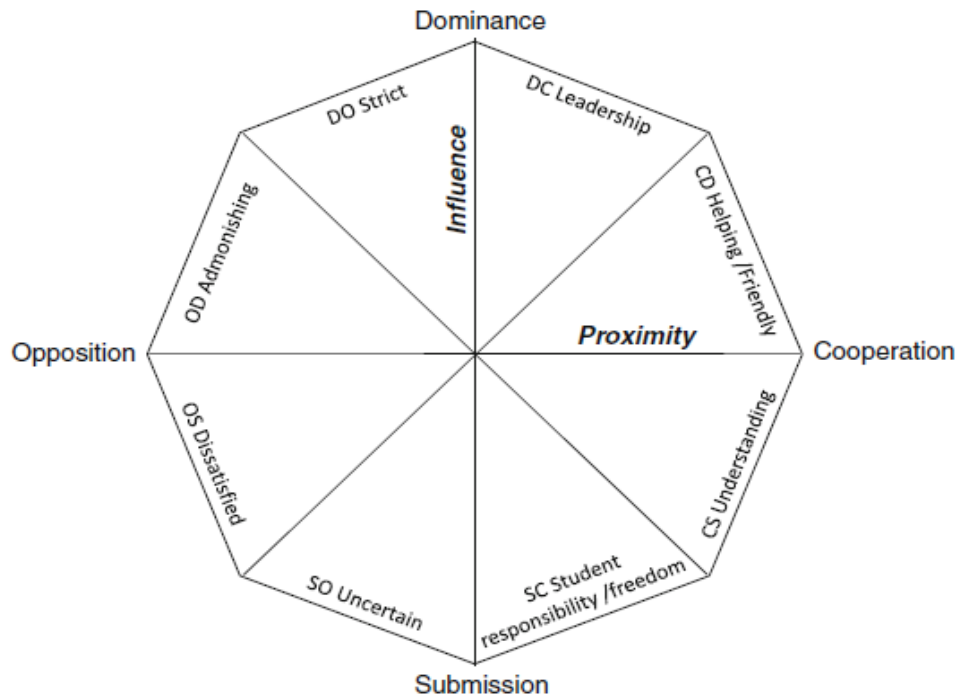


Figure 2.2: The model for interpersonal supervisor behaviour (Mainhard et al., 2009, p. 363), adopted from Wubbels and Mieke (2006)

This study therefore draws on the interpersonal supervisor behaviour model of Mainhard et al. (2009), adopted from Wubbels and Mieke (2006), to explain the nature of the student-supervisor relationship. The two dimensions and the eight types of supervisor behaviours were used to describe and frame the findings of each of the four sub-research questions.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have provided a theoretical perspective on the student-supervisor relationship in postgraduate studies. First I discussed the status of postgraduate studies from a global perspective before narrowing it down to sub-Saharan Africa and finally looking at the status specifically in South Africa and Kenya. I provided an overview of postgraduate supervision, and discussed supervision pedagogy and the nature of postgraduate supervision capturing the models and the approaches of supervision. I also looked into the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship of which I have highlighted several issues including being a supervisor and being a doctoral student. I outlined how the student-supervisor relationship is developed

and maintained as well as how it is part of a conducive environment for the relationship. I discussed the expectations and experiences of the student-supervisor relationship and also outlined the negotiations and student perceptions of success in the relationship. I also looked at the trends in doctoral studies and postgraduate supervision. Finally, I provided the theoretical framework I used to make meaning of the student-supervisor relationship in postgraduate studies. What became evident from the literature is that only a few studies like Hodza (2007) and Backhouse et al. (2015) have focused on the student-supervisor relationship in an African university setting, and this informed the focus of this study which aimed at exploring the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the completion of educational doctoral studies in two African Universities. The following chapter explains the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research design and methodology of the study. It outlines the research approach, the paradigm and the research design taken in the study, as well as providing the reasons for the choice and suitability of each in the study. In addition, the data generation methods, including the justification for the choice of the methods, as well as the procedures followed are also presented. Equally important, the sampling procedure, data analysis process, ensuring trustworthiness and ethical consideration are also indicated and elaborated upon.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach taken in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research aims at gathering rich descriptive data related to a particular phenomenon or context in order to develop an understanding of what is being studied (Creswell, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This explanation highlights three important terms in qualitative research, namely; descriptive, contextual and understanding the phenomena. According to Ochieng (2009) qualitative research depends on human experiences. This suggests that the researcher is not only concerned with the process but also the meaning derived from the generated data (Ochieng, 2009).

The strength of qualitative research is that issues can be explored in depth and in detail to provide an in-depth understanding of the study phenomena (Creswell, 2014). The data generated in qualitative research is dependent on human experience and as such, it is more convincing as compared to the data generated quantitatively (Creswell, 2014). However, Nieuwenhuis (2007) points out that one of the weaknesses of qualitative research is that it can

easily be influenced by the biases of the researcher. Since the researcher must be present in the process of generating the data, there is a possibility that the participants' responses could be influenced by his or her presence (Creswell, 2014).

The motivation for using a qualitative approach was the need to gain a deeper understanding of the research problem, which explores the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral education studies in African universities. As such, it appears that the research problem in this study could best be understood if the perceptions, expectations and experiences of those recently graduated in doctoral education studies could be explored through their own explanations.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is “a comprehensive belief system, a world view or a framework that guides research and practice in a field” (Willis, 2007, p. 8). As a systematic inquiry, any particular research study is underpinned by specific philosophical assumptions such as the nature of reality (ontology), the type of knowledge that can be generated (epistemology) and a discipline specific way of generating that knowledge (methodology) (Taylor & Medina, 2013). These philosophical assumptions form the pillars of a paradigm. Research paradigms therefore inform the nature of inquiry and can be seen as a unique means of generating knowledge (Taylor & Medina, 2013).

The current study was located in the interpretivist paradigm. This was informed by the research question which explores the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies. The fundamental belief of an interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed and that multiple experiences and conceptions of reality can be apprehended (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Through the use of

individual interviews and drawing as methods of gathering data, the participants were accorded an opportunity to reconstruct their experiences in the student-supervisor relationship.

In a continuum of research paradigms, the positivist paradigm is the oldest established scientific paradigm while the interpretive paradigm forms part of what can be considered to be one of the relatively new paradigms (Taylor & Medina, 2013). The key feature that distinguishes the new paradigms from the older ones is that the positivist paradigm focuses on a singular objective truth compared to the new paradigms which acknowledge that multiple realities exist (Willis, 2007).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study is a qualitative case study. Creswell (2007) has defined a case study as an exploration of a specific happening bounded by context or place and time. The case under study can be an activity, issue, process, topic, event, programme, individual or a number of individuals (Creswell, 2007). To explore and describe the case, in-depth and detailed data are generated (Creswell, 2007).

According to Fouchè and Schurink (2014) there are three types of case studies:

- Intrinsic case study, also called descriptive case study, which describes, analyses and interprets a specific phenomenon;
- Instrumental case study, also called explanatory case study. This is used for the purpose of theory building; and
- Collective case study, which can be said to be an instrumental case study that has been extended to a number of cases in which comparisons can be made between the cases.

Apart from the three types of case studies referred to above, Yin (2009) refers to interpretive, exploratory and evaluative case studies. The researcher in an interpretive case study aims to

interpret the data by developing conceptual categories without adding own judgement to the phenomena found in the data, while in evaluative case study, the researcher adds his/her judgements (Yin, 2009). An exploratory case study is where the researcher explores a certain phenomenon in the data in order to provide a significant insight into a given problem that has not been conducted clearly (Yin, 2009). It is important to note that, the different types of case study more often than not overlap in use (Fouchè & Schurink, 2014)

This study is positioned as an intrinsic interpretive case study as it explored the nature of student-supervisor relationship in two African universities. It is bounded to describing, analysing and interpreting the experiences of the student-supervisor relationship in the two African Universities.

The strength of using a case study is that it provides an opportunity for the researcher to carefully examine the data within a specified context (Creswell, 2007). The case study approach allows the researcher to explore and produce in-depth descriptions of particular cases, which assist in discovering the uniqueness of each case. In addition, the case study approach affords opportunities for investigating contemporary cases with the purpose of illuminating each participant as a case while providing an opportunity for obtaining an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon (Fouchè & Schurink, 2014). The demerit of a case study is that it focuses on a single unit and does not provide generalisation like in quantitative research (Fouchè & Schurink, 2014). However, Stake (1995) is of the view that a lot can be learned from a given particular case, noting that “readers can learn vicariously from an encounter with the case through the researcher’s narrative descriptions” (Stake, 1995, p. 86).

3.5 SAMPLING

In this study convenient sampling as well as purposive sampling was used to select the participants. In convenient sampling the selection of the participants is done based on their

convenient proximity and accessibility to the researcher (Etikan & Alkassim, 2016). It is also called availability sampling since the researcher relies on the participants who are conveniently available to participate in the study (Etikan & Alkassim, 2016).

Purposive sampling also called deliberate sampling is a subjective method of selecting participants based on the purpose and the objectives of the study (Struwig & Stead 2001; Etikan & Alkassim, 2016). The selected participants should portray certain characteristics and have the information which the researcher needs for the study (Struwig & Stead, 2001). The researcher has the opportunity to rely on his or her own judgement in choosing the participants (Struwig & Stead 2001).

In this study, convenient sampling was used to select the participants who were available to participate and could easily be reached within or near MU and NMU. At the same time, purposive sampling was used to select the participants with the required characteristics. To be included in the sample, the participant had to portray the following characteristics;

- Have a doctoral degree in education
- Be within a bracket of five years after graduation
- Be a graduate of MU or NMU
- Be willing to share their experiences of their student-supervisor relationships
- Male or female

The selection of the participants was done with the assistance of the administrators in the faculties of education in the two universities. The faculty administrators were requested to provide the graduation programmes and a list with the contact information of graduates who recently completed their doctoral degree in education within five years of graduation. With the assistance of the administrators and also the supervisors in the faculty of education who were

aware of those graduates who could easily be reached, I wrote e-mails and also made phone calls to seek appointment with the anticipated participants and invite them to participate. Since I needed ten (10) participants for this study (five from each university), I considered the first five (5) positive responses in each university for participation.

3.6 PARTICIPANTS

The table below gives a brief description of the participants:

Table 3.1: Participants according to institution of graduation, year of graduation, sex and designation

Name of the participant (pseudonyms)	Institution of graduation	Year of graduation	Sex	Designation
Alice	NMU	2015	Female	Lecturer
Winnie	MU	2016	Female	Senior lecturer
Dan	NMU	2015	Male	Senior lecturer
Careen	MU	2016	Female	Senior lecturer
Nelly	NMU	2011	Female	Associate Professor
Newton	MU	2016	Male	Lecturer
Mary	NMU	2015	Female	High school Teacher
Beatrice	MU	2016	Female	Lecturer
Eve	NMU	2014	Female	Senior lecturer
Mike	MU	2016	Male	Lecturer

3.7 DATA GATHERING METHODS

Data gathering methods are devices used in research to obtain data in the field (Creswell, 2014). The following qualitative data gathering tools were used in this study, namely; (i) semi-structured individual interview and (ii) drawing. These methods are further elaborated upon

below, including why they were used. Table 3.2 indicates the different phases and dates of the research, research questions as well as the data generation method(s) associated with each.

Table 3.2: Phases of the research, dates of data generation and methods utilised

Phase	Participant/ date of data generation	Research questions (sub-questions)	Data generation method utilised
Phase 1 South Africa: 9th Nov- 5th Dec 2016	Alice - 15 th Nov 2016 Dan - 16 th Nov 2016 Nelly - 23 rd Nov 2016 Mary - 28 th Nov 2016 Eve - 5 th Dec 2016	i What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Semi-structured individual interview
		ii What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Drawing
		iii How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Semi-structured individual interview
		iv What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?	Drawing
Phase 2 Kenya: 8 th Dec- 22 th Dec 2016	Winnie - 17 th Dec 2016 Beatrice -19 th Dec 2016 Mike - 20 th Dec 2016 Careen - 21 st Dec 2016 Newton –21 nd Dec 2016	i What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Semi-structured individual interview
		ii What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Drawing
		iii How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Semi-structured individual interview
		iv What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?	Drawing

The data was generated systematically in the order of the four sub-questions. I engaged every participant in four steps as indicated in table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Steps of data generation

Steps	Research question	Activity	Time
1	What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Interview conversation	Approximately 15-20 minutes
2	What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Drawing and explaining what the drawing means	Approximately 15-20 minutes
3	How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?	Interview conversation	Approximately 15-20 minutes
4	What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?	Drawing and explaining what the drawing means	Approximately 15-20 minutes

3.7.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

Interviews are managed verbal conversations with the objective of generating relevant information (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The interviewer must have effective communication skills to be able to manage an interview (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). These skills include: (i) clearly structuring the interview questions (ii) listening attentively (iii) pausing and probing where necessary and (iv) encouraging the interviewee to be free to respond (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). Gomm (2004) also suggests that for successful data generation through the interview, the researcher should make every effort to establish rapport and create a warm, friendly and a close relationship that will make the participant feel free to disclose all the information.

The decision to use semi-structured interviews was to obtain and probe for greater depth the possible answers to the research questions. Semi-structured interviews have increased validity,

because it provides the interviewer an opportunity to probe for deeper understanding and ask for clarification to avoid misinterpretation (Gomm, 2004; Ritchie & Lewis 2003).

The interviews were done individually with the 10 participants in this study. I sought permission from the participants to record the interview. Different skills indicated above by scholars (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007; Gomm, 2004) were taken into consideration for the success of the interviews. I therefore first asked the participants to share their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship and then (after making a drawing of their experiences) how they negotiated the relationship with their supervisors during their study. The main guiding questions for the interview were:

- Tell me about your expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during your doctoral studies; and
- How did you negotiate your relationship with your supervisor during the study?

Together with the guiding questions, I also used probing questions and follow-up questions as suggested by Clough and Nutbrown (2007) to seek clarification and correct interpretation of what the interviewees were saying during the interview. Each interview was recorded with an audio-recorder. The recorded information was later transcribed and typed in Microsoft word.

3.7.1.1 Strengths and limitations of semi-structured interviews

The major strength of the semi-structured interview is its power to provide original and rich information for understanding a phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A semi-structured interview has the potential to generate a great amount of information, especially when the participants are free and at ease to disclose what they know (Gomm, 2004). However, the weakness of a semi-structured interview is that, in any interview, participants develop perceptions of the interviewer when they consider their characteristics such as; (i) age (ii) status (iii) race and (iv) sex (Denscombe, 2007). This might affect the response in terms of

honesty and willingness to reveal some information depending on the topic being handled (Cohen et al, 2007; Denscombe, 2007). According to Gomm (2004) the interviewee who desires purposely to please or disappoint the interviewer may distort information. To avoid this, the interviewer ought to ensure that the topic and the purpose of the study is clear to the participant (Denscombe, 2007).

3.7.2 Drawing

Drawing has been used as a technique to explore conscious and unconscious issues and experiences (Theron, Mitchell, Smith & Stuart, 2011). As such drawing has the potential to bring out hidden or unknown perceptions or views not previously known or expressed (De Lange, 2011). Hence, utilising drawing is an important method that has the possibility of prompting discussion around a topic of concern, and it helps a researcher to get access to the aspects of knowledge which could be very hard to express in words and might be ignored or remain hidden (Theron et al., 2011). When drawing is used as a research method the participant is given time to draw and write a caption (De Lange, 2011). A caption is a brief explanation provided by the participant in writing to describe the meaning embedded in the drawing (De Lange, 2011).

The participants in this study were engaged in making two drawings: drawing their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during their study, and drawing their perceptions of what they perceived to have led to the successful completion of their doctoral studies within the student-supervisor relationship. I explained to the participants that there is no wrong or poor drawing, the rationale being to encourage them not to worry about the aesthetics of their drawing.

The following prompts were provided to them:

- Draw how you experienced your student-supervisor relationship, and

- Draw what you think in the student-supervisor relationship led to the successful completion of your doctoral studies.

Every participant was given 10 minutes to draw and to write a caption. In this study I used drawing and writing, together with drawing and talking to obtain responses as data. The participants had to explain the meaning embedded in the drawing by writing a caption of what the drawing means. After the participants had explained their drawings in writing, I asked them also to provide me with an oral explanation of what the drawing represents. The oral explanations were recorded with a voice recorder and later transcribed. Each of the drawings made was scanned and the accompanied explanations transcribed and typed in Microsoft Word.

3.7.2.1 Strengths and limitations of drawing

Drawings are simple to make as all that is needed is a pencil and paper (Theron et al., 2011). It also allows active engagement between the researcher and participants (De Lange et al., 2011). Once drawings are made we can look at them and touch them, they are tangible and concrete, hence, they also provide visible proof of research findings (Theron et al., 2011). The limitation of this method is that it is sometimes difficult for people to draw. This was evident in this study where some participants did not want to draw and instead chose to provide some pictures which they downloaded from the internet using my laptop during the session I had with them (see figure 4.7 and figure 4.18). However, explaining what the drawing represents is vital as it gives meaning to what is drawn (Theron et al., 2011).

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

The data gathered in this research was analysed through thematic analysis, which is discussed in this section.

3.8.1 Thematic analysis

This is a method of identifying patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding is an important process in thematic analysis. In this process the transcripts are used to generate the units of meaning by putting some texts in brackets and writing a word (unit of meaning) in the margins which represents the texts in the bracket (Creswell, 2014). The units of meaning are grouped into categories which are then used to generate the themes (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2009, pp. 184-189) suggests crucial steps in thematic analysis, these are; (i) familiarization with the data (ii) generating initial codes (iii) searching for themes among codes (iv) reviewing themes (v) defining and naming themes and (vi) producing the final report.

3.8.2 The analysis process

As described earlier, the data in this study was generated through semi-structured individual interviews and drawing. Preliminary data analysis was done simultaneously with data generation, by asking the participants during the interview to clarify some information provided to avoid misinterpretation.

The generated data was in the form of audio recordings, drawings and captions. I prepared the data by transcribing the audio recordings. Exact verbatim transcription was done to preserve the content and the meaning as provided by the participants. I scanned the drawings by using a scanner and then inserted these drawings into a Microsoft Word document. The captions of the drawings were then typed up and inserted below each drawing in the Microsoft Word document. The verbal explanations of the drawings were also transcribed and typed. Finally, I had four data sets (for each research question) contained in four Microsoft word documents ready for analysis.

The steps of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Creswell (2009) were followed in the analysis. I started by reading the transcripts several times in order to familiarize

myself with the data. To make meaningful patterns from the data, I took time to write the units of meaning as derived from the data. These were written in the margin of the transcripts. The units of meaning formed the basis to carefully generate the categories. Finally, I used the categories to create and name the themes.

The diagram shows a summary of the steps which I took while analysing the collected data.

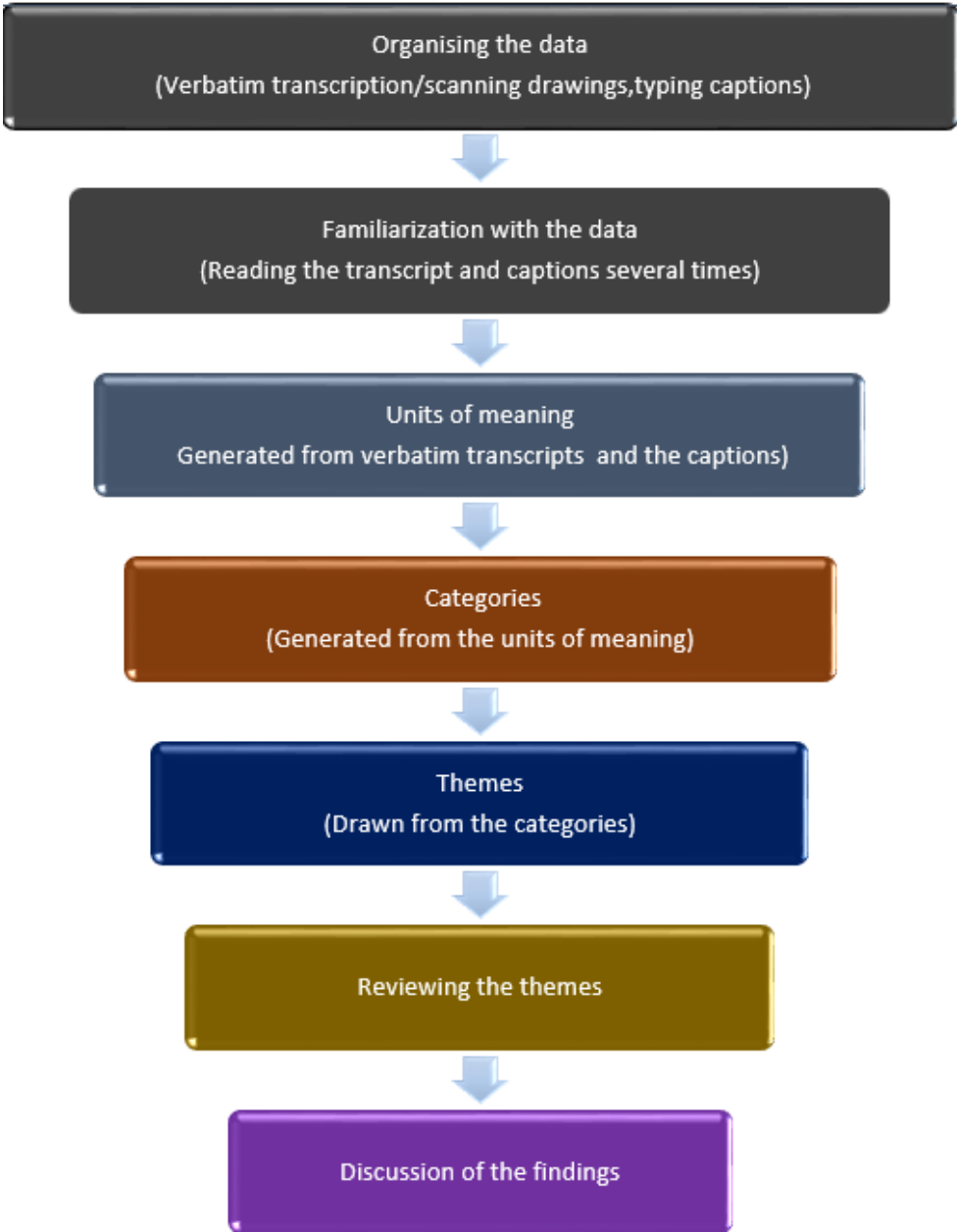


Figure 3.1: Diagram showing the steps followed during the data analysis

3.8.3 Strengths and limitations of thematic analysis

The strength of thematic analysis is that it allows categories (themes) to be drawn from the data, hence, making the findings concrete and tangible (Greg, 2012). It is also an analysis method that has the potential to provide a rich description of phenomena from the data generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, its flexibility allows a wide range of analytical options since it is not based on a specific theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, the flexibility of thematic analysis is also its weakness in that the researcher might find it difficult to choose the aspects of data to concentrate on (Braun & Clarke, 2006); a difficulty which could be overcome by concentrating on the aspect of data that answers the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.9 RESEARCH DESIGN SUMMARY

The diagram below provides a summary of the research design:

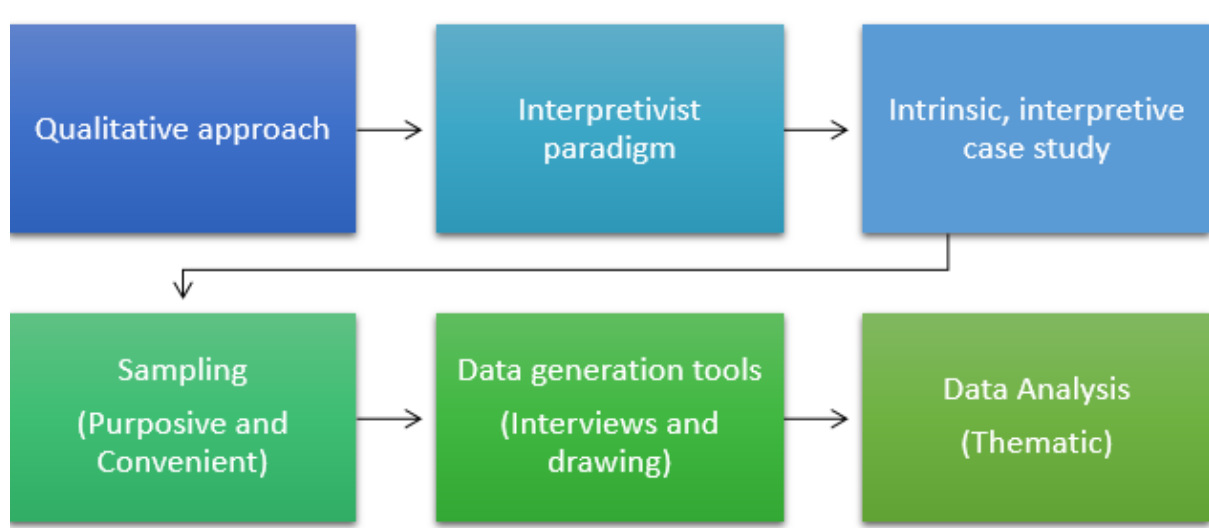


Figure 3.2 Diagram showing a summary of the research design

3.10 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is a terminology used by qualitative researchers to refer to the process of validating the findings and making them truthful (Pitney, 2004). The idea of trustworthiness was developed by Guba (1981). Just like the concepts of validity and reliability used by

positivists, Guba (1981) incorporated the measures that deal with validating the findings in qualitative research. There are four criteria for ensuring trustworthiness as proposed by Guba (1981), these are; (i) Credibility (ii) Applicability (iii) Dependability and (iv) Confirmability. These are elaborated upon below.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to whether the researcher captured what he or she intended to capture or learned in the research (Schurink, Fouchè & De Vos, 2014). It is the obligation of the researcher to represent the realities of the participants in an accurate way (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). Credibility was achieved during the data generation process by using appropriate data generation tools. The tools were used to elicit rich responses from the purposively selected participants who responded to the research questions. As stated earlier, I used probing questions during the interview to seek clarifications and correct interpretation of what the interviewees were saying. I also provided verbatim (direct quotations) which could help the reader to understand the experiences of the participant.

3.10.2 Applicability

Applicability is the extent to which the researcher's findings can be generalised or applied to other similar contexts (Ary et al., 2010). The goal of a qualitative researcher is not to provide generalization (Ary et al., 2010). According to Shenton (2004) and Pitney (2004) the findings of qualitative research are usually specific to a small number of individuals or a particular environment. Therefore, the findings of this study are specific to the faculties of education in the two universities. However, I provided rich and detailed descriptive information to the readers so that they can make judgements and comparisons about similarity to determine whether the findings apply to their own situations. Qualitative findings can be applied to other

context if the two contexts are similar; this is referred to as “goodness of fit” (Ary et al., 2010, p. 501).

3.10.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which the data generated and the findings would be similar if the study was replicated (Ary et al., 2010; Shenton, 2004). It should also be possible to track or explain any variations (Pitney, 2004). In this study, a detailed description of the procedures on how the data was generated has been provided; this enables the reader to develop a thorough understanding of the methods used and their effectiveness. It also enables future researchers to repeat the work even though not necessarily to gain the same results. A coding agreement was also used; selected verbatim transcripts were coded separately by my supervisors and the results compared with what I did for accuracy of the coding.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to ensuring that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants (Schurink et al., 2014; Shenton, 2004). It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the data generated and the conclusions drawn can be confirmed by other researchers investigating the same situation (Shenton, 2004). Ary et al., (2010) argues that an audit trail is the main strategy for demonstrating confirmability. The data generated in this study has been kept in a well organised and retrievable form to make it easy to do an audit trail so as to trace the data and the process of how I developed my findings. I also took time to share the data and the interpretations with my peers and they verified to me the accuracy of my descriptions and interpretations based on the data generated.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A proposal of this study was submitted to the Nelson Mandela University's ethics committee for ethical clearance. The committee granted me the permission to carry out the research (See Appendix A).

According to Struwig and Stead (2001) it is the obligation of the researcher to inform the participants about the nature of the study. In this study, the participants who were doctoral graduates from the two universities were invited and informed via email, not only to request them to participate, but also to explain the purpose of the study to them. Written consent was sought from the participants before the actual research commenced. I also obtained the permission from the participants to record the interview and to keep the drawings which they made. I assured the participants that all information obtained from them will remain confidential and therefore their anonymity has been safeguarded by using pseudonyms in the study.

The participants were informed of their rights such as withdrawing from the research if they wish to do so at any stage of the research process. I took every precautionary measure which was necessary to ensure that I did not interfere with the privacy of the participants during the sessions I had with them. A counsellor was informed to be ready for any counselling support in case the participant became emotionally upset.

3.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I outlined the research design and methodology used in researching the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in completion of doctoral studies in education in the two African universities. The chapter has captured the approach and its suitability to the study, the strategy used as well as the paradigm in which the study has been positioned. I described the methods used to generate the data, the reasons for choosing them and how the methods were

used in the field to generate the data. I have also described how the data was analysed, how the study was conducted ethically and how I ensured trustworthiness of the research. In the next chapter I present the findings and discussions thereof. The generated themes are discussed and re-contextualized within the literature by looking at the similarities, differences and new information.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study was to explore the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities. In order to answer this main research question, four sub-questions were formulated. In this chapter therefore, I present and discuss the findings of each of the four research questions as generated from the data and recontextualise the discussion within the literature.

4.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

I first present a summary of the findings of all four sub-questions in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Summary of the findings

The nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies	
Expectations of the student-supervisor relationship	<p>Theme 1: Purpose-focused relationship Categories Effective mentoring Getting the PhD done Scholarly induction</p> <p>Theme 2: Collaborative relationship Categories Harmonious working relationship Productive feedback Relationship of understanding</p> <p>Theme 3: Integrity in the relationship Categories Commitment to the PhD Maintaining an ethical relationship Balancing of power in the relationship</p>
Experiences of the student-supervisor relationship	<p>Theme 4: Fulfilling relationship Categories Relationship that inspires Relationship with a bond Relationship supported by scaffolding</p> <p>Theme 5: Unfulfilling relationship Categories Disengaged supervision Feelings of discontent</p>
Negotiation of the student-supervisor relationship	<p>Theme 6: Continuous negotiation Categories Persistent negotiation Open communication</p> <p>Theme 7: Diplomatic negotiation Categories Negotiated space within differential power positions Mutual negotiation Negotiating openly</p> <p>Theme 8: Progress related negotiation Categories Negotiating time lines of doing work Negotiating convenient working space Negotiating knowledge production</p>
Perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies	<p>Theme 9: Supervisor nurturing Categories Quality guidance Positive encouragement</p> <p>Theme 10: Supervisor efficiency Categories Expedient feedback Efficient communication</p> <p>Theme 11: Supervisor-student obligation Categories Negotiated commitment Mutual commitment</p>

4.2.1 Expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

The first aim of this study was to explore the expectations doctoral students have of the student-supervisor relationship. The first sub-research question was “*What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?*” As explained in the previous chapter, an individual semi-structured interview was used to generate the data with the 10 participants (See 3.7.1). Figure 4.1 below is a summary of the findings showing the themes and their categories.

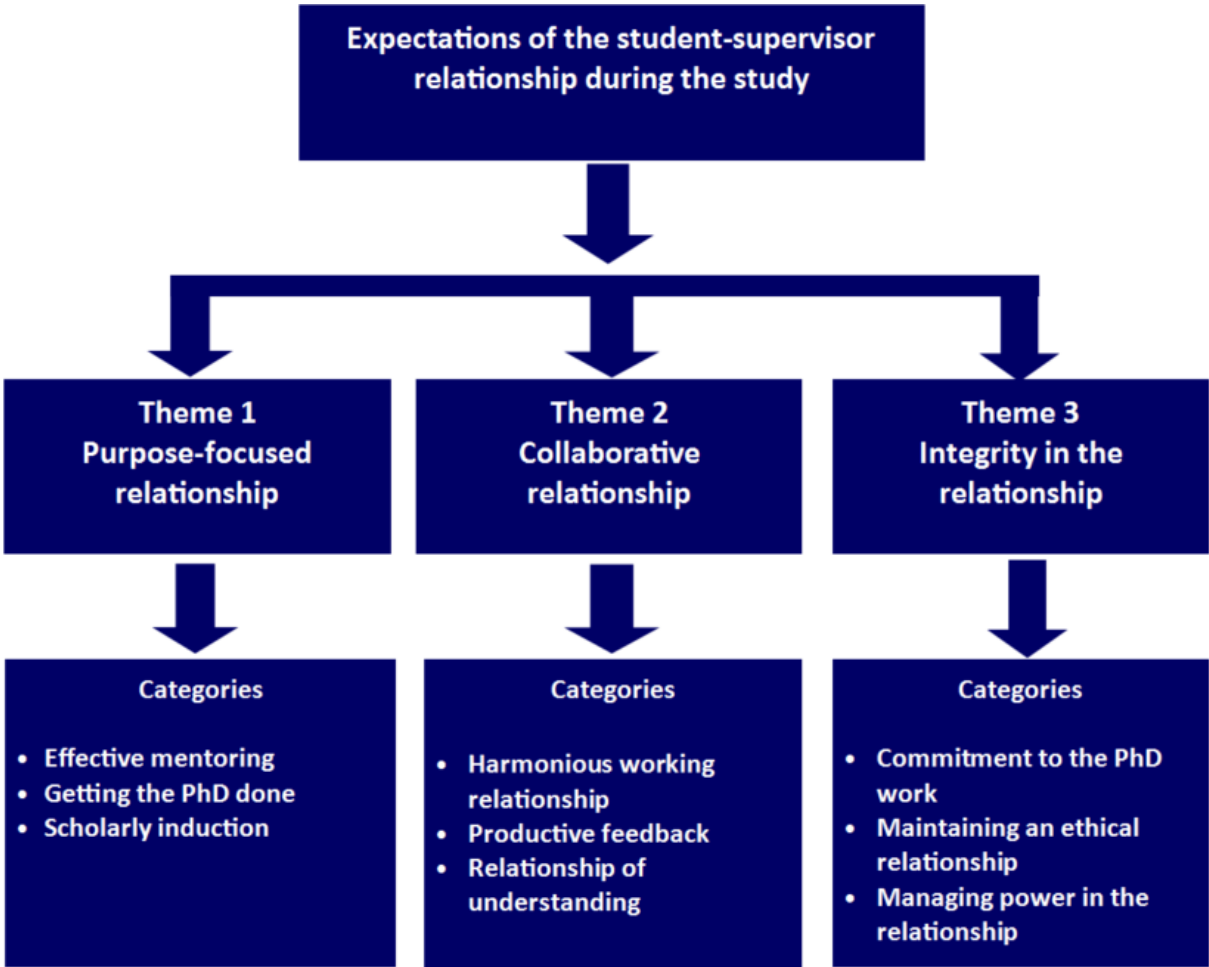


Figure 4.1: Diagrammatic representation of the findings; Expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

The findings above highlight three themes in response to what the doctoral graduates expected and which are discussed in this section. These are a *purpose-focussed relationship*, a *collaborative relationship* and *integrity in the relationship*.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Purpose-focused relationship

Participants in this study expected that they would have a relationship with their supervisors that is focussed on the purpose of doing the doctoral study. They expected that their doctoral relationship with their supervisors would lead to development in their research field through learning and gaining new skills that would enable them to complete their studies within the expected time. According to the participants the purpose-focussed relationship involved three processes, namely, (i) the supervisor providing effective mentoring, (ii) providing support towards getting the PhD done, and (iii) the induction of the PhD candidate into scholarship and into scholarly networks.

4.2.1.1.1 Effective mentoring

Mentoring refers to the work of a trusted advisor with experience, knowledge and wisdom to advise and guide another, in this instance, a supervisor guiding and advising the doctoral student. Participants in this study expected their supervisors to be mentors, who would provide effective mentoring for the success of their doctoral studies. The doctoral graduates found the doctoral studies as a new area for them and they expected their supervisors to orient and mentor them through regular guidance of what was expected of a PhD, assisting them to shape their work and even directing them on what to do. This is evident from the following quotations:

“My two supervisors were very well qualified and I expected them to be my mentors, they were people who could understand their work well” (Interview, Winny, line 563, {2016-12-17}).

“You see the advantage that I had was that I was a supervisor also, but not at their level of course and so I expected them to be my mentors” (Interview, Careen, line 213{2016-12-22}).

“Ahaa, I think I expected a mentor and a guide” (Interview, Alice, line 714, {2016-11-15}).

“I can say I expected them to support me, ummh... to check on me to ensure that I am on the right track always” (Interview, Beatrice-, line 1198, {2016-12-20}).

“I can say I expected them to do “panel beating”, you know, to shape my work to the required standard” (Interview, Careen, line 207 {2016-12-22}).

The above quotations explain the doctoral graduates’ expectations of a supervisor as a mentor in the student-supervisor relationship. According to De Boone (2014) the supervisor is largely responsible for mentoring the research student, using their accumulated knowledge and experience in the academic field to mentor their students. A study by Cadman (2010) showed that students pay tribute to the commitment of their supervisors and acknowledge them as mentors in the doctoral learning process. Supervisors clearly play a significant role in mentoring and coaching the research students (McCallin & Shoba, 2012). It requires that the supervisor meets with the student regularly to discuss ideas, concepts, readings and progress in the writing of the thesis. This ensures that the research student progresses towards timely completion of the research project (De Boone, 2014). The purpose of effective mentoring is to complete the PhD and this will be highlighted in the next category.

4.2.1.1.2 Getting the PhD done

Participants described how they looked forward to having a relationship that is focussed on the completion of the study. This involves supervisors assisting the doctoral students to complete their studies within the expected time frame set down for part-time or full-time study in the policies of their respective universities. They are expected to form a productive relationship

with their supervisors with which they would work together for the success of completing their study.

The above was highlighted when the participants responded as follows:

“I expected that together we will work to complete the journey within the shortest time possible” (Interview, Newton, line 441, {2016-12-22}).

“For me I expected that we will work to complete in time, but as I have told you, it never worked” (Interview, Winny, line 615, {2016-12-17}).

“My expectation was first, right, of completion which has to be done as efficiently as possible” (Interview, Eve, line 43, {2016-12-05}).

“He was always there for me in terms of our personal relationship, and this led him towards getting me through the system as quickly as I wanted” (Interview, Dan, line 348, (2016-11-16).

“And I also wanted to complete the journey, so it was kind of ...laughter...win-win kind of relationship” (Interview, Nelly, line 503, {2016-11-23}).

The quotations above confirm that the completion of doctoral studies was a key expectation of the doctoral graduates. Grant (2005) noted that doctoral students expect their supervisors to support them to complete their studies in time. It however seems that this expectation is sometimes not met for some candidates. According to Grossman and Crowther (2015) most doctoral students in African universities fail to complete their studies within the expected time. A study by Mouton (2011) also found that there is a limited number of PhDs produced in sub-Saharan Africa. One of the reasons pointed out by Grossman and Crowther (2015) for the low number of PhDs in sub-Saharan Africa is the problem of lack of supervision capacity and therefore lack of mentoring capacity, which slows down the completion rate or increases the

attrition rate of the doctoral students in the region. The next category focusses on inducting the doctoral student into scholarship and into scholarly networks.

4.2.1.1.3 Scholarly induction

Studying towards a PhD also calls for being inducted into the world of scholars, scholarliness, and scholarship, within a research context such as higher education institutions. Participants in this study expected that their supervisors would provide them with such an induction which would enable them to develop into independent scholars through sharing their knowledge of how research works in higher education institutions, guiding them on publishing and exposing them to their research networks. They looked forward to gaining research skills from their supervisors which would guide them to own the research process and become independent researchers. The following quotations from the participants reflected the above:

“Yes, I was working at a level where I expected my supervisors to assist me generate knowledge, not to absorb knowledge, but generating the knowledge together with them” (Interview, Winny, line 599, {2016-12-17}).

“Ummh, also to be exposed to the network that my supervisor had at that time, at that point in time” (Interview, Eve, line 63, {2016-12-05}).

“I expected that we would work together and do publications together, you see as a PhD student I knew publications are important, but as I told you, I was new in the research and I expected them to assist me” (Interview, Beatrice, line 1192, {2016-12-20}).

“Yah, to be part of this embodied, you know, to own the process” (Interview, Nelly, line 511, {2016-11-23}).

“I knew that I would have to do a fair amount of independent work.” (Interview, Dan, line 322, {2016-11-16}).

The quotations above outline the doctoral graduates' expectations of an induction to become independent scholars in academia. Supervisors not only supervise or promote doctoral studies, but play an important role in developing the research students to become independent scholars (McCallin & Shoba, 2012) and to find their own space in the academia. Induction into scholarship is best done when supervision is practiced as a pedagogy (Emilsson & Johnsson, 2007), where the teaching element is emphasised in the research process. According to Radloff (2010) it is the role of the research supervisor to train, empower and facilitate the research student to become an independent researcher. Supervisors also expect the doctoral students to become independent researchers who are able to think critically about their own work and who could work on their own (Halse, 2011). Although McCallin and Shoba (2012) propose that the supervisor-apprentice model is one of the models that can be used by the supervisor to prepare the doctoral student to be an independent researcher, there are other models too. This model, however, provides an opportunity for the apprentice to learn from the supervisor, learning how to write papers and publish articles with the guidance of their supervisors (Abiddin et al., 2009). A study by Cadman (2010) also suggests that supervisors prefer working with students who were ready to explore new areas in research and to push the boundaries of knowledge production. These are the students who work together with their supervisors to co-author articles which they can publish and present in academic forums.

Another expectation of the student-supervisor relationship pointed out by the participants is a collaborative relationship, which is discussed as the second theme.

4.2.1.2 Theme 2: Collaborative relationship

A collaborative relationship is where both the student and the supervisor work in unity, that is, working together for the success of the research project. The doctoral graduates expected that they would have a collaborative relationship with their supervisors, which encompasses the

following, namely, (i) harmonious working relationship (ii) productive feedback, and (ii) a relationship of understanding.

4.2.1.2.1 Harmonious working relationship

In this study, the participants expected to form a harmonious working relationship with their supervisors. This means a relationship without conflict, as well as a close working relationship with common interest and values. The following quotations highlight the above:

“But working for the best quality possible with no chance of fighting” (Interview, Eve, line 45, {2016-12-05}).

“In fact, something again that I expected and it happened was that we would work together closely and actually, my lead supervisor I would say we would think the same together, because we were reading on the same line” (Interview, Mike, line 988, {2016-12-21}).

“I knew that because of his interest in the field it’s also going to put him in a position where he would see that interest as a catalyst for us to work harmoniously” (Interview, Dan, line 328, {2016-11-16}).

“For the very very important thing was one that the supervisor and I had to connect in terms of our values and our passions and our interests” (Interview, Alice, line 812, {2016-11-15}).

The quotations above explain how the doctoral graduates expected a harmonious working relationship where their supervisors work closely with them throughout the PhD journey without fighting. A harmonious working relationship forms the basis of a productive and conducive environment for the student-supervisor relationship (Hodza, 2007). There can be cases of conflict between the student and the supervisor (Krauss & Ismi, 2010), but Watt and Chiappetta (2011) argue that a harmonious working relationship between the student and the supervisor can be achieved through negotiating the relationship. Both the student and the

supervisor should negotiate their expectations to avoid conflict and to enable them to work in harmony (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). It is important also to note that there are instances in some relationships where students have frequent disagreements with their supervisors (Grevholm et al., 2005). Such relationships which are filled with conflict, hampers collaboration and may negatively affect the progress of the doctoral student (Grevholm et al., 2005). A harmonious working relationship enables the supervisor to provide productive feedback and the doctoral student to accept and engage with the feedback, which is the focus of the next category.

4.2.1.2.2 Productive feedback

Productive feedback refers to critical and prompt feedback provided by the supervisor to strengthen and support the research project. This can either be feedback about the submitted work or verbal feedback about their thinking within the study. The feedback forms one of the crucial elements in the student-supervisor relationship. Participants in this study expected their supervisors to provide productive feedback on the drafts they submitted and critique related to their work in a positive way. The participants also emphasised their expectation of timely feedback. Some participants expressed their disappointment on the delayed response from their supervisors. The above is shown by the following quotations:

“To critique your thinking process and ...not just accept...that because you are a colleague, they cannot tell you the truth or give you critical feedback on things that you need to think” (Interview, Eve, line 71, {2016-12-05}).

“So I needed somebody who mmmh would be critical with my work” (Interview, Alice, line 716 {2016-11-16}).

“Yah you are excited and I expected that I will write my work and the supervisors give the feedback quickly... you know, ahaa... like a young child who writes the

work and wants the teacher to put a tick quickly” (Interview, Winny, line 585 {2016-12-17}).

The above quotations speak strongly on the doctoral graduates' expectation of productive feedback, which would advance their work. A study by Sayed, Kruss and Badat (2006) found that students expect their supervisors to provide critical and timely feedback. In the same way Grant (2005) points out that timely feedback enables the doctoral students to move faster in their studies. Critical and timely feedback is an ingredient of success for development and progress of a graduate student to a scientifically sound study and timely completion of the research study (Sayed, Kruss & Badat, 2006). However, there are cases of delayed feedback which could put students in a state of frequent complaints, anxiety and stagnation in their studies (Grant, 2005). Often a student just needs some productive feedback to move beyond the stagnation and to be set on task again. When a supervisor takes a long time to respond to students' work, as long as ten months to provide the feedback, the student is at risk of not completing the study (Spear, 2000). As such, it is necessary that the student and the supervisor work in a relationship of understanding, as is elaborated on in the next category.

4.2.1.2.3 Relationship of understanding

In order to establish a collaborative relationship, both supervisor and doctoral student should engage with each other in a way that is understanding. The participants in this study described their expectation of a student-supervisor relationship that is governed by understanding. Students expected that their supervisors would understand the challenges associated with PhD studies and work with them to overcome these. They expected an understanding and caring supervisor who will always show empathy and will be ready to assist in situations of difficulty and at the same time motivate them to work better and harder towards completing the PhD.

The above was highlighted when the participants responded as follows:

"I was expecting her to be a bit empathetic in a way, you know, for instance, you know when it comes to personal issues, it is not easy, maybe my child is sick or

anything, I expected her to be able to understand that” (Interview, Nelly, line 495, {2016-12-23}).

“I would read overnight without sleeping, because I never had time during the day, that is why I said I expected my supervisor to understand my situation” (Interview, Mary, line 1100 {2016-11-28}).

“I expected them to push me and even motivate me, you know, PhD is a heavy task you need to be motivated always” (Interview, Careen, line 249, {2016-12-22}).

These quotations provide evidence of how doctoral graduates expected their supervisors to have understanding, have empathy and at the same time motivate them. Students who are discouraged and overwhelmed by personal problems may opt to discontinue their studies, especially when they think that their supervisors do not understand them (Schulze, 2012). According to Abiddin et al. (2009) supervisors have the responsibility to motivate and encourage the students in their work. A study by Lessing and Schulze (2003) found that doctoral students celebrate and appreciate supervisors who show understanding as this becomes a source of motivation and encouragement to them. A relationship of understanding provides a supportive working environment that enables the student and the supervisor to work better and faster for timely completion of doctoral studies (Radloff, 2010; Krauss & Ismi, 2010). The participants, however, also expressed their expectation of integrity in the relationship, which is discussed as the third theme.

4.2.1.3 Theme 3: Integrity in the relationship

Integrity refers to the qualities of being honest and having strong moral principles. The student and the supervisor should engage with each other with integrity, upholding the moral principles in the entire research process. Doctoral graduates in this study expressed their expectations of working with integrity in the student-supervisor relationship. Their views accentuated the

following; (i) commitment to the PhD work (ii) the need for an ethical relationship and (ii) managing of power in the relationship.

4.2.1.3.1 Commitment to the PhD work

Research projects require commitment where the student and the supervisor devote themselves to the research project. Participants in this study outlined commitment to the PhD work as one of the major expectations in the student-supervisor relationship. This involves the expectation of frequent meetings with the supervisor, taking responsibility, supervisor support in the relationship and working with an available supervisor throughout the study. The above became evident from the following responses:

“So I expected to walk with them throughout my journey, to guide me step by step” (Interview, Beatrice, line 1174, {2016-12-20}).

“The other expectation obviously the fact that we were basically at the same location, it did not make it difficult to set up meetings and meet impromptu and you know, meeting regularly, those were the expectations which I had and they were met” (Interview, Dan, line 318, {2016-11-16}).

“So I expected that they will always be available for me” (Interview, Winny, line 576 {2016-12-17}).

“So ahaa, the expectation on the one hand was that I expected to do a lot of it individually” (Interview, Dan, line 318, {2016-11-16}).

From the quotations above it is evident how these doctoral graduates expected a commitment to the relationship that supports them throughout their research journey. A study by Nita (2015) concurs and found that students expect their supervisors to be committed to the student-supervisor relationship and as such have regular contact with them. According to Cadman (2010) students value the commitment of their supervisors and appreciate the frequent

guidance and direction given by their supervisors during the research process. However, it appears that sometimes some supervisors have no time for the students and they consider the students they supervise as an afterthought (Spear, 2000). Spear (2000) argues that some supervisors seem to have many pressing responsibilities which often lead to little attention provided to the supervised students as these students are not their first priority. If students are aware of and understand the workload of the supervisor, then their own interest, passion and commitment to their own research project (Hodza, 2007) could enable them to advance until the supervisor is available again. The student therefore has to make every effort to take the responsibility of understanding the field and methods necessary to carry out the research project (Abiddin et al., 2009). Commitment to the PhD work also requires that the student and the supervisor work in an ethical way, as elaborated on in the next category.

4.2.1.3.2 Maintaining an ethical relationship

An ethical relationship refers to a relationship where the student and the supervisor uphold the moral principles in their working relationship; ensuring that they engage in the right practices in the research process and avoid any disreputable issues. The participants in this study expected an ethical relationship with their supervisors in which there would be mutual trust, openness and honesty. They also expected confidentiality, keeping what happens in the student-supervisor relationship to themselves, aspects which became evident when the participants articulated it as follows:

*Eve: “And my trust was three things, to be treated fairly and with respect”
(Interview, line 47)*

Me: “with respect” (line 48)

Eve: “And therefore, not discussing me with anybody else, because I worked with other people in the faculty” (Interview, Line 49, {2016-12-05}).

“I expected them to be honest with me in everything we were doing” (Interview, Newton, line 421, {2016-12-22}).

“I trusted her and I expected a trust relationship between both of us” (Interview, Mary, line 1036, {2016-11-28}).

“That is what I am saying in my mind it was this person either understands my values and ethics or they don’t work” (Interview, Alice, line 864 {2016-11-15}).

“I expected that we will work within the norms, to be respected as I respect them, to maintain the respect for a good working relationship” (Interview, Newton, line 409 {2016-12-22}).

The quotations above provide evidence that the doctoral graduates expected an ethical relationship where there is mutual trust, honesty, confidentiality and openness. Radloff (2010) concurs that there is a need for doctoral students and their supervisors to develop an ethical relationship during the research process. Nita (2015) also points out that the student-supervisor relationship will usually work best when the student and the supervisor are open and honest with one another. Doctoral students seem to have more confidence to work on their research studies when they know that their supervisors trust them and there is respect in the relationship (Nita, 2015). However, lack of honesty and trust between the student and the supervisor create a strained relationship which might negatively affect the progress of the research student (Radloff, 2010). An ethical relationship also brings the notion of managing power between the student and the supervisor, which is the focus of the next category.

4.2.1.3.3 Managing power in the relationship

The supervisor, by virtue of being the supervisor, is positioned as the expert professional who supervises the doctoral student and as such is in a position of power. How the power is used in the relationship, can influence the quality of the relationship. Participants in this study explained how power in the student-supervisor relationship affects their doctoral studies. The

participants expected that they would have a relationship with their supervisors where there are no power plays, where their supervisors relate to them without showing that they have more power than them and as such, provide the necessary space to enable them to engage as emerging independent scholars. They also expected their supervisors to listen to them and consider their ideas. The above is shown by the following quotations:

“I wanted someone who would see me..., perhaps not as a colleague, because we are not equal, but with no hierarchy, because I thought in my master degree, they always saw me as a student” (Interview, Alice, line 820 {2016-11-15}).

“And if I am coming with ideas, I wanted her to listen not to always regard me as a student, you know” (Interview, Alice, line 836, {2016-11-15}).

The quotations above show that the doctoral graduates expected to be recognised in the student-supervisor relationship. The power relationship between the student and the supervisor has a great effect on the progress of the research student (Grant, 2005). Since the student and the supervisor have unequal power, it appears that there is always a hierarchy in the student-supervisor relationship. However, to break the hierarchy, Grant (2005) proposes that the student and the supervisor should always negotiate the balance of power in the relationship. In the same way, Morris (2011) argues that the power dynamics in the student-supervisor relationship needs to be properly managed. It is necessary for the supervisor to accommodate the student’s ideas during the research process (Morris, 2011). The students’ research productivity might be affected negatively in a relationship where the supervisor controls everything without considering the student’s opinion or ideas and as such hinders the development of the doctoral student. A power struggle between the student and the supervisor limits the chances of success in the research process (Gurr, 2010).

4.2.1.4 Synthesis of expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

Collectively, the three themes (with their categories) in response to the question “*What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?*” point to the expectations of a relationship which is purpose-focussed, collaborative, and underpinned by integrity (See also, 2.4.5). In the next section I discuss the findings of the second sub-research question.

4.2.2 Experiences of the student-supervisor relationship

The second aim of this study was to explore the doctoral students’ experiences of the student-supervisor relationship. The second sub-research question was “*What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?*” In order to obtain the participants’ experiences, drawing as data generation tool was utilised (See 3.7.2). As such, I now present the ten drawings and the captions associated with each drawing. After the presentation of the drawings, I will then provide the findings and the discussion in response to the question. It is important to take note that I have typed the captions as written by the participants, hence, no punctuations, spelling or tenses were corrected.



Figure 4.2: Drawing by Dr Dan

Caption: Two hills representing my student-supervisor relationship

I represent my student-supervisor relationship with the two hills above that are linked by a bridge. The two hills represent me and my supervisor. I saw my supervisor as a knowledgeable person experienced in research, my study was a link (the bridge). The bridge enabled me to tap the knowledge from him. Our relationship was bright and warm as you can see the sun in the drawing which represents the warmth of our relationship, my supervisor was supportive and he motivated me throughout my study. I have also drawn clouds to represent the challenges in my relationship with my supervisor, it was not always bright and warm but sometimes gloomy when I felt my supervisor was criticising my work even when I thought I had done my best. I had to do it several times until he was satisfied. There was also a time when my supervisor was busy and would not be available for me, these were dark moments for me.

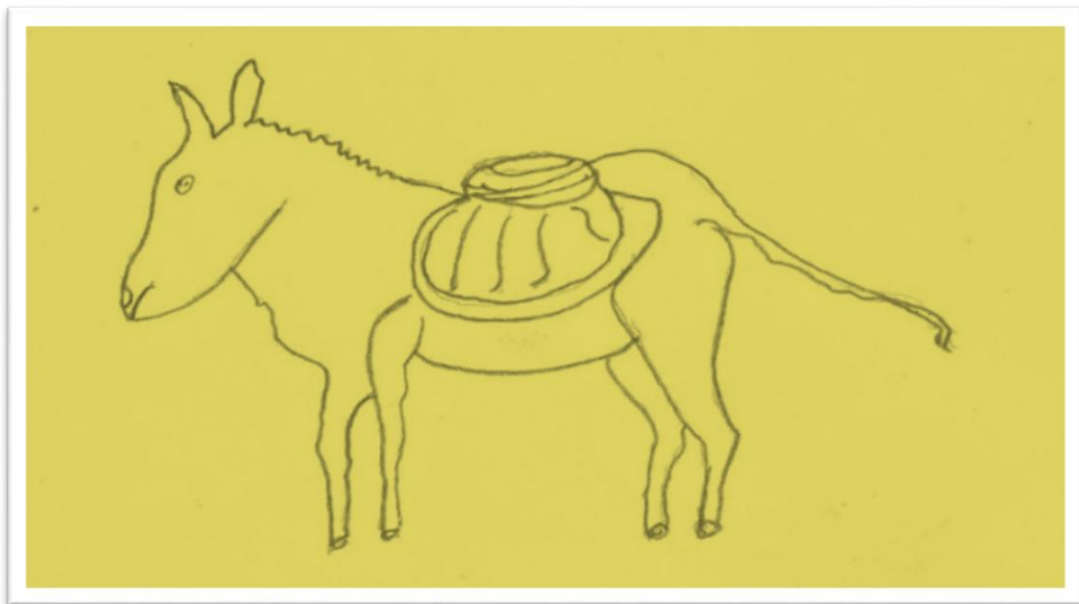


Figure 4.3: Drawing by Dr Newton

Caption: A donkey representing my experience

I have drawn a donkey with a luggage to represent my experience. A donkey is always an overworked animal with very little time to rest. My relationship with my supervisors was an overburdened relationship which I can compare to a donkey's work. My experience was a situation of a busy student working with too busy supervisors. I was a student and at the same

time a full time lecturer, while my supervisors were people who had a lot of work. I had the support of my supervisors but they were committed with other university activities. It was difficult to meet but we would all try our best out of our busy schedules to create time to meet and discuss my work. We were overburdened in our relationship by our professional work but we ensured that we maintained the objectives and the direction of the research work.

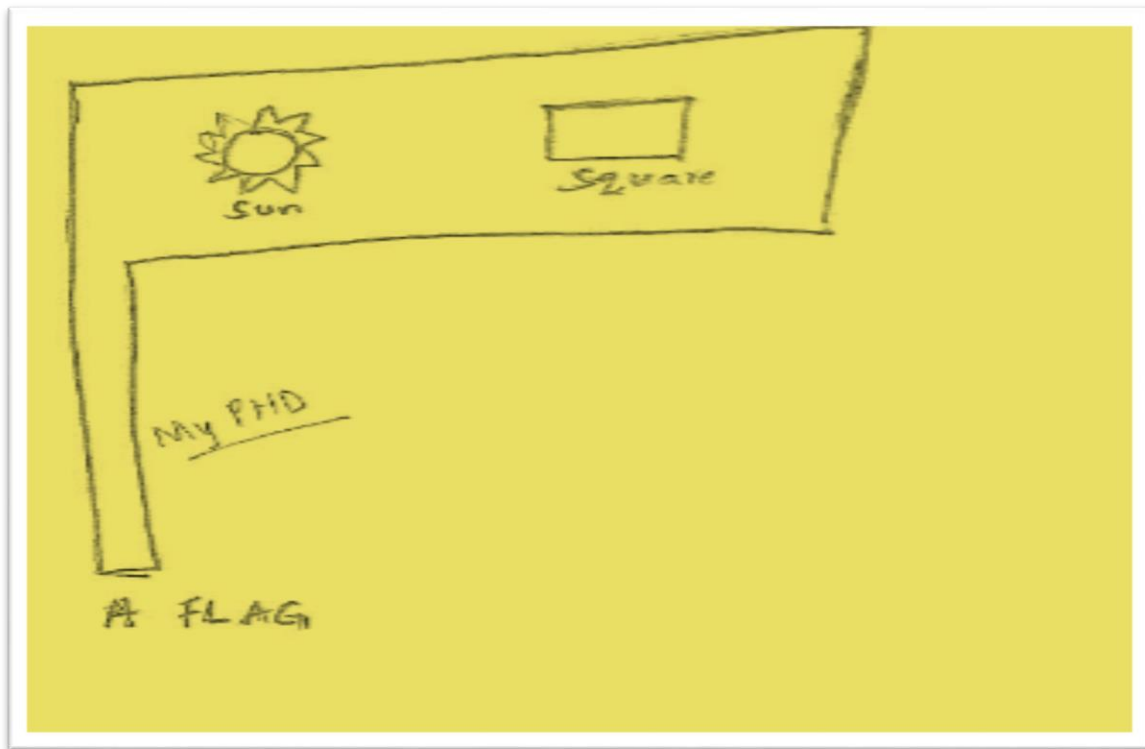


Figure 4.4: Drawing by Dr Nelly

Caption: A flag to represent my PhD experience

I have drawn a flag which represents my PhD. I believe that a doctoral relationship encompasses the PhD, the student and the promoter. As you might know, a flag symbolises unity of a nation, it is sovereignty and the values it encompasses. In my case, the flag represents my PhD which brought us together in unity with my promoter. We had a relationship in the study itself. I drew a sun because it is a source of energy, whenever I was discouraged in my study I would get an encouragement from my promoter and be energised again. The sun also represents the light. With the support of my supervisor I would see where I

was going because there was light in terms of guidance I was getting from my promoter. I have also drawn a square. A square has four equal side with opposite angles. This is to represent that I was bring knowledge into the study as much as my supervisor. We had different lenses to look at some aspects of the research. In a nutshell my experience was enjoying though we did not always agree.

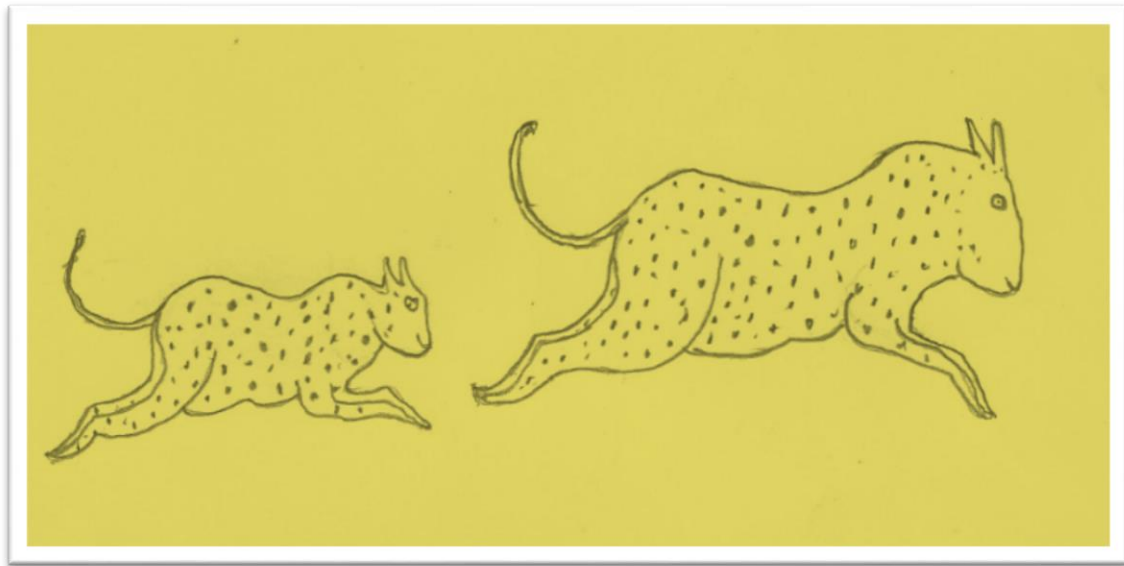


Figure 4.5: Drawing by Dr Mike

Caption: Leopards representing my student-supervisor experience

I have drawn a leopard and a young one running after the mother. I represent my experience in the student-supervisor relationship with this picture. I am the young leopard and my supervisors are the mother leopard. I see my supervisors as leopards not a lion because a lion is ceremonial. My supervisors were not ceremonial, they worked with me like a leopard which is silent but sure in what it does. They showed leadership and I was following their steps. I would give them my work and they would respond within a very short time. They gave me thorough training in how to do my work just like a leopard trains its young one to hunt perfectly. They became great friends to me. It was an interesting and nurturing experience with them.



Figure 4.6: Drawing by Dr Alice

Caption: Experience of my student-supervisor relationship

My supervisor is sitting under the shade of a tree; the tree represents academia. She is reading a book. She is peaceful and captivated by her reading. There is a pile of books next to her and a basket with fruits. I am on the other side of the river exploring and learning, I am on my own but I know that my supervisor is there for me and I am safe. She was always there for me and I could cross the bridge and join her. We sit together on the blanket, she shares her fruit which represents the knowledge and guidance. She will also show me the interesting things in her book which I also need to go and learn. When I am nourished and ready to continue playing and exploring, I go back across the river to my own place where I continue. The drawing is warm and happy, my supervisor was a friend to me, the sun shines indicating the warm experience.

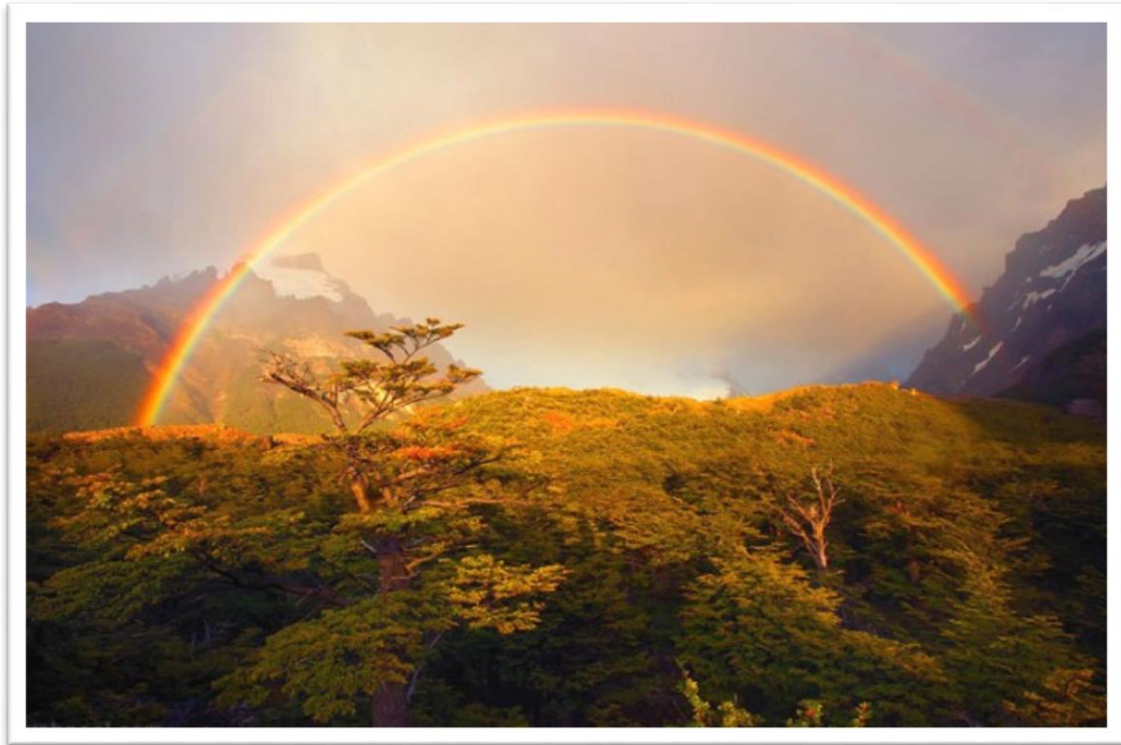


Figure 4.7: A picture from Dr Mary

Caption: A rainbow representing my student-supervisor relationship

I represent my PhD experience with a rainbow. When a rainbow is in the sky it is not always clear. A clear rainbow represents the time when I enjoyed my relationship with my supervisor and I was happy and satisfied with the guidance she gave me. She was a good friend to me and she motivated me to do my work especially that I was going through a difficulty of being a PhD student and working in a different institution. The rainbow that is covered by clouds and is not clear in the sky, represents the challenges in the relationship with my supervisor, sometimes I felt that my supervisor was too busy to attend to my work or meet with me, I felt I was lonely even if I understood why she was busy. Sometimes I was discouraged by her critique but I had to accept. The rainbow also has several colours which represents the various moods that arise at different occasions in my relationship with my supervisor, for instance happiness, sadness, cheerful, anger or guilty. They say that at the end of the rainbow is a pot of gold. I was working towards getting the gold at the end of the rainbow.



Figure 4.8: Drawing by Dr Careen

Caption: A dove representing my student-supervisor relationship

The drawing shows a dove. A dove is mostly used to represent peace. In my experience, this dove represents the peaceful working relationship with my supervisors. My supervisors were humble and peaceful, they were not arrogant and they did not create barriers in our relationship. It was easy to work with them because there was respect for one another. They were busy people and sometimes feedback would delay but I understood them. They created time for me and we worked with understanding.



Figure 4.9: Drawing by Dr Beatrice

Caption: Forest and clear road representing my experience

The drawing shows a forest, at the edge of the forest is a clear road but with some stones. My experience with my supervisors at the beginning of my PhD was difficult, they did not give me the assistance I needed and they always disagreed, I have drawn a forest to represent this difficult experience with them, they are the dark moments in a forest without direction and guidance from the supervisors, I was just confused. Later the supervisors were changed and my new supervisors gave me direction and guidance, I see this as coming of the forest and following a clear route. We worked together with the new supervisors and they always encourage me to complete my PhD.

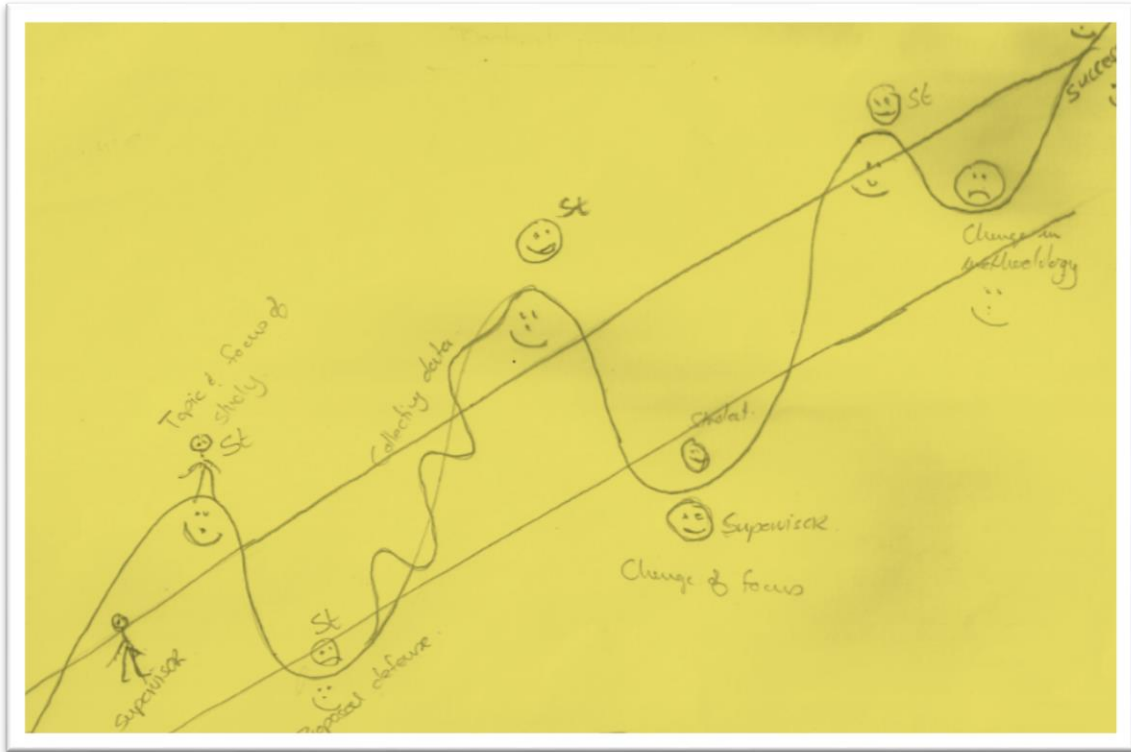


Figure 4.10: Drawing by Dr Eve

Caption: Experience of my PhD journey

This is the experience of my PhD journey, it was an up and down journey but my supervisor walked with me throughout the journey. He was there for me as an honest friend who supported me by providing the guidance and timely feedback. I travelled the journey with him without any fight.

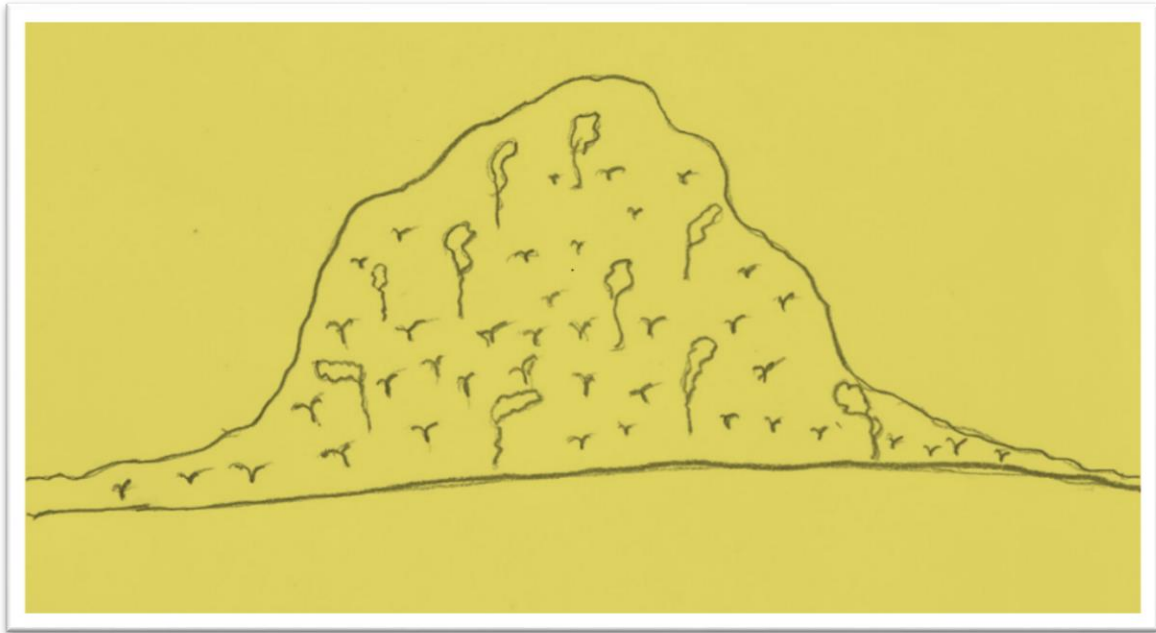


Figure 4.11: Drawing by Dr Winny

Caption: A hill representing my experience

This is a hill which represents my experience. My supervisors were knowledgeable and experienced but they never had time for me. Arranging meetings and getting feedback from them was an uphill task, it was like climbing a thick-forested hill. Sometimes I would send my work but it takes over six months without any response. I would call them several times or send text messages but they rarely pick my call or call back. Whenever I got an opportunity to meet them, they would guide me very well but again they would disappear with no communication or response for a long time. It was an uphill task working with them.

Figure 4.12 in the next page provides a summary of the findings which are derived from the captions below the drawings.

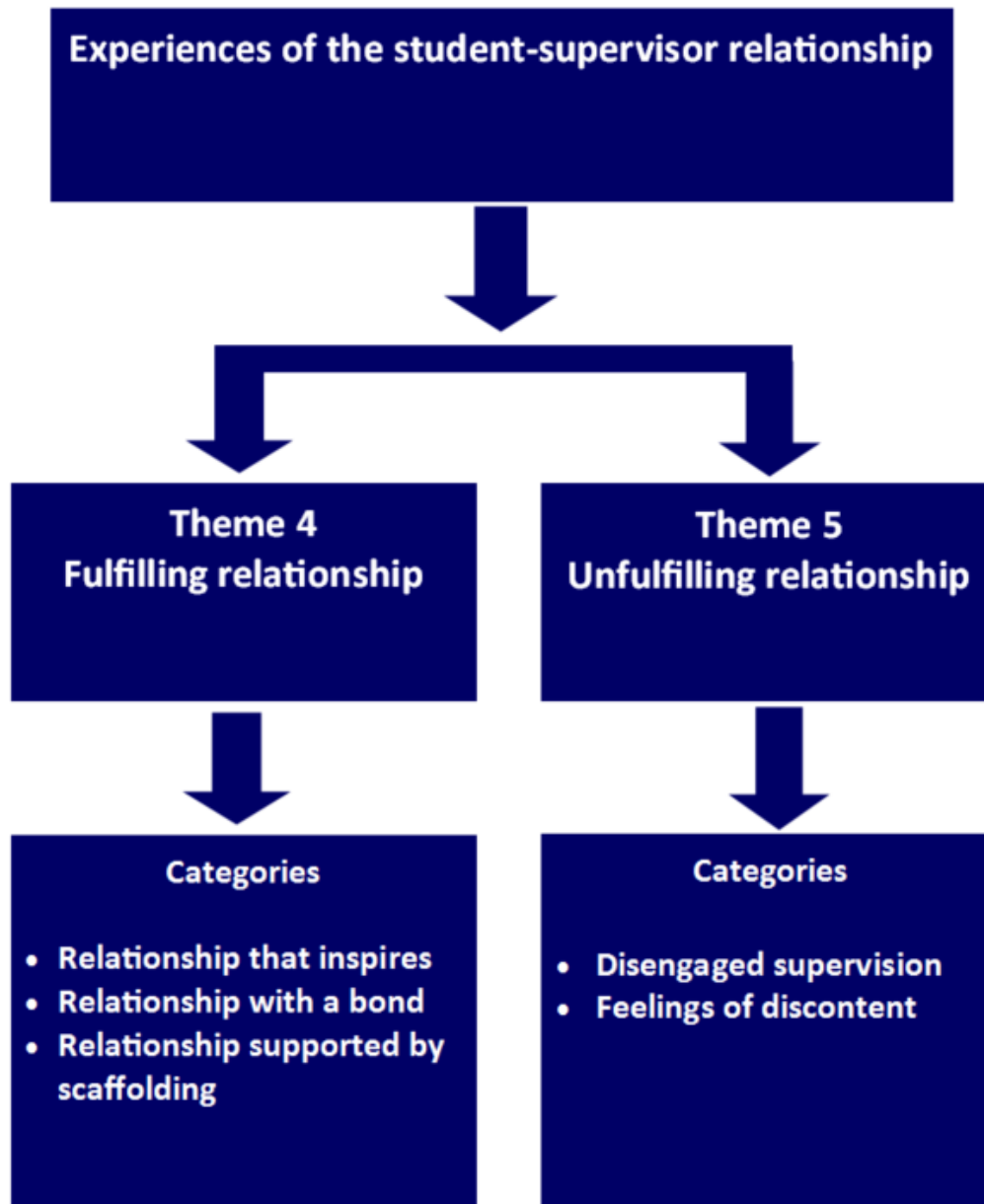


Figure 4.12: Diagrammatic representation of the findings; experiences of the student-supervisor relationship

The findings presented in Figure 4.12 highlight two themes which are discussed in this section. They are *fulfilling relationship* and *unfulfilling relationship*. What is interesting is that one participant indicated that the doctoral relationship encompassed three elements, *i.e.* the PhD, the student and the promoter, which was demonstrated in their speaking about the relationship. Whether the relationship is fulfilling or unfulfilling depends on who the student and who the supervisor is, as well as the complexities of the context in which the supervision takes place.

4.2.2.1 Theme 4: Fulfilling relationship

Experiences of doctoral studies can be fulfilling and satisfying to the doctoral student. A fulfilling relationship is a supportive relationship that enhances learning and enables the research student to work in the best way possible. It is a relationship that promotes the completion of the research project and the production of quality work. The participants highlighted three aspects that related to fulfilling relationships namely, (i) a relationship that inspires (ii) a relationship in which there is a bond and (iii) a relationship supported by scaffolding.

4.2.2.1.1 A relationship that inspires

In this context an inspiring relationship refers to how the supervisor manages the relationship in order to enable the doctoral student to work confidently and creatively during the research process. While describing their experiences, the participants expressed their views on how their supervisors inspired them to progress and complete their studies. They recalled the encouragement, energy and motivation from their supervisors, as can be seen from their captions:

*“My supervisor was supportive and he motivated me throughout my study”
(Drawing, Dan, figure 4.2 {2016-11-16}).*

“I drew a sun, because it is a source of energy, whenever I was discouraged in my study I would get an encouragement from my promoter and be energised again” (Drawing, Nelly, figure 4.4 {2016-11-23}).

“We worked together with the new supervisors and they always encourage me to complete my PhD” (Drawing, Beatrice, figure 4.9 {2016-12-20}).

*“I am at my own but I know that my supervisor is there for me and I am safe”
(Drawing, Alice, figure 4.6 {2016-11-15}).*

The quotations above suggest an inspiring relationship that promoted the student's doctoral learning. It seems that supervisors played an important role in encouraging and motivating the candidates to persevere and complete their studies. According to McClure (2005) research students flourish when their supervisors give them the energy to work smarter and produce quality work within the expected time. Schulze (2012) argues that it is important for the supervisor to acknowledge the candidate as a person first, in addition to being a learner and as such motivate them to continue the research process. However, it is important to note that some doctoral students also experience harshness and discouragement from their supervisors, which make them feel demotivated and insecure in the relationship and may opt to discontinue their studies (Morris, 2011), (See also 2.4.6.1). It is therefore necessary for the supervisor to provide support through encouragement and motivation (Schulze, 2012), this could create a bond in the relationship, as discussed in the next category.

4.2.2.1.2 A relationship with a bond

A relationship with a bond refers to the kind of relationship where there is a strong affiliation between the student and the supervisor. The participants expressed their experiences of a bonding relationship which involved working with the supervisor as a friend, being in a warm relationship and a relationship of understanding and peace. This became evident from the following quotations:

“They became great friends to me. It was an interesting and nurturing experience with them” (Drawing, Mike, figure 4.5 {2016-12-21}).

“Our relationship was bright and warm as you can see the sun in the drawing which represents the warmth of our relationship” (Drawing, Dan, figure 4.2 {2016-11-16}).

“They created time for me and we worked with understanding” (Drawing, Careen, figure 4.8 {2016-12-22}).

“In my experience, this dove represents the peaceful working relationship with my supervisors... it was easy to work with them because there was respect for one another” (Drawing, Careen, figure 4.8 {2016-12-22}).

The quotations above suggest that a bond between the student and the supervisor seems to promote the doctoral learning process, as it opens the possibility for engagement. Most researchers agree that completing the PhD is a process that depends on a close working relationship between the student and supervisor (Abiddin et al., 2009; Lovitts, 2001; Grant & Graham, 1999). A bond between the doctoral student and the supervisor offers strong support which enables the student to progress steadily in the research process (Radloff, 2010). Many supervisors work closely with students to nurture them in the research field (Khanna & Den otter, 2013). A supervisor who is friendly creates an opportunity for a peaceful working relationship with the student, which enhances the learning process and hence promoting the completion of doctoral studies (Mainhard et al., 2009). A relationship guided by respect and understanding not only promotes faster completion of the doctoral studies, but also enables the student to produce quality work (Khanna & Den otter, 2013). The production of quality work requires the supervisor’s support through scaffolding, which is the focus of the next category.

4.2.2.1.3 A relationship supported by scaffolding

Scaffolding is a supportive learning process that aims at promoting a deeper level of learning for the doctoral student. It involves a variety of techniques applied by the supervisor to enable the doctoral student to progress towards a stronger understanding of the doctoral work. The participants explained how they had supportive and satisfying experiences with their supervisors. They describe their supervisors as people who nurtured them in the research process by providing thorough guidance and training. The above became evident from the following responses:

“With the support of my supervisor I would see where I was going because there was light in terms of guidance I was getting” (Drawing, Nelly, figure 4.4 {2016-11-23}).

“They gave me thorough training in how to do my work just like a leopard trains its young one to hunt perfectly” (Drawing, Mike, figure 4.5 {2016-12-21}).

“She will also show me the interesting things in her book which I also need to go and learn. When I am nourished and ready to continue playing and exploring, I go back across the river to my own place where I continue” (Drawing, Alice, figure 4.6 {2016-11-15}).

“I enjoyed my relationship with my supervisor and I was happy and satisfied with the guidance she gave me” (Drawing, Mary, figure 4.7 {2016-11-28}).

The quotations above provide evidence of the efforts made by the supervisors to scaffold the students’ doctoral learning. Mainhard et al. (2009) describe a helpful working relationship where the supervisor balances between controlling the student’s research process and ensuring that the required guidance is provided to support the progress of the student. The supervisor should take the responsibility of guiding and training the research student to produce quality theses and complete their studies on time (Vladimir, 2010). The supervisor’s guidance is the light that illuminates the way for the research student to progress. Sayed et al. (2006) argue that students like to work with supervisors who read their drafts and provide thorough guidance on their work, as it gives direction to the student on what is required of a PhD.

Even though the student-supervisor relationship can be fulfilling as described in this section, some relationships can be disappointing to the doctoral students. The next theme refers to experiences which caused dissatisfaction in the student-supervisor relationship.

4.2.2.2 Theme 5: Unfulfilling relationship

While the student-supervisor relationship can work to the benefit of the student and be fulfilling, it can also be unfulfilling. An unfulfilling relationship refers to a less supportive working relationship between the student and the supervisor. In this theme, the participants pointed to their dissatisfaction with and within the relationship, as they referred to two issues namely, (i) disengaged supervision and (ii) feelings of discontent.

4.2.2.2.1 Disengaged supervision

Disengaged supervision refers to a relationship of little contact and little communication between the student and the supervisor. The research process is an arduous task that requires frequent communication and contact in the student-supervisor relationship, enabling engagement with the study. However, minimal engagement between the student and the supervisor during the study or during some phases of the study, places strain on the student, who then might not know how to proceed. Participants spoke of their experiences of being lonely in the relationship when their supervisors are unavailable to attend to them. Some talked of delayed feedback and insufficient communication. The above is evident from the following quotations:

“Sometimes I felt that my supervisor was too busy to attend to my work or meet with me, I felt I was lonely” (Drawing, Mary, figure 4.7 {2016-11-28}).

“My supervisor was busy and would not be available for me, these were dark moments for me” (Drawing, Dan, figure 4.2 {2016-11-16}).

“My supervisors were knowledgeable and experienced but they never had time for me” (Drawing, Winny, figure, 4.11 {2016-12-17}).

“Sometimes I would send my work but it takes over six months without any response” (Drawing, Winny, figure, 4.11 {2016-12-17}).

These quotations provide evidence of a dissatisfying relationship where the engagement between the student and the supervisor is not adequate. Grossman and Crowther (2015) concur that research students can sometimes find themselves lonely in a relationship where their supervisors are busy and unavailable for consultation. These issues raised above were due to the supervisors being busy with administration, teaching responsibilities, having too many students to supervise or sometimes being away from the university (Nita, 2015; Spear, 2000). A supervisor's workload may cause less contact with the student and delayed feedback (McClure, 2005). Students feel abandoned when they work on their own without the supervisor's guidance (McClure, 2005). It is therefore important for the student and the supervisor, at the outset of the study, to negotiate the frequency of meetings and the way consultations are to be done in the relationship (Detsky & Baerlocher, 2007). This should include arrangements for supervision when the supervisor is busy or away for an extended period of time (Spear, 2000). Disengaged supervision may cause discontent in the relationship, as outlined in the next category.

4.2.2.2 Feelings of discontent

Discontent, in the context of the student-supervisor relationship, refers to the student feeling dissatisfied with the supervisor's guidance. The relationship between the student and the supervisor can be characterised by discontent if not well managed and if it lacks transparency. Participants expressed their experiences which led to discontent, as the lack of robust guidance and direction, the lack of regular and clear communication from their supervisors, being discouraged by supervisor critique and the demanding nature of the research work. These aspects became evident when the participants articulated it as follow:

“My experience with my supervisors at the beginning of my PhD was difficult, they did not give me the assistance I needed and they always disagreed, I have drawn a forest to represent this difficult experience with them, they are the dark

moments in a forest without direction and guidance from the supervisors, I was just confused.” (Drawing, Beatrice, figure 4.9 {2016-12-20}).

“I would call them several times or send text messages but they rarely pick my call or call back.” (Drawing, Winny, figure, 4.11 {2016-12-17}).

“It was not always bright and warm but sometimes gloomy when I felt my supervisor was criticising my work even when I thought I had done my best.” (Drawing, Dan, figure 4.2 {2016-11-16}).

“My relationship with my supervisors was an overburdened relationship which I can compare to a donkey’s work” (Drawing, Newton, figure 4.3 {2016-12-22}).

From the quotations above it seems that the participants experienced discontent in their relationships. Doctoral students expect their supervisors to guide them during the research process (Gill & Burnard, 2008) and when this does not happen, it creates feelings of discontent. A study on student experiences by Krauss and Ismi (2010) concurs that research students experience discontent when they fail to receive the necessary guidance from their supervisors. Furthermore, it is more frustrating to the student when the supervisor fails to communicate and to provide direction related to the research process (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013). Communication is key to establish and sustain a productive student-supervisor relationship (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013).

Supervisor critique is an important factor that provides a blend of ideas to strengthen and support the research project (Grossman & Crowther, 2015) and to enable the doctoral student to think critically about his or her own work. However, the critique may not always go down well with the student and can be a source of discontent, especially when the student feels unfairly criticised (Sayed et al., 2006). The student workload can also be very demanding and as such this could also cause student discontent as indicated by McClure (2005) who refers to

the doctoral studies as a demanding research process. Many research students work long hours, spend sleepless nights and work during the weekend to meet the PhD demands (McClure, 2005). When this does not yield satisfactory results and positive feedback from the supervisor, the student may feel discontent and reluctant to continue the study.

4.2.2.3 Synthesis of experiences of the student–supervisor relationship

Collectively, the two themes, in response to the question “*What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship?*” revealed how the participants experienced the student-supervisor relationship as a fulfilling relationship and or an unfulfilling relationship. While presented in binary as fulfilling or unfulfilling, the relationship sometimes seems to have moments of both. One participant mentioned that the rainbow has several colours which represent the various moods that arise at different occasions in her relationship with her supervisor, for instance, happiness, sadness, cheerfulness, anger or guilt. What has become clear is that for some doctoral students the student-supervisor relationship enabled the doctoral study to move forward and for some, it seemed to be unrewarding and thus holding them back from completing the PhD if there are feelings of discontent. In the next section, I present how the student-supervisor relationship was negotiated.

4.2.3 Negotiating the student-supervisor relationship

The third aim of this study was to explore how the student-supervisor relationship was negotiated. The third sub-research question was, “*How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?*” An individual semi-structured interview was used to generate the data with the participants (See 3.7.1). Figure 4.13 on the next page provides a summary of the findings as it presents the themes and associated categories.

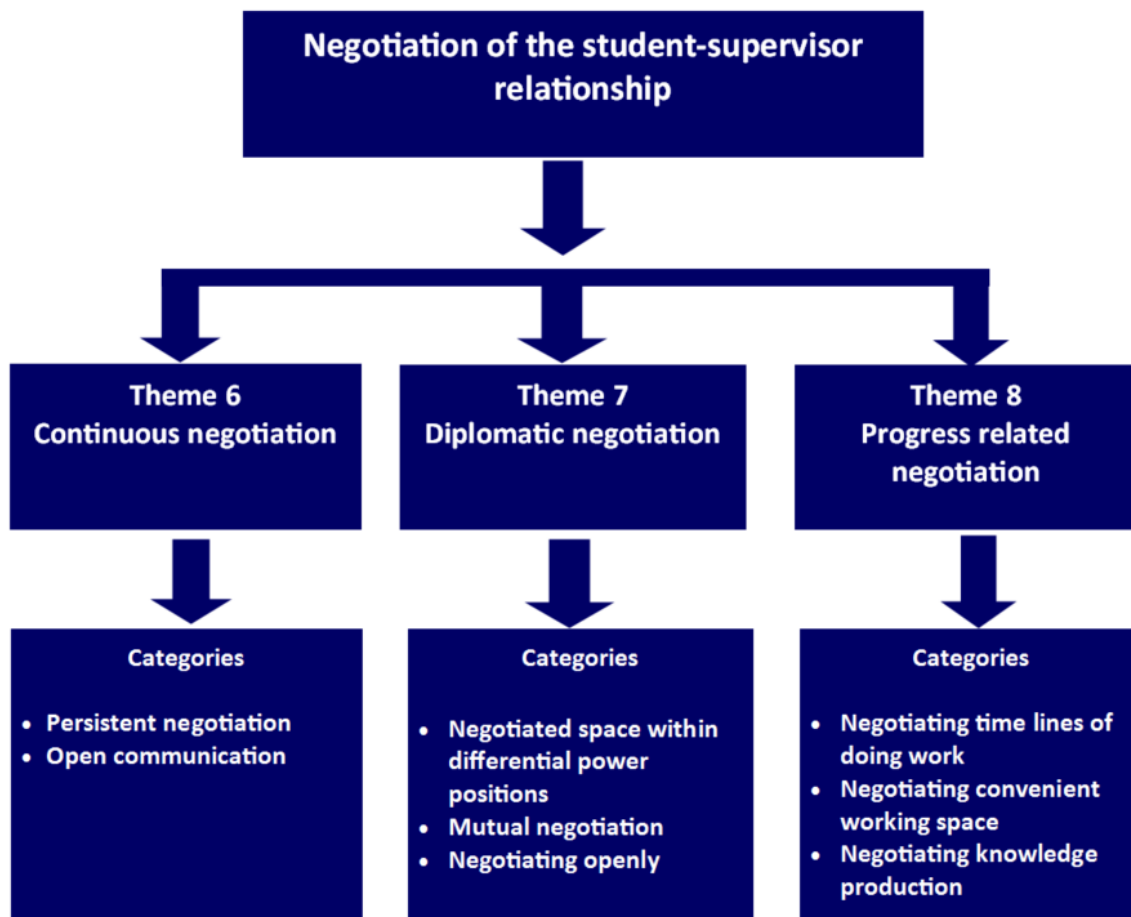


Figure 4.13 Diagrammatic representation of the findings; negotiating the student-supervisor relationship

The diagram above indicates three themes that portray the findings pertaining to the third research sub-question namely, (i) negotiation as a continuous process (ii) diplomatic negotiation and (iii) perspective-taking negotiation.

4.2.3.1 Theme 6: Continuous negotiation

Negotiation can be seen as the heart of a successful student-supervisor relationship. During the interview with the participants, it was found that negotiation in the student-supervisor relationship is not a one-time event, but a constant process where the student and the supervisor are always negotiating or re-negotiating some issues related to the study during the study period. This is evident from the explanations of the participants which are discussed in

this theme under two categories namely, (i) persistent negotiation, and (ii) open communication.

4.2.3.1.1 Persistent negotiation

Persistent negotiation in this context refers to a negotiation that is constantly done throughout the entire period of the research process. It is a negotiation that is done continuously during the study and not only when there is a difficulty. As such, it involves a working relationship where everything is frequently negotiated, as shown by the following responses from the participants:

“So there was no need to say this and this or next week we are doing that. We did continuously and that was the golden... threshold concept of keeping momentum in your thinking, that is why I would complete a PhD from scratch with three different topics in two years” (Interview, Eve, line 481 {2016-12-05}).

“...And everything else comes and you have to negotiate on it again” (Interview, Newton, line 241 {2016-12-21}).

“Ahaa, there was no set timelines but we always negotiated, for instance, whenever I submitted my written draft I would ask them, when do you think probably I would get the feedback?” they would say for instance one or two weeks, I would suggest that I preferred one week and they would agree with me” (Interview, Mike, line 281 {2016-12-20}).

“Every time we had a meeting we would discuss the way forward” (Interview, Mike, line 252 {2016-12-20}).

The above quotations provide evidence of continuous negotiation between the student and the supervisor during the study period. Persistent negotiation in the student-supervisor relationship creates a strong and reliable partnership between the student and the supervisor (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). It provides an efficient working relationship in which the student and the supervisor are always negotiating on issues such as the work which needs to be done at a

particular point as evident by what Eve says, or feedback time and the way forward as stated above by Mike. According to Pearson and Brew (2002) negotiation in the student-supervisor relationship should be a continuous process during which the student and the supervisor communicate to negotiate and re-negotiate the issues in the research project persistently. Persistent negotiation on issues of thesis writing provides the student with an opportunity to work progressively and to complete the study on time (Detsky & Baerlocher, 2007). As such, negotiating persistently in the relationship requires open communication, which is elaborated upon in the next category.

4.2.3.1.2 Open communication

Open communication within the context of the student-supervisor relationship signifies a non-structured negotiation where the supervisor offers the student an opportunity to communicate with him/her at any time and negotiate on issues pertaining to the research project. In this case, the supervisor can easily be reached by the student for any negotiation. Participants spoke of a negotiation in which their supervisors were ready to negotiate with them at any time during the research process and this became evident from the interview data below:

“And they told me to be free to call or visit their offices at any time in case I needed help from them” (Interview, Beatrice, line 382 {2016-12-19}).

“So whenever I was finished with what I was supposed to be doing, what I was required to do was just to make a call to request for a meeting” (Interview, Winny, line 691 {2016-12-17}).

“She would tell me “when you are ready send me an email” and we will organise a skype chat” (Interview, Alice, line 909 {2016-11-15}).

“So what I would do in that situation when I am not sure then I would kind of send him an email ...I would just send an email to say, can I see you, I need

clarity on issues one two three” (Interview, Nelly, line 607 and 613 {2016-11-23}).

The data above suggests that open communication between the student and the supervisor is important, as it seems that negotiations become faster and efficient when there is open communication in the relationship (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). Gurr (2005) concurs that open communication provides an opportunity for the student and the supervisor to discuss how to work at every stage of the research project (Gurr, 2005). The supervisor and the student can communicate at any time during the research process to negotiate issues by a phone call, an email, Skype or organising a face to face meeting; aspects that were evident from the data presented above. Such continuous negotiation promotes a healthy student-supervisor relationship, as well as an appropriate progress of the research student (Grant, 2005).

While the student-supervisor relationship needs to be negotiated continuously during the study, it also needs to be diplomatic, as highlighted by the next theme.

4.2.3.2 Theme 7: Diplomatic negotiation

Diplomatic negotiation refers to a situation where the student and the supervisor negotiate in a prudent way without either taking advantage of the other, arguing or offending each other. Under this theme, the participants expressed their views of a diplomatic negotiation which are presented by the following three categories; (i) negotiated space within differential power positions, (ii) mutual negotiation and (iii) negotiating openly.

4.2.3.2.1 Negotiated space within differential power positions

During the interview, the participants expressed different views on how they negotiated their relationship, which enabled them to work with their supervisors without any power struggle. They described a non-domineering negotiation in getting along with their supervisors and their

study. The doctoral graduates appreciated the fact that their supervisors did not look down upon them when negotiating. This can be seen from the following quotations:

“Honestly I never felt any power struggle, because ahaa when I started my PhD she said to me; we are on first name terms now; you must call me by my first name” (Interview, Mary, line 1136 {2016-11-28}).

“I never felt any power struggle at all, in fact I only hear people talk of that, but I never felt myself” (Interview, Mike, line 323 {2016-12-20}).

“So I never actually felt that she was domineering” (Interview, Nelly, line 657 {2016-11-23}).

“I did not feel that my supervisor was my boss, we put up very well” (Interview, Alice, line 979 {2016-11-15}).

“My own personal view was that obviously he knows more than me about the work, but he never exerted or displayed that kind of attitude that he was arrogant or made it appear to me that you are the student, no nothing, and ahaa... I think that type of relationship made it easy for us to work together” (Interview, Dan, line 91 {2016-11-17}).

The views above express negotiation where power does not seem to be an issue between the student and the supervisor. Several scholars concur that there should be a balance of power between the student and the supervisor (Grant, 2005; Grant, 2003; Pearson & Brew, 2002) as students work better when there is a relationship where they do not see their supervisors as their bosses. Interestingly, Manathunga (2007) argues that supervisors gain power by empowering their students. When the supervisor negotiates with the student without domineering, it provides the student with an opportunity to open up and discuss issues without fear or reservation and hence promotes the student’s learning progress to timely completion of the study (Grossman & Crowther, 2015). However, negotiation should be mutual.

4.2.3.2.2 Mutual negotiation

Mutual negotiation refers to a negotiation process where both the student and the supervisor have an equal opportunity to contribute to the negotiation process. Participants noted that their supervisors listened to their voices, while they also took the supervisors' suggestions. This can be concluded from interview data below:

“Actually it was a give and take academic journey where I would listen to my supervisors and my voice was also considered” (Interview, Mike, line 318 {2016-12-20}).

“Whenever he provided feedback, he would not say this is not the way to be done, he would say there is a better way of doing it, he would say there is another way of doing this and he would... sort of enter into a negotiation “why did you think that this would work” (Interview, Eve, line 503 {2016-12-05}).

“There were times when we discussed something and she has a different opinion and I had a different opinion but we discussed on that to reach an agreeable solution with what we were busy with” (Interview, Mary, line 1116 {2016-11-28}).

“He would say look, would you be able by next Friday to give me the completed chapter...never a demand, you know, never saying I must see that by Friday” (Interview, Dan, line 55 {2016-11-16}).

These quotations suggest mutual negotiation within the relationship. Even though the student is required to take the advice given by the supervisor seriously, it is equally important for the supervisor to listen to the student's voice (Abiddin et al., 2009). According to James and Baldwin (1999) the supervisor should provide honest feedback to the student, but at the same time be considerate of the student's viewpoint. The negotiation process should not be a one-sided process (Pearson & Brew, 2002), nor should supervisors use the command of their power to demand their way (Grant, 2003), as the study is ultimately the doctoral students' work which

should demonstrate independent thinking. The student and the supervisor should negotiate equally during the entire research process on issues such as submission of drafts, feedback and presentation of ideas in writing (Emilson & Johnson, 2007). Mutual negotiation enables the student to do more thorough work and produce a quality thesis (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013), more so when there is transparency in the negotiation process, the focus of the next category.

4.2.3.2.3 Negotiating openly

Openness in diplomatic negotiation refers to being honest and frank while negotiating. It appears that openness promotes truthful negotiation where the student and the supervisor negotiate without anyone hiding something or taking advantage of the other. Participants described how they negotiated openly with their supervisors. Their negotiation was evident from the following quotations:

“We discussed on every issue openly... my supervisors were flexible and we agreed that I would call them directly whenever I had an issue... I would call, they would pick my call, it was so open, straightforward and very clear” (Interview, Mike, line 331 {2016-12-20}).

“We could speak openly about things and I think that probably made it easy to work with him” (Interview, Dan {2016-11-16}).

From the data above, it appears that the negotiation process was characterised as a process during which both the student and the supervisor had the opportunity to express their views openly. Similarly, Gurr (2005) concurs that openness is a recipe of successful negotiation between the student and the supervisor. Despite the power difference, it is crucial for the student and the supervisor to be frank and open about issues being negotiated in the relationship (Gurr, 2005). As such, it seems that open negotiation enables the student and the supervisor to express their views and seek clarification regarding all issues related to the research process (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011) However, sometimes negotiation is not without

challenges between the student and the supervisor, yet it seems that open negotiation could establish the basis for ongoing communication and provide direction on the working relationship between the student and the supervisor (James & Baldwin, 1999).

Apart from negotiating continuously and diplomatically, the participants also pointed to progress related negotiation which is presented by the next theme.

4.2.3.3 Theme 8: Progress related negotiation

While the participants described how they negotiated their relationship as continuous and diplomatic, they also pointed out what they negotiated. This theme indicates what was negotiated in the relationship regarding the progress of the doctoral student. These include, (i) negotiating time lines of doing work, (ii) negotiating a convenient working space and (iii) negotiating knowledge production.

4.2.3.3.1 Negotiating time lines for doing work

Negotiating and agreeing on specific time lines of doing work is essential in the student-supervisor relationship. Doctoral graduates interviewed in this study described how they negotiated the time lines for working on their doctoral study, as highlighted by the following quotations:

“Yes, you see it was a negotiation, are you going to be ready to submit here or will you be ready to submit here?” (Interview, Alice {2016-11-15}).

“There was no fixed agreed time for the feedback, but we would always talk about it every time I give them my work” (Interview, Newton {2016-12-21}).

“You know as a need arose but the Friday, the weekly meeting on a Friday always happened despite whether we met on a Wednesday or so and I think that is important, because when you have structure, you know” (Interview, Dan {2016-11-16}).

“So we had a weekly appointment of an hour... same day same time every week, Wednesday morning from 10:00-11:00” (Interview, Eve {2016-12-05}).

“It also involved ummh, sending him stuff about 24 hours minimum before the time of meeting so that he can give me feedback on that Wednesday” (Interview, Eve {2016-12-05}).

The data above provide evidence of how the time lines of doing work were negotiated by the student and the supervisor in their relationship. According to Hodza (2007) some students can be lazy and rarely meet the deadlines of submitting written drafts. At the same time, supervisors may also take a lot of time before they read and give feedback on the student's work (Galt, 2013). It is therefore necessary for the student and the supervisor to negotiate the time line for submission of written drafts by the student and a time line of feedback from the supervisor (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). Negotiation should also include the frequency of meetings and the meeting time (Detsky & Baerlocher, 2007), as well as the requirement to submit written drafts in advance to allow the supervisor to read and comment before the meeting (Gill & Burned, 2008). Negotiating a meeting time also calls for the negotiation of the meeting place, which is pointed out in the next category.

4.2.3.3.2 Negotiating a convenient meeting space

This refers to the negotiation to enable the student and the supervisor to meet at an agreed convenient place. It also includes a convenient place for dropping off and picking up written drafts. This can be seen from the following quotations:

“From the start we planned to meet on a weekly basis in his office” (Interview, Dan {2016-11-16}).

“So I had to travel to that university, that is the time we set up meetings or sometimes she would travel to PE [Port Elizabeth] then we could meet” (Interview, Nelly {2016-11-23}).

“We would meet in her house or a coffee shop to discuss my work and the relationship developed and up until today we are friends” (Interview, Mary {2016-11-28}).

“I placed the copies somewhere in one of the hotels in town where they would pick it up” (Interview, Careen {2016-12-21}).

Consultation meetings are important avenues for sharing knowledge in the student-supervisor relationship (Gill & Burned, 2008). As such, it is thus important for the students to make every effort to meet with their supervisors (Hodza, 2007), even though it involves taking time to negotiate meeting times and places for the meetings (Gill & Burned, 2008). Meeting places range from the supervisor’s office or house, hotels and coffee shops, as long as it is agreed upon. These meetings are usually meant for discussing and sharing of knowledge between the student and the supervisor, as indicated in the next category.

4.2.3.3 Negotiating knowledge production

Negotiating knowledge production involves the student and the supervisor negotiating ideas, facts and skills required for academic writing and generating knowledge in the relevant field of study. This is done to promote the student’s scholarly development and progress to complete the study. The following quotations elaborate on the above:

“And there were things obviously that he was far more experienced as far as academia is concerned which I know I didn’t know, so I would always take it as good advice” (Interview, Dan {2016-11-16}).

“When they said can you do some more literature... I would do that; it was always negotiated as they would give me reasons” (Interview, Mike {2016-12-20}).

“So there were a lot about my academic writing, but we would always negotiate on the best way to present my work” (Interview, Newton {2016-12-21}).

“So I think that from the start I adopted the attitude that this is a new territory for me, I have never been there before, so I need to take it as it is handed off or down to me” (Interview, Dan {2016-11-16})

As explained earlier in chapter one of this study the student-supervisor relationship is the most important channel of intellectual inheritance between one generation and the next. Doctoral studies enable knowledge sharing between the student and the supervisor, which results in intellectual growth (Jones, 2013). One of the main aims when one ventures into the doctoral study space, is knowledge production and it is this knowledge production process and its presentation that should always be negotiated by both the doctoral student and the supervisor (Grant, 2005). Typically, doctoral students view their supervisors not only as experienced and successful researchers, but also as established authorities in a discipline (Grant, 2003). As such, the above suggest that the student expects to learn from the supervisor (Radloff, 2010).

4.2.3.4 Synthesis of how the student-supervisor relationship was negotiated

The three themes, in response to the question *“How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?”* revealed how the student-supervisor relationship was negotiated. The first theme revealed that negotiation is the backbone of the doctoral research process and is a continuous process. The second theme indicated that negotiation should be done diplomatically to accommodate the voice of every member in the relationship, while the third theme revealed what was negotiated in the relationship with regard to the doctoral student’s progress (See also 2.4.7). In the next section, I present the perceptions pertaining to the student-supervisor relationship towards the successful completion of doctoral studies.

4.2.4 Perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies

The fourth aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies. The fourth sub-research question was framed as, “*What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?*” Drawing was used as a method of data generation (See 3.7.2).

I first present the drawings and the captions made by each of the participants below and this will then be followed by the presentation of the findings and the discussions thereof. It is important to take note that the captions are presented as it was written by the participants without making any changes to possible incorrect spelling, punctuation and tenses.

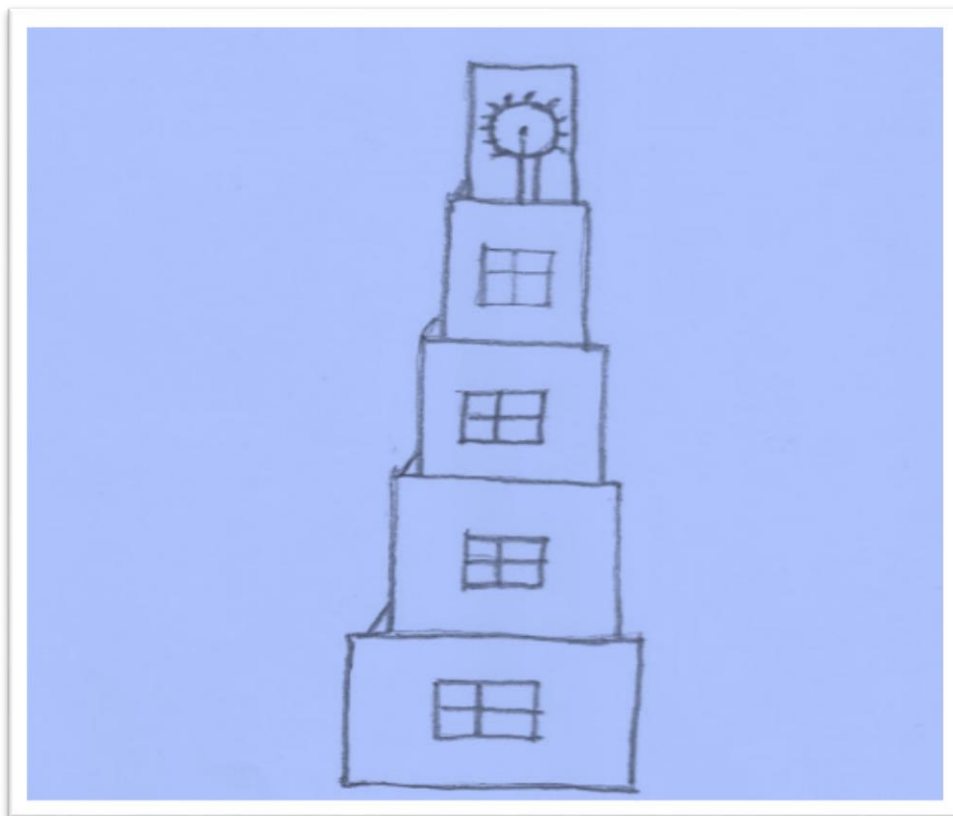


Figure 4.14: Drawing by Dr Mike

Caption: A tower

This is a tower with a light at the top. I attribute my success to the support of my supervisor. I see my supervisor as a tall standing tower with bright light at the top that illuminated my way to the completion of my studies. My supervisor was a light to my way; he guided me throughout the journey as a close friend. His communication was clear and straight forward, his critique was reasonable and clear and the response was in time. There were no dark moments on the way because the light was always seen even from a distance. This light was the frequent guidance he gave which directed my studies to completion in time.

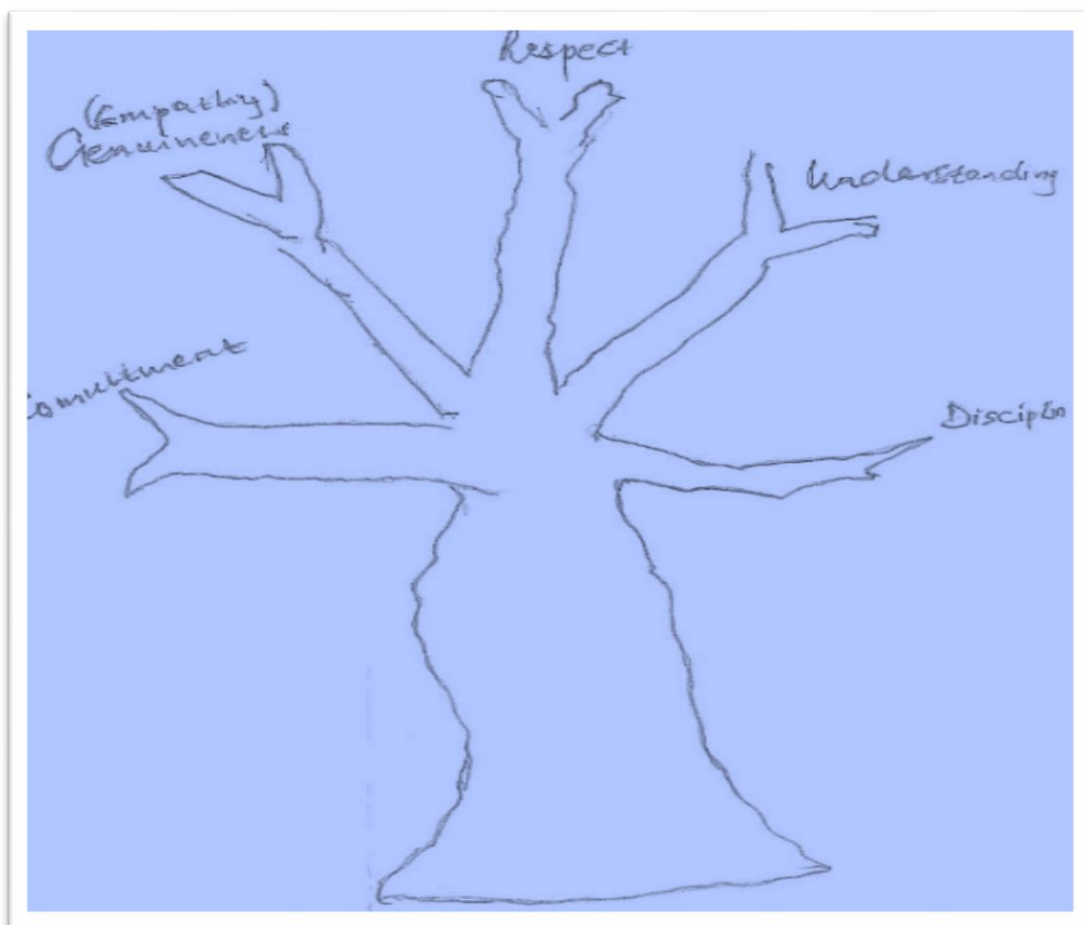


Figure 4.15: Drawing by Dr Dan

Caption: A tree of virtues related to PhD completion

I have drawn a tree to me represents the perception of my success. This tree has five branches. The stem and the roots of this tree represent the student-supervisor relationship. My success

was firmly rooted in the relationship with my supervisor. I attribute my success to the important values which I can say they were always there in our relationship. There was commitment in my part as a student and my supervisor was also very committed. There was mutual respect and understanding which made it easy to work with him. Discipline was very important in our relationship; we always stick to the deadlines. My supervisor was also empathetic to me and he would motivate me throughout the journey.



Figure 4.16: Drawing by Dr Careen

Caption: Flying eagle

I have drawn an eagle flying above the clouds. The clouds represent the challenges in a journey. My perception of what lead to completion of my PhD is the ability to cope with challenges. Together with my supervisors we managed to fly above the many challenges in the PhD journey like an eagle flying above the clouds. We negotiated every step in the journey. We had a close working relationship with my supervisors and everything was negotiated to avoid any conflict that may distract the journey. An eagle aims at the target without turning

back, in the same way my goal was to complete the PhD and my supervisors were supporting me towards this goal, it was a target that we never wanted to miss.



Figure 4.17: Drawing by Dr Beatrice

Caption: A cake

The drawing is a cake. A cake is made of several ingredients to get the sweetness. I see my PhD as a cake which I got out of several efforts in my relationship with my supervisors. This begins with my commitment and readiness to work with my supervisors. My supervisors also had purpose to support me, they were very cooperative and we would meet regularly to discuss my work. There was constant communication with them. They motivated me in the journey, one of them sent me a message at the beginning of the year saying “*Let one of your resolution be to complete your PhD*” this was a very motivating message, it was a driving force to my success.



Figure 4.18: Picture from Dr Eve

Caption: Wedding rings

The two wedding rings show trust. Those who get married trust each other. I use this to represent my perception of what lead to successful completion of my studies. I needed trust from my supervisor and he never broke that trust. He trusted me and I trusted him. It is that trust that holds our relationship to the completion of my PhD. We would discuss all issues openly and together we could chat a way forward for my work, but I was driving the process and my supervisor was providing feedback which was always within a day or two days and that was excellent. It was that trust relationship that lead to my success.



Figure 4.19: Drawing by Dr Nelly

Caption: Traditional hut

I have drawn a hut. The traditional hut is important; it is where the elders stay or where important family meetings are held. It represents your family, your identity. Whenever you are called by elders to meet them in the hut, there is always good or bad that awaits you, the elders can bless you or condemn you. The hut symbolises the university and the elders inside represents my supervisor. My supervisor (the elder in the hut) provided me with a lot of support and opportunities for the success of my PhD. As an elder, my supervisor motivated me to complete my studies. I felt that being in the university and working with my supervisor was like going to the hut and meeting the elders for a blessing. It was a good environment that supported my studies. You can also see that the hut has an open door and open windows. The open door in the hut symbolise my supervisor's office and other offices in the university where I got my support. My supervisor's office was open to me and she was ready to help at any time. The open windows represent many other opportunities in the university which I got during my PhD study to support my success.

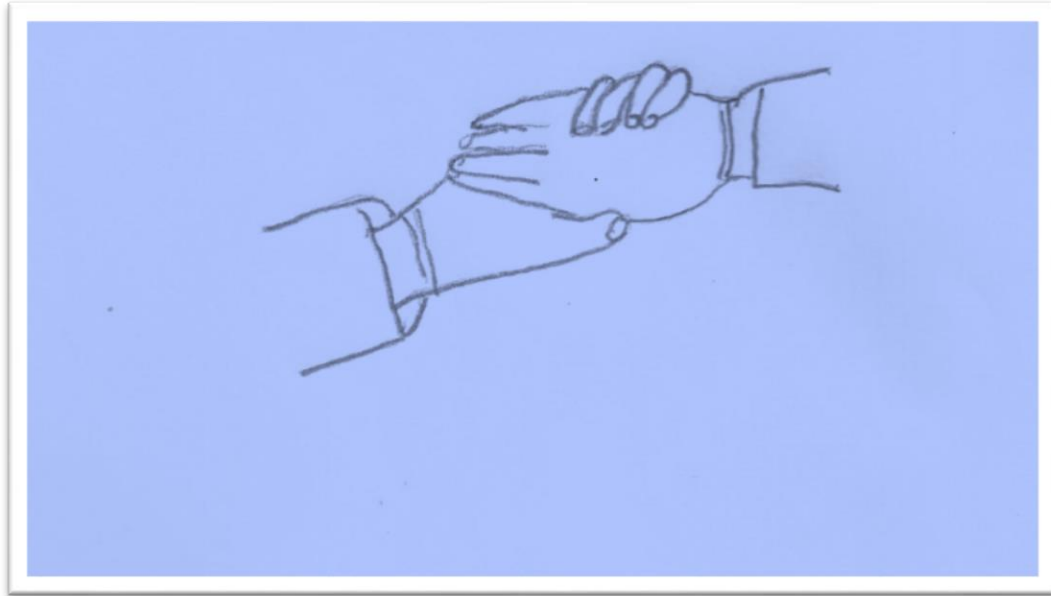


Figure 4.20: Drawing by Dr Winny

Caption: Shaking hands

I have drawn "shaking hands" to show the strength of togetherness which I am attributing my success to. My supervisors were busy people and difficult to get them but they played a big role in the completion of my PhD. They supported me to complete the studies and we worked in unity. Every time we met they gave me the guidance that I needed, they were knowledgeable and they provided a clear direction to my studies. It is that strength of working together with my supervisors which lead to the completion of my studies.

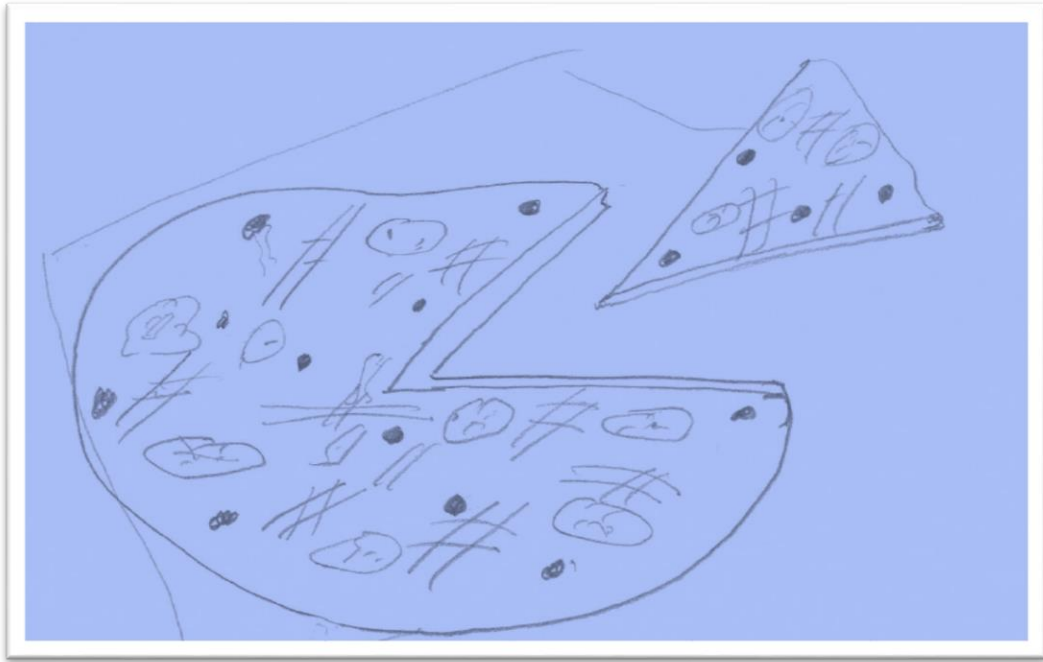


Figure 4.21: Drawing by Dr Alice

Caption: A pizza

I represent my PhD as a delicious warm pizza because many different ingredients/variables have come in to play to make a really outstanding pizza, in the same way I attribute my success of my PhD studies to different variables/ingredients that came to play in my relationship with my supervisor. The base represents me and my supervisor, we started our relationship well, we negotiated how to work with her, and this was the first ingredient. You have to start with good ingredients for a solid base otherwise everything else just falls apart. Good quality flour and right amount water to get the right constitute. But also need to be patient with the dough, there was patience and understanding in our relationship. The cheese represents the family support because they help me define who I am and where am I going. The toppings represent the relevance of the topic and the strength we put with my supervisor together, my supervisor supported me to give the pizza a unique flavour that makes it my own. The plate/oven represents the community and my participants, something to sit your own work on, provide a

platform your pizza. It is the community and the participants that provide the heat to cook your pizza perfectly.

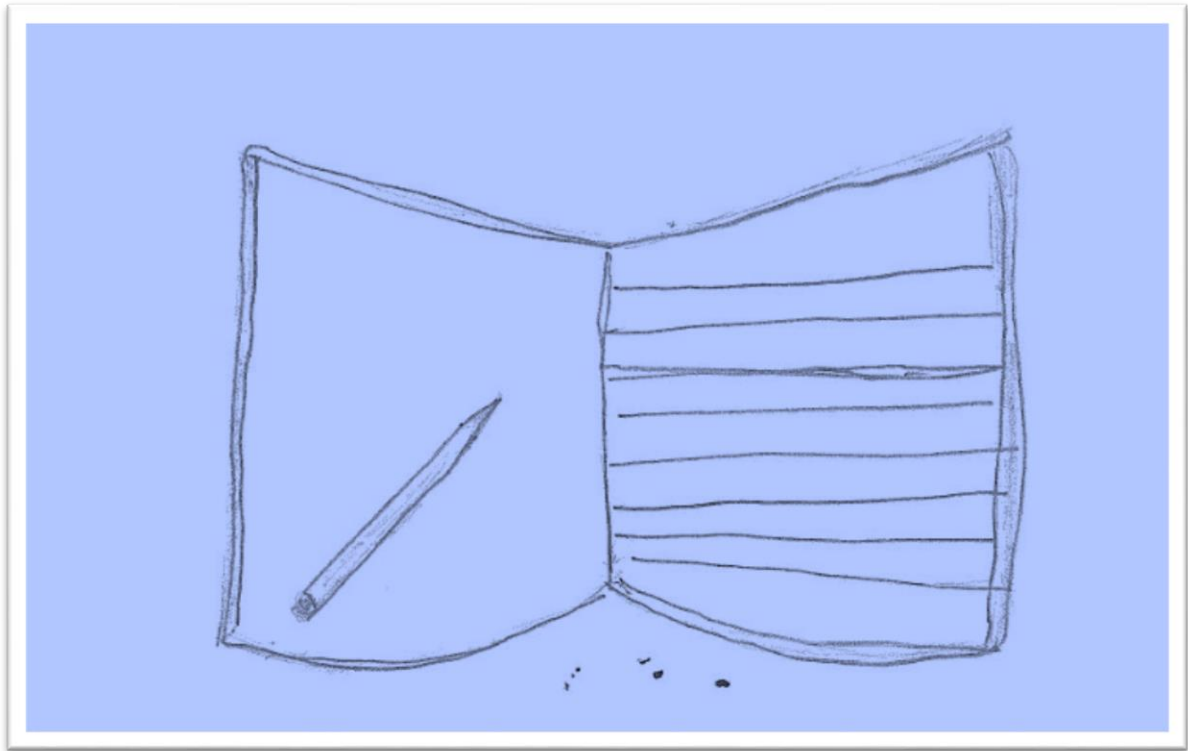


Figure 4.22: Drawing by Dr Mary

Caption: A book of knowledge

I have drawn a book which represents knowledge and the reading materials. I attribute the success of my PhD journey to the knowledge which I gained from my supervisor and the variety of reading materials that my supervisor shared with me. We met regularly with my supervisor and she gave me the guidance and exposed me to various reading materials and accumulations of knowledge made by other people. As an exposed PhD student I learn how to create knowledge from my supervisor and from other people's work, this was a major stepping stone to the completion of my PhD. She also gave me the moral support by encouraging me and she even promise to take me to an international conference if I complete my PhD in time. I had to struggle to finish because I needed that conference and she actually took me.

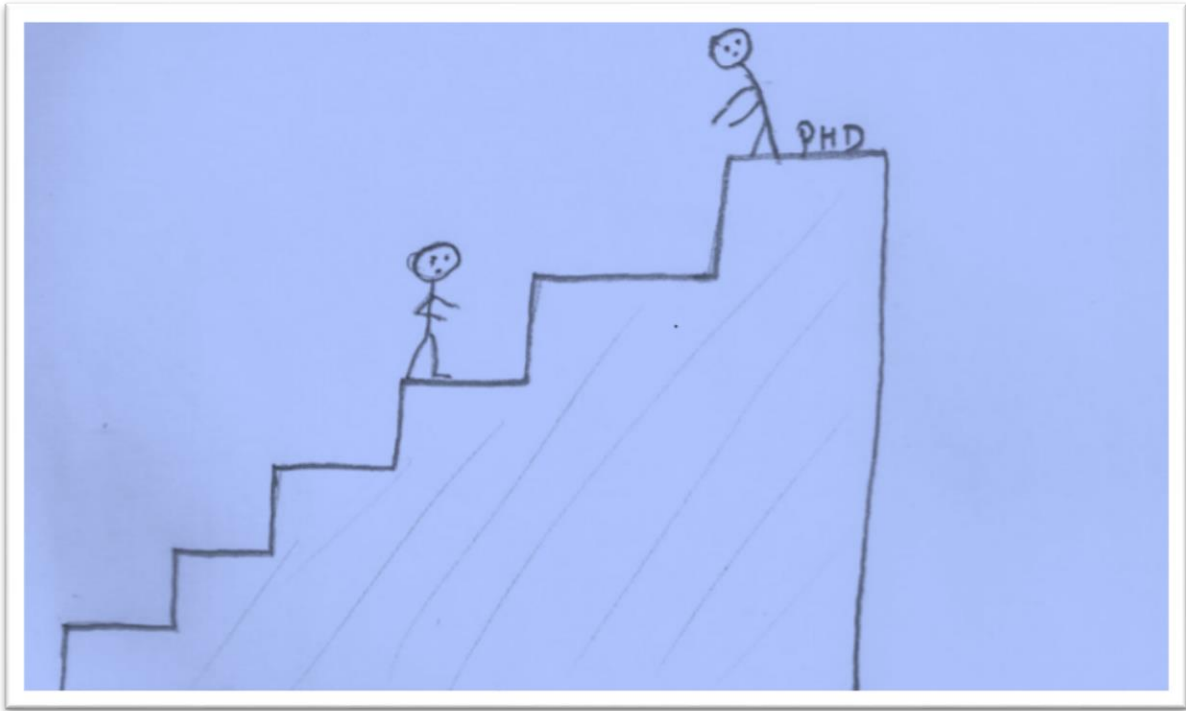


Figure 4.23: Drawing by Dr Newton

Caption: A ladder

I represent my success with the ladder that shows my academic journey. I see myself as somebody who has travelled the long academic journey to the top of ladder being a PhD holder. I attribute my success of completing the PhD to my internal motivation to get to the highest level of education and the support that I got from my supervisors. In the diagram it shows that I have climb through many steps successfully and i am standing at the last step of the ladder just about to get to the top of the ladder. My supervisor is standing at the top of the ladder and extending his hand to support me to the top, my supervisors played a big role in my success, despite the workload that my supervisors had, they were very understanding and ready to help me complete my studies, and their feedback was always prompt making my learning progressive and faster.

Figure 4.24 in the next page gives a summary of the findings.

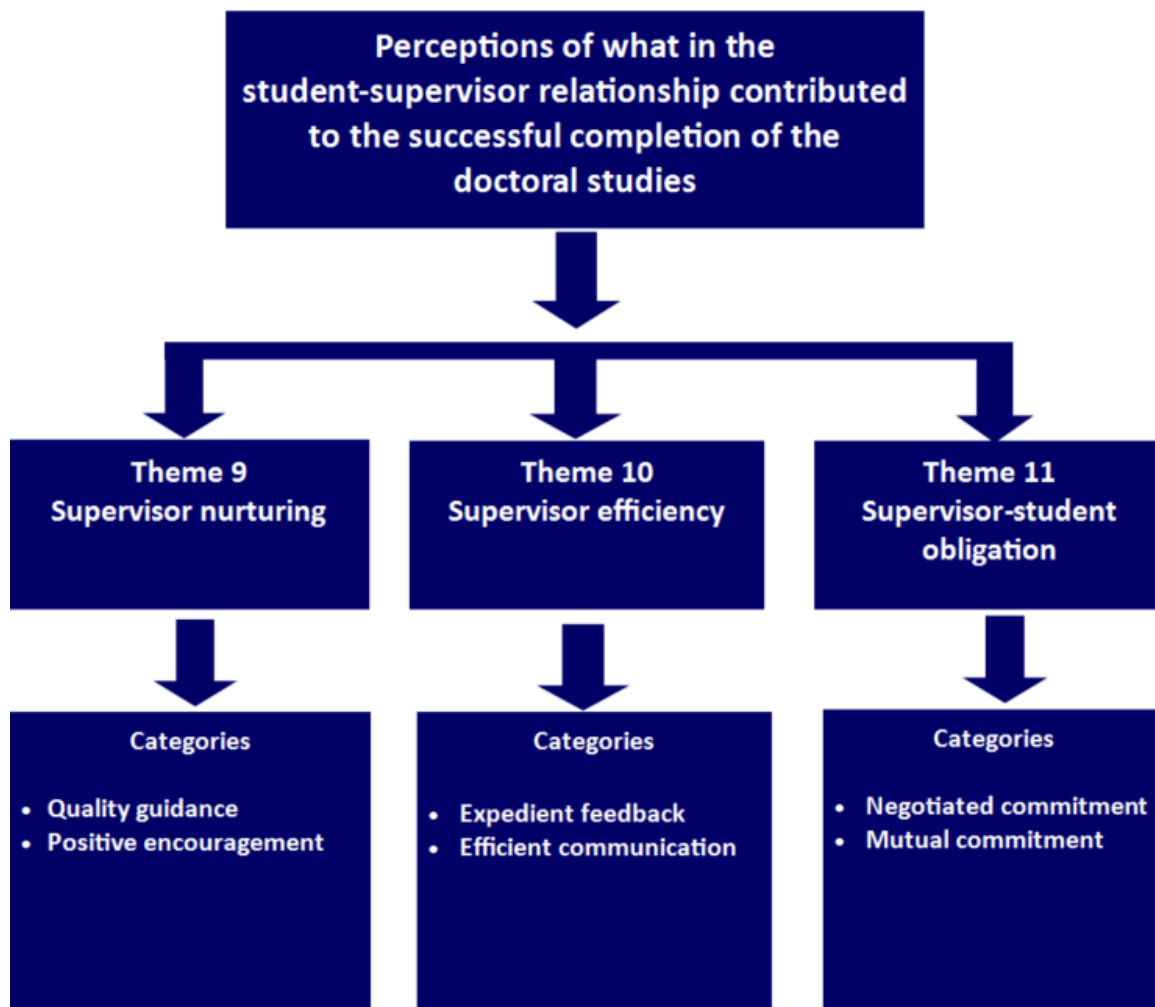


Figure 4.24: Diagrammatic representation of the findings; perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies.

The diagram above presents three themes which are discussed in this section. These are (i) supervisor nurturing, (ii) supervisor efficiency and (iii) mutual supervisor-student commitment.

4.2.4.1 Theme 9: Supervisor nurturing

Supervisor nurturing refers to the responsibility undertaken by the supervisor to develop the research skills of the doctoral student in order to enhance learning and promote good progress of the research student. Under supervisor nurturing, two categories emerged namely, (i) quality guidance, and (ii) positive encouragement from the supervisors.

4.2.4.1.1 Quality guidance

Quality guidance refers to the supervisor's guidance that is done in the best way possible for the success of the research student. From the drawings and captions made by the participants, it is evident that the doctoral graduates attributed their success to the efficient guidance from their supervisors. They talked of their supervisors' guidance as a light to their way, receiving the expected guidance, guiding them to create knowledge, and being ready to help. The above is evident in the following quotations:

"Every time we met they gave me the guidance that I needed, they were knowledgeable and they provided a clear direction to my studies" (Drawing, Winy, figure 4.20 {2016-17-2016}).

"I learn how to create knowledge from my supervisor and from other people's work; this was a major stepping stone to the completion of my PhD" (Interview, Mary, figure 4.22 {2016-11-28}).

"I attribute the success of my PhD journey to the knowledge and skills which I gained from my supervisor" (Drawing, Mary, figure 4.22{2016-11-28}).

"This light was the frequent guidance he gave which directed my studies to completion in time" (Drawing, Mike, figure 4.14 {2016-12-20}).

"My supervisor is standing at the top of the ladder and extending his hand to support me to the top; my supervisors played a big role in my success" (Drawing, Newton, figure 4.23 {2016-12-21}).

"My supervisor's office was open for me and she was ready to help at any time" (Interview, Nelly, figure 4.19 {2016-11-23}).

The supervisor plays a big role in the completion of research projects (McCallin & Shoba, 2012), as is also evident from the quotations above. According to Rettig et al. (2000) the success of any research project largely depends on the supervisor's guiding role. The

supervisor is a source of knowledge to the research student (McCallin & Shoba, 2012) and it is the knowledge and skills gained from the supervisor's guidance which lights the way for the student to be able to progress well (Emilson & Johnson, 2007). Doctoral learning becomes a positive learning experience for the student when the supervisor is ready to help and can easily be reached for consultation and guidance (Lee, 2008). Quality guidance is also associated with positive encouragement from the supervisor, which will become evident from the next category.

4.2.4.1.2 Positive encouragement

Positive encouragement refers to the inspiration of the supervisor which perks up the research student to be focused on the research project and sustain the momentum of the doctoral learning. Participants appreciated positive encouragement as one of the important contributors to their success, which involved motivation, positive messages and even promises by the supervisor. This can be noted from the following quotations:

“As an elder, my supervisor motivated me to complete my studies. I felt that being in the university and working with my supervisor was like going to the hut and meeting the elders for a blessing” (Drawing, Nelly, Figure 4.19 {2016-11-23}).

“One of them sent me a message at the beginning of the year saying, “Let one of your resolutions be to complete your PhD” this was a very motivating message; it was a driving force to my success” (Drawing, Beatrice, figure 4.17 {2016-12-19}).

“She also gave me the moral support by encouraging me and she even promised to take me to an international conference if I complete my PhD in time. I had to struggle to finish because I needed that conference and she actually took me” (Drawing, Mary, figure 4.22 {2016-11-28}).

These quotations suggest that positive encouragement inspires the research student to work towards achieving the ultimate goal of completing the doctoral study. Motivation not only boosts the confidence of the research student to work better and improve his/her work, but also to work in a spirited way towards the success of the study (Lessing & Schulze, 2003). Encouragement is a source of energy for the research student which could make the student work intensively towards completing the doctoral study, as well as producing quality work (Schulze, 2012).

Participants in this study did not only attribute their success to supervisor nurturing in the student-supervisor relationship, but also to the efficiency of the supervisor. This becomes the focus of the next theme.

4.2.4.2 Theme 10: Supervisor efficiency

Another key theme which emerged is supervisor efficiency, which refers to the ability of the supervisor to work with the research student in the most effective way within the available time and resources. Under this theme, the participants expressed their views about two main issues namely, (i) expedient feedback and (ii) frequent communication.

4.2.4.2.1 Expedient feedback

Participants referred to the timely feedback as one of the key contributing factors to their success. The following quotations from the captions of the drawings alluded to expedient feedback, when participants wrote:

“My supervisor was providing feedback which was always within a day or two days and that was excellent” (Drawing, Eve, Figure 4.18 {2016-12-05}).

“Their feedback was always prompt making my learning progressive and faster” (Drawing, Newton, figure 4.23 {2016-12-21}).

“Discipline was very important in our relationship; we always stuck to the deadlines” (Drawing, Dan, figure 4.15 {2016-11-16}).

The sections quoted above from the captions of the drawings suggest that expedient feedback promoted timely completion of the doctoral study. Galt (2013) concurs that timely feedback is an essential element that promotes the student’s research progress. Likewise, Grant (2005) noted that timely feedback enables the student to work faster towards completion of the studies. Many successful doctoral graduates would admit that they managed to complete their studies in the expected time, because their supervisors provided quick and timely feedback (Sayed et al., 2006). Timely feedback enables the student to sustain the energy to drive the study, without which the student could lose the momentum. For the supervisor to be expedient in giving feedback, there should be effective communication during the relationship. This is the focus of the next category.

4.2.4.2.2 Efficient communication

Efficient communication refers to communication which is clear and leaves no doubt in the student’s mind as to what is required to be done. An efficient supervisor would provide clear and frequent communication during the research process. This is evident from the following quotations:

“His communication was clear and straight forward and his critique was reasonable” (Drawing, Mike, figure 4.14 {2016-12-20}).

“We would meet regularly to discuss my work and there was constant communication with them” (Drawing, Beatrice, figure 4.17{2016-12-19}).

The quotations above confirm the efficiency of communication in the student-supervisor relationship. Efficient communication is key in establishing and sustaining a productive student-supervisor relationship (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013), enabling the student to move

ahead without any doubt, misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Gurr (2005) concurs that clear and constant communication promotes clear direction, whereas communication breakdown in the student-supervisor relationship is detrimental to the doctoral learning and completion of the study (Gatfield, 2005). Communication should be a continuous process to allow the smooth writing of the thesis from one step to the next (Khanna & Den Otter, 2013). Efficient communication provides a supportive relationship in which the student is able to produce quality work within the expected time (Gurr, 2010; Khanna & Den Otter, 2013).

Apart from the supervisor's effort of nurturing the student and being efficient in the relationship, the participants also highlighted that the commitment of both the student and the supervisor contributed to their success.

4.2.4.3 Theme 11: Supervisor-student obligation

Supervisor-student obligation refers to the commitment and the collective effort that is invested into the study by the student and the supervisor towards the success of the research student. Participants expressed their views on two main issues, namely (i) negotiated commitment and (ii) mutual commitment.

4.2.4.3.1 Negotiated commitment

As outlined earlier in this study (See 2.4.7), negotiation is a dialogue that leads to an agreement on matters of mutual concern between the student and the supervisor. A negotiated commitment refers to a process where the student and the supervisor negotiate their contribution to the research project. This involves sharing of roles and discussing how they will work in the relationship. Participants pointed to their negotiated commitment to the project as one of the important factors that contributed to their success. This can be seen from the following quotations:

“We had a close working relationship with my supervisors and everything was negotiated to avoid any conflict that may distract the journey” (Drawing, Careen, figure 4.16 (2016-12-21)).

“We started our relationship well; we negotiated how to work with her, and this was the first ingredient” (Drawing, Alice, figure 4.21 {2016-11-15}).

It is evident from the quotations above that participants attributed their success to a negotiated working relationship. The student-supervisor relationship should be a partnership in which both the student and the supervisor negotiate and re-negotiate their respective contributions to the research project (Pearson & Brew, 2002). A student-supervisor commitment that is negotiated seems to prevent conflict between the student and the supervisor and hence promotes a cooperative relationship that enhances learning (Watt & Chiappetta, 2011). It is through negotiation that the student and the supervisor come to an agreement on what to do at every step of the research process (Detsky & Baerlocher, 2007). A negotiated relationship provides the student with an opportunity to work progressively for timely completion of the studies (Grant, 2005). In addition, it also appears to promote mutual commitment as pointed out in the next category.

4.2.4.3.2 Mutual commitment

Mutual commitment implies that both the student and the supervisor dedicate their efforts to work towards the success of the research project. Participants described a combined effort in which they worked together with their supervisors to contribute to the research project. This involved individual commitment, working together and the commitment to meet regularly as expressed by the following quotations:

“There was commitment in my part as a student and my supervisor was also very committed” (Drawing, Dan, figure 4.15 {2016-11-16}).

“It is that strength of working together with my supervisors which lead to the completion of my studies” (Drawing, Winy, figure 4.20 {2016-12-16}).

“My supervisors also had purpose to support me, they were very cooperative and we would meet regularly to discuss my work” (Drawing, Beatrice, figure 4.17 {2016-12-19}).

The quotations above describe the mutual commitment within the student-supervisor relationship. Pole et al. (2006) argue that student commitment coupled with the supervisor commitment is a good recipe for a successful research project. The majority of supervisors who commit themselves to be engaged in the study and to provide regular guidance, are proud of their students who also put effort into their work. Pooling efforts appears to promote a higher throughput rate (Litalien, 2015). The doctoral graduates also attributed their success to the commitment to meet regularly with their supervisors (Gill & Burned, 2008), to discuss progress, explore new ideas and to address problems.

4.2.4.4 Synthesis of the perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies

The three themes in response to the question “What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?” described the perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of their doctoral studies. It is clear from the findings that the supervisor’s establishing of a nurturing relationship is central to the doctoral student’s success. Furthermore, inspiration and encouragement enthuse the student to keep working and to do more and better. What is also required is efficiency in terms of engaging in the doctoral student’s study to be able to provide meaningful discussion and feedback, which enables the student to sustain the momentum. It seems that the student’s success is linked to the quality of the supervisor’s guidance and direction. However, it is not only the quality of the supervisor’s guidance and direction as the

research journey is a mutual one during which both parties have to show commitment and resilience during the journey (See also 2.4.8).

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the findings of the doctoral graduates' expectations during their doctoral studies, what they subsequently experienced, and how they negotiated their student-supervisor relationship. Taking these into account, the doctoral graduates then pointed out what they perceived contributed to their successful completion of their doctoral study. In the next chapter, I present a summary of the findings and offer a response to the main research question.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to generate knowledge to enable a better understanding of the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in education, and as such the main research question was formulated as follows:

What is the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities?

The exploration took place in the context of two African universities, namely NMU in South Africa and MU in Kenya. The study was located in the field of teaching and learning in higher education, particularly in postgraduate supervision as an area of study. A qualitative approach was used, located within an interpretivist paradigm and positioned as an intrinsic interpretive case study. Individual semi-structured interviews and drawing were used to generate the data with the participants, five from each of the two universities. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data while the interpersonal theory of Mainhard et al. (2009), adopted from Wubbels and Mieke (2006), was used to make meaning of the findings.

In this chapter I summarise the findings, draw conclusions from the themes, and then offer some implications. I also explain the theoretical contribution and provide suggestions for further research and point out the limitations of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This section provides a summary of all the themes generated from the thematic analysis. The themes answered the four sub-research questions in response to the main research question. The main research question was phrased as: *“What is the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities?”*

5.2.1 Expectations of the student supervisor relationship

From the thematic analysis three themes emerged to answer the first sub-research question: *“What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?”*

It is evident from the findings that doctoral students expected a relationship that would support their doctoral research towards completion. They pointed to the expectation of a purpose-focused relationship where they wanted their supervisors to provide effective mentoring that would assist them in completing their studies within the expected time. At the same time, they wanted an induction into academia and their development as independent scholars to be enhanced. Furthermore, they expected a collaborative student-supervisor relationship underpinned by a harmonious working relationship to foster understanding and allow for honest and productive feedback from the supervisor, built on commitment and support to get the PhD efficiently done. They held a high regard for integrity in the student-supervisor relationship and expected that moral principles such as mutual commitment, mutual trust, honesty and no power plays, which guide the research process, should be upheld.

The thematic analysis and the summary above lead me to conclude that doctoral candidates expect a relationship that is supportive of completing the doctoral study and in the process be mentored to develop as independent scholars. This however, should take place in a relationship

that is respectful of the other enabling the student and supervisor to productively work together.

5.2.2 Experiences of the student-supervisor relationship

From the thematic analysis, two themes emerged to answer the second sub-research question:

“What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?”

The experiences of the student-supervisor relationship seemed to be positive and satisfying as their supervisors inspired them to complete their studies through motivating and encouraging them. They experienced a bond with their supervisors in a relationship supported by scaffolding which promoted their doctoral learning process. However, some student-supervisor relationships were less satisfying, as characterised by a lack of robust guidance; supervisor unavailability; a lack of regular and clear communication and delayed feedback. In such a dissatisfactory relationship it was difficult for doctoral learning to occur optimally and for them to complete their studies in time. However, it is important to take note that though the experiences are presented as fulfilling or unfulfilling, the relationships sometimes seemed to have moments of both.

The analysis and the above summary lead me to conclude that it is vital to have a positive student-supervisor relationship as it promotes doctoral learning and successful completion of the doctoral studies. When a student-supervisor relationship is filled with dissatisfaction, doctoral learning is impeded and could delay the student from completing the PhD or cause the doctoral student to drop out.

5.2.3 Negotiating the student-supervisor relationship

From the thematic analysis three themes emerged to answer the third sub-research question:

“How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?”

The findings show that the student-supervisor relationship was a continuously negotiated process, relying on consistent communication throughout the study. The negotiations were flexible and diplomatic, with both the doctoral student and the supervisor having equal opportunity to contribute to the negotiation process, share power, and negotiate openly about doctoral issues without reservation. Nevertheless, it also emerged that some doctoral candidates chose not to negotiate and simply accepted what their supervisors told them to do.

The thematic analysis and the summary above lead me to conclude that negotiation was a continuous activity in the student-supervisor relationship, with the student and the supervisor mostly exchanging views, ideas and knowledge in a critical, but amicable way.

5.2.4 Perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of doctoral studies

From the thematic analysis three themes emerged to answer the fourth sub-research question: “What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?”

A student-supervisor relationship which is anchored in supervisor nurturing creates opportunities for student success. The explanation of the doctoral graduates showed how their supervisors nurtured them through quality guidance, drawing on their expert knowledge and experience, which enabled them to understand the research process and progress well. They attributed their success to the inspiration of the supervisor, which boosted their morale and gave them the energy to work harder towards completing their studies. The supervisors’ efficiency was key to the success of the doctoral studies, providing an opportunity for development, giving timely feedback and communicating efficiently in the relationship. It was however clear that success required a collective effort and mutual commitment in which both

the student and the supervisor dedicated their efforts to the research project, without which conflict could arise which could affect the progress of the doctoral study.

From the summary above, which is drawn from the thematic analysis, I conclude that the supervisor's efficient guidance was a key pillar in the successful completion of their doctoral studies. They were nurtured in the relationship through effective communication, quality guidance and encouragement to keep the doctoral students on-task.

5.3 FINAL SYNTHESIS

Collectively all the themes of the four sub-questions respond to the main research question which was phrased as: "What is the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities"? The themes point to the expectations of a student-supervisor relationship which is purpose-focused, collaborative, and underpinned by integrity. It also revealed how the doctoral graduates experienced the student-supervisor relationship as fulfilling or unfulfilling and sometimes containing moments of both. At the same time, it revealed how the student-supervisor relationship was negotiated as a continuous process and in a diplomatic way, with negotiations related to the progress of the doctoral student. Finally, from the perceptions of the student-supervisor relationship in the successful completion of their doctoral studies, it is clear that the supervisor's role in establishing a nurturing relationship and being efficient in engaging with the doctoral student is central to the doctoral student's success. However, the commitment of both the student and the supervisor to the research process is a key ingredient that enabled the successful completion of the research project.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The following implications are drawn from the findings:

Induction of new doctoral students into the research community is a vital activity that should be prioritised by supervisors. Providing a comprehensive orientation gives the doctoral students information on what to expect on issues regarding the process of supervision, policies and general understanding of the research journey.

The university management should ensure that supervisors are given the opportunity to supervise the topics presented by doctoral students which match with their areas of specialisation. This promotes effective supervision in specific knowledge areas.

One way of increasing the PhD throughput rate is to ensure that supervisors are not overloaded and thus have time to mentor the doctoral students for success. It is therefore necessary for universities to set a reasonable number of postgraduate students to be supervised by academics at one time.

Student-supervisor relationships have a significant impact on doctoral students' success and as such, it requires universities to develop a culture of collegiality within the doctoral supervisor and student community. Collegiality enhances student learning and promotes progress.

University postgraduate committees should ensure that there are postgraduate supervision policies in place which promote the negotiation of a contract between supervisor and student, focusing on regular communication and frequent guidance in the relationship.

Supervision is a complex and dynamic activity for which the supervisor requires several skills. As such, efficient supervision that promotes student success can only be achieved when universities invest in developing the academics to strengthen their supervision skills. This requires the university management to provide a variety of innovative courses on postgraduate supervision to support the academics.

Supervisors should be sensitised on how to enable the doctoral students to develop agency regarding their doctoral learning. This enables mutual contribution to the research project and the development of the doctoral student to be an independent scholar.

University management should invest in establishing and equipping postgraduate research commons as a space for research, for postgraduate students and the academics. This enriches doctoral learning and might improve completion of doctoral studies.

University management should establish a regular formal review of doctoral students' progress. This could prevent student stagnation or discontinuation from the programme due to unnoticed challenges.

5.5 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

I drew on the interpersonal supervisor behaviour model of Mainhard et al. (2009, p. 363), adopted from Wubbels and Mieke (2006), as I explained in chapter two (See also 2.6), to make meaning of my findings. There are two key dimensions in their model, namely, influence and proximity. The influence dimension is a continuum (ranging from dominance to submission), which describes the extent to which a particular supervisor influences the student's activities during the research process. The proximity dimension is also a continuum (ranging from opposition to cooperation), which describes the emotional distance or interpersonal proximity between a supervisor and a student. They also identified eight types of supervisor behaviour, namely: leading, helpful/friendly, understanding, giving students opportunity for independence, uncertain, dissatisfied, admonishing and being strict. I used their model to theorise and explain the findings of my study (See Figure 5.1).

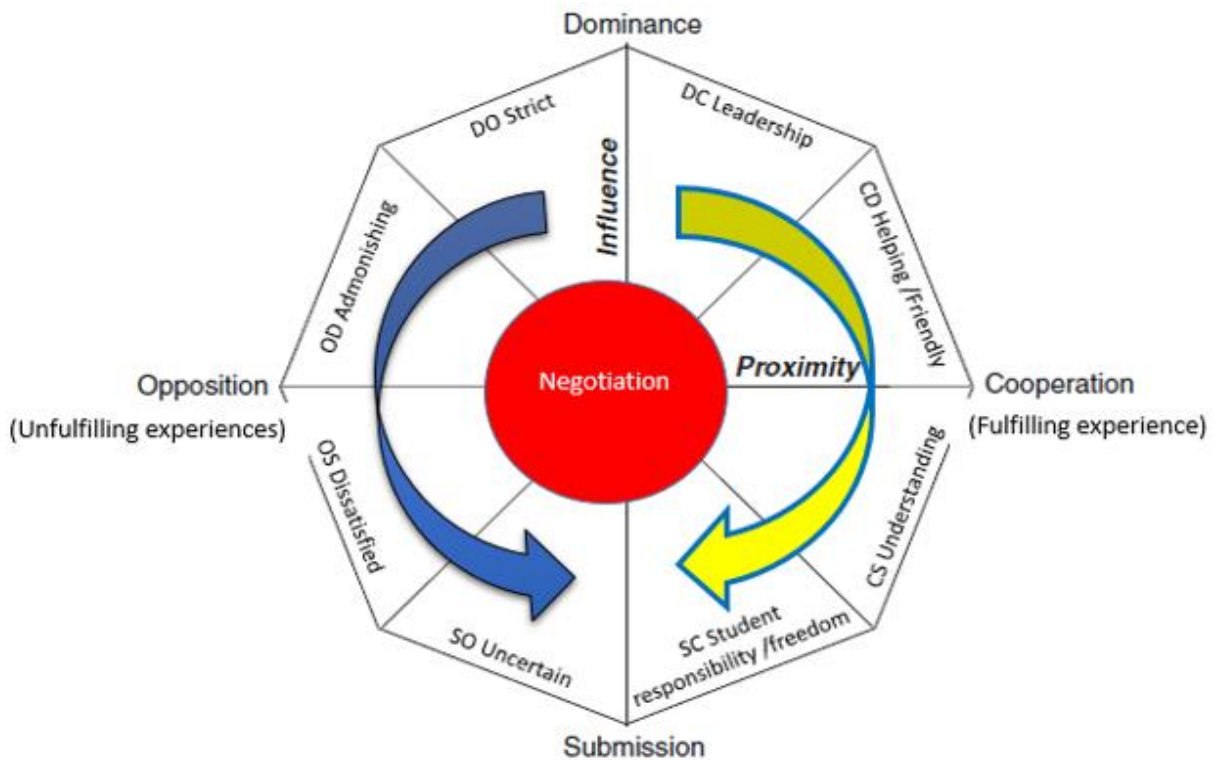


Figure 5.1 The model for interpersonal student-supervisor relationship (Adapted from Mainhard et al., 2009)

It is evident that a student-supervisor relationship which enables doctoral learning, as well as the successful completion of the doctoral studies, is positioned in the two quadrants on the right, depicted in the sections covered by the yellow arrow. This is the point where a cooperative relationship between the doctoral student and the supervisor exists, and where the supervisor displays the qualities of leadership, being friendly, helpful, understanding and giving the student freedom to take responsibility for the doctoral learning. The findings in my study clearly suggest that doctoral students attribute their success to a collaborative relationship with their supervisors, who lead the process through mentoring and efficiently engaging the students. The doctoral graduates' experiences also pointed to their supervisors as helpful, friendly, understanding and at the same time making sure that there is a fine balance between dominance and submission in the relationship to ensure that they showed leadership but also give the doctoral student the opportunity to be independent in the research process. As

such, this section (with the yellow arrow) clearly explains what the doctoral graduates experienced as a fulfilling relationship.

It is also evident that a dissatisfying student-supervisor relationship impedes the doctoral learning. This is positioned in the two quadrants on the left, depicted in the sections covered by the blue arrow. At this point, the student and the supervisor work in opposition and the supervisor displays the qualities of being uncertain, dissatisfied and strict. This explains the findings in this study, which indicate that the doctoral graduates experienced the relationship as unfulfilling, especially when there was little engagement between the student and the supervisor. The element of admonishing was however not noted in this study. While encountered as a twofold relationship, as fulfilling or unfulfilling, the relationship sometimes seemed to have moments of both, as some doctoral graduates experienced both fulfilling and unfulfilling moments in the relationship. It seems that there can be a shift or movement along the continuum to either side, opposition or cooperation, during the research period.

The importance of negotiation, as seen in my study, is not shown in model of Mainhard et al. (2009) and as such I posit that at the center of the relationship lies the negotiation process. It can be seen from the findings of my study that if there was negotiation in the student-supervisor relationship, it strengthened the affiliation between the student and the supervisor and thus created a harmonious working relationship. The doctoral graduates explained how they negotiated in order to prevent conflict, hence avoiding opposition in the relationship. It is also evident that the lack of proper negotiation created discontent and opposition between the student and the supervisor. When the student and the supervisor negotiated their respective contributions to the research process, it seemed to open up the space for the doctoral student to develop independence regarding scholarship. It appears to me therefore that negotiation can be

placed at the centre of the student-supervisor relationship as it affects both the influence and the proximity of the supervisor and the doctoral student in the relationship.

Finally, I conclude that the nature of the relationship between the doctoral students and their supervisors in this study is associated with both dimensions of the model, namely, influence and proximity, with negotiation central to the relationship.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

I recommend the following for further research:

This study focused on doctoral graduates from two African universities, namely, NMU and MU. In order to get a wider understanding of the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in Africa, I recommend that this research should be replicated in other African universities.

Even though the study was carried out in two African universities, namely, NMU and MU, it was not a comparative study. It would be significant if the same study is done as a comparative study to compare and contrast the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in South Africa and Kenya.

The study was specifically aimed at exploring the views of doctoral graduates in the faculty of education. It will deepen our understanding of the student-supervisor relationship if the views of supervisors in the same faculty are also explored.

While this study focused on doctoral graduates within five years after graduation, it would be significant also to do a study with continuing doctoral students to understand more about what could be holding them back or moving them forward towards completion within the context of the student-supervisor relationship.

The approach taken in this study is qualitative; individual semi-structured interviews and drawing were used to generate the data. The same study could also be done using a different methodology as it could extend the depth of the findings.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations are as follow:

The sample consisted of only ten doctoral graduates from two universities in Africa. While the findings cannot be generalised, the study does however offer insight into the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in the two African universities.

The participants in this study were doctoral graduates. Most of them seemed to have a lot of commitments and it was difficult to get hold of them. Some accepted the invitation to participate but later cancelled due to their busy schedule. However, I managed to get ten participants required for this study.

I used drawing as a method of data generation in this study. Some participants did not want to draw and as such they provided pictures which they downloaded from the internet to represent what they would have drawn.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter concluded this qualitative study by providing a summary of the findings and conclusions drawn from the four sub-questions, which collectively answered the main research question: *“What is the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in two African universities?”* The study revealed the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in an African context and thus added to the few studies that have explored the nature of the student-supervisor relationship in the context of African universities. The findings revealed the

students' expectation of a supportive relationship and the importance of it in the completion of doctoral studies. While some relationships contained tensions, it seemed that negotiation is a vital activity that needs to be continuous and done cordially, to maintain the relationship and to sustain the forward movement in the study. It was evident that the supervisor's establishing a nurturing and efficient relationship is central to the doctoral student's success and when this is not established, the doctoral study is in jeopardy. African universities struggling with the throughput of doctoral students could learn from this research in order to improve student-supervisor relationships and promote the success rate of doctoral students. Production of more PhDs in Africa is of great significance, seeing that there is a growing need for research to support the national social, economic and environmental goals of African countries. The prosperity of African nations depends on having more doctoral graduates who have the skills, knowledge and expertise necessary to drive innovations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE, NMU



16 August 2016
Prof N de Lange / Mr C Rugut
Education Faculty
NMMU

Dear Mr Rugut

The nature of postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in education: An exploration in two African universities.

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval was approved by the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee of Education (ERTIC) at the meeting held on 2 August 2016.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.
The ethics clearance reference number is H16-EDU-ERE-014.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Ms J Hay
Secretary: ERTIC

APPENDIX B: PROJECT INFORMATION



PROJECT INFORMATION

Dear doctor.....

My name is CORNELIUS KIPLETING RUGUT. I am conducting a research on the title;

“The nature of postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in education: An exploration in two African universities.”.

Supervised by. Prof Naydene de Lange-NMU, (Contact +27-41-5044519)

Prof Rose Korir- Moi university, (Contact +254-722 727779)

Prof Andre Du Plessis - NMU

The expected participants in this study are doctoral graduates in education who graduated in Nelson Mandela University (NMU), South Africa and Moi university (MU), Kenya within the last five years.

I invite you to consider taking part in this study. Your participation will be highly appreciated.

This study will meet the requirements of research ethics committee (human) of the NMU.

Aim of the research

The main aim of this research is to explore the nature of the student-supervisor relationship as experienced by graduates who recently completed their educational doctoral studies in the two African universities.

Research questions

- What were their expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?
 - What were their experiences of the student-supervisor relationship during the study?
 - How did they negotiate the student-supervisor relationship during the study?
 - What in the student-supervisor relationship do they perceive to have contributed to the successful completion of their studies?
- *The four research questions will be the Centre of our discussion in my meeting with you.*

Significance of the research project

The findings of this study will be of significance in the following ways:

- The knowledge produced in this study will be used to enable better understanding of postgraduate supervision in higher education in African universities.
- The findings will contribute to the literature in the field of doctoral studies in education and related disciplines.
- It will also enable better understanding of the student-supervisor relationship in African universities. This can assist in improving the completion of doctoral studies in these African universities.

Research plan and methods

The study will be involving 5 doctoral education graduates in NMU and the same number in Moi University.

The doctoral graduates will be involved in taking part in oral individual interviews and making drawings.

The meeting is expected to last for one hour

Participants will be treated with respect and their privacy will be maintained. No individual will be identifiable in any report that will be written.

I will be grateful of your participation in this research.

Thank you

APPENDIX C: PREAMBLE LETTER



PREAMBLE LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is *CORNELIUS KIPLETING RUGUT*, masters' student at Nelson Mandela University, faculty of education. I am kindly requesting you to participate in my research study. Together with my supervisors we will provide you with the necessary information to assist you to understand the study and explain what would be expected of you as a participant. The guidelines would include the purpose of the study, significance of the study, your rights as a participant and any risks involved. Please feel free to ask the researcher to clarify anything that is not clear to you.

To participate you will be required to provide a written consent that will include your signature, date and initials to verify that you understand and agree to the information provided to you.

You have the right to raise concerns regarding the study at any time. Immediately report any new problems during the study to the researcher. The telephone numbers are: the researcher (063 8844118 or +254723 096513-Cornelius k. Rugut) and that of the supervisor is (27-41-5044519- Prof Naydene de Lange). Please feel free to call these numbers.

It is also important that you are aware of the fact that the ethical integrity of the study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the Nelson Mandela University. The REC-H consists of a group of independent experts that has the responsibility to ensure that the rights and welfare of the participants in the research are protected and that the studies are conducted in an ethical manner. Studies cannot be conducted without REC-H's approval. Queries with regard to your rights as a participant can be directed to the Research Ethics Committee (Human), department of Research Capacity Development, P.O box 77000, NMU, Port Elizabeth, 6031.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time during the study without penalty. Your identity will at all times remain confidential. The results of the research study will be publicized in my dissertation.

Cornelius Kipleting Rugut (Researcher)

(Prof Naydene de Lange - Supervisor)

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am a Master of Education student in Nelson Mandela University undertaking research on student-supervisor relationships. In order to do my research, I will work with PhD graduates who have recently obtained their doctoral degree in any field of education. I expect them to share their experiences about their relationship with their supervisors during their period of study. I will be grateful of your participation in this research.

RESEARCHER'S DETAILS AND SUPERVISORS	
Title of the research project	The nature of postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in education: An exploration in two African universities
Name of researcher	Rugut Cornelius Kipleting
Researchers' contact	063 8844118
Name of supervisor	Prof Naydene de Lange
Supervisors' contact	041 5044519
Co-supervisors	Prof Rose Ruto-Korir and Prof Andre du Plessis

DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT		Initial
I, the participant and the undersigned	(full names)	
Contact number		
<u>OR</u>		
A.1 HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:		Initial
I was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project		
that is being undertaken by	Rugut Cornelius Kipleting	
From	Faculty of Education	
of the Nelson Mandela University.		

2. THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME (THE PARTICIPANT):			<u>Initial</u>
2.1	Aim:	I understand that the study aims to explore the nature of postgraduate student-supervisor relationship in the completion of doctoral studies in education and that it will be carried out in Nelson Mandela university, South Africa and Moi university, Kenya.	
2.2	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand that I will be making drawings and taking part in an oral individual interview and that the interview will be recorded and I agree. • I understand that the drawings I make will be copied by the researcher for analysis and I agree. • I also understand that the information I provide will be re-used in future for research and I agree. 	
2.3	Confidentiality:	My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.	
2.4	Possible risks	I understand that there will be a counsellor in case of emotional discomfort due to recall of some experiences of the student-supervisor relationship.	
2.5	Voluntary participation / refusal / discontinuation:	<p>My participation is voluntary.</p> <p>My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care / employment / lifestyle.</p>	

3. THE INFORMATION ABOVE WAS EXPLAINED TO ME BY:			<u>Initial</u>
The researcher			
In	English		
and I am in command of this language			
I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.			
4.	No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.		
5.	Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.		

6. I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT:		
Signed/confirmed at	on	20
Signature or right thumb print of participant	Signature of witness:	
	Full name of witness:	

STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)									
I,	(name of interviewer)	declare that:							
1.	I have explained the information given in this document to	(name of patient/participant)							
	and / or his / her representative	(name of representative)							
2.	He / she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;								
3.	This conversation was conducted in	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Afrikaans</td> <td></td> <td>English</td> <td></td> <td>Xhosa</td> <td></td> <td>Other</td> </tr> </table>	Afrikaans		English		Xhosa		Other
	Afrikaans		English		Xhosa		Other		
	And no translator was used <u>OR</u> this conversation was translated into								
(language)	by	(name of translator)							
4.	I have detached Section D and handed it to the participant	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>	YES	NO					
YES	NO								
Signed/confirmed at	on	20							
Signature of interviewer	Signature of witness:								
	Full name of witness:								

DECLARATION BY TRANSLATOR (WHEN APPLICABLE)	
I,	(full names)
ID number	
Qualifications and/or	
Current employment	
confirm that I:	
1.	Translated the contents of this document from English into (language)

2.	Also translated questions posed by	(name of participant)	as well as the answers given by the investigator/representative;
3.	Conveyed a factually correct version of what was related to me.		
Signed/confirmed at		on	20
I hereby declare that all information acquired by me for the purposes of this study will be kept confidential.			
Signature of translator		Signature of witness:	
		Full name of witness:	

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANT/REPRESENTATIVE OF PARTICIPANT

Dear participant/representative of the participant

Thank you for your/the participant's participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:

- an emergency arises as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study, or
- the following occur

(indicate any circumstances which should be reported to the investigator)

Kindly contact	
at telephone number	(it must be a number where help will be available on a 24 hour basis, if the research project warrants it)

APPENDIX E: DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOL

First engagement: Interview: Interview guide

Individual semi-structured interview will be used.

The following one main question will be asked in the interview:

Tell me about your expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during your doctoral studies.

Other questions will be asked during the interview from what the participant says. I will therefor use probing questions, clarifying questions, follow up questions, specifying questions and interpreting questions to elicit more details.

Second engagement: Drawing

Drawing prompt

The following **drawing prompt** will be used:

1. In the space provided:
2. Draw a picture that represents your experience of the student-supervisor relationship during your doctoral studies.
3. Please note that there are no good or bad drawings, just draw.
4. Below the drawing write an explanation why you have chosen this representation and what it means to you.
5. Prepare to give an oral explanation of what you have drawn, what issues are represented in the drawing and what it means to you

Third engagement: Interview

Interview guide

Individual semi-structured interview will be used.

The following one main question will be used for the interview

Tell me how you negotiated your relationship with your supervisor during your doctoral studies

Other questions will be asked during the interview from what the participant says. I will therefore use probing questions, clarifying questions, follow up questions, specifying questions and interpreting questions to elicit more details.

Fourth engagement: Drawing

Drawing prompt

The following **drawing prompt** will be used;

1. In the space provided:
2. Draw a picture of what you perceive to have led to the completion of your doctoral studies in the student-supervisor relationship
3. Please note that there are no good or bad drawings, just draw.
4. Below each drawing write an explanation of why you have chosen this representation and what it means to you.
5. Prepare to give an oral explanation of what you have drawn, what issues are represented in the drawing and what it means to you

APPENDIX F: EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIPTION

Interview with Dr Eve

Date 5th December 2016

Transcribed data

Research question one- expectations of the student-supervisor relationship

1.	Interview with Dr. Eve- NMU
2.	Me: Thank you so much Dr Eve for coming, you are most welcome to this session. I sent you the project information which has four research questions and that is about expectations of your student-supervisor relationship in your PhD studies, experiences, negotiation and your perception on what led to your success. So the four research questions which I sent you, we are going to do an interview then drawings
3.	Eve: Ok, that is Ok
4.	Me: Thank you, would you wish that I clarify something about this?
5.	Eve: Yes, if you say, what were their expectations and experiences, who are you referring to?
6.	Me: I am referring to your journey, from a student perspective. From a student perspective, what did you as a PhD student expect of the relationship
7.	Eve: Ok
8.	Me: From a student perspective, all this is about the student, expectations of the relationship, the experiences of the student, the perceptions of the student, say this is what led to my success and again the negotiations
9.	Eve: Ok
10.	Me: Is that fine with you now?
11.	Eve: Yes
12.	Me: Ok, so this study is about the student-supervisor relationship Dr Eve, and as you understand the student-supervisor relationship plays a big role in the completion of the doctoral studies.

	May be we can start with that about your supervisor Dr Eve, did you have to choose your supervisor for yourself or the faculty gave you the supervisor for your PhD
13.	Eve: that is a difficult one it is coming from both sides (me, Mmmh) let us say I have chosen the person, went to the person, go and speak to the person to see whether that particular person could be interested and have the capacity to take me, then you agreed that, ok, we will work together. It was not one sided because I was a staff member, I knew who was on the..... who was capable of doing doctoral supervision.
14.	Me: yah
15.	Eve: and I had inside information because I knew this person for over 20 years before I started the relationship.
16.	Me: Ahaa
17.	Eve: so it is a not a traditional situation where am looking at the internet and saying that person is fitting my topic and am going to start the negotiation.
18.	Me: you already knew the person
19.	Eve: I already knew the person, I knew what he was working at, I knew what I was working for and then together we decided this is what is going to happen (me, ahaa) so mix between faculty and you
20.	Me: Thank you, so when you joint up and now you started together, please tell me about your expectations of the student-supervisor relationship during your studies, in the entire process
21.	Eve: so again this is a different situation because am a senior member of the staff.
22.	Me: you are in the system already.
23.	Eve: in the system already, so the power relationship between me and my supervisor was in a Lecturer-Professor situation.
24.	Me: Ahaa

25.	Eve: professional, identity, my identity as a student is intertwined, you could not see, so I was never just a student, I was a colleague to him.
26.	Me: a colleague also
27.	Eve: so my expectation was that together we are going to be successful
28.	Me: Mmmh
29.	Eve: it is not a traditional expectation of a student that is looking for a supervisor coming from the outside.
30.	Me: yah
31.	Eve: or having experience with this person, a master student or a doctoral student
32.	Me: Yah
33.	Eve: so my expectation was that we would finish this as quickly as possible.
34.	Me: As quickly as possible
35.	Eve: Yes and I actually manage in 2 years, which was quite unique for a doctoral student
36.	Me: you manage it in two years?
37.	Eve: Yah
38.	Me: That was great, to finish your PhD in two years.
39.	Eve: Yah
40.	Me: That is wonderful
41.	Eve:pause
42.	Me: Dr. Eve you were telling me about your expectations
43.	Eve: My expectation was first, right of completion which has to be done as efficiently as possible.
44.	Me: Efficiently as possible

45.	Eve: But the best quality possible with no chance of fighting.
46.	Me: Mmmh
47.	Eve: So I expected my supervisor to provide me with honest opinion of where the work is going so that the chances for success need to be very very very good.
48.	Me: Very good
49.	Eve: Not even just good enough but very very very good.
50.	Me: Mmmh
51.	Eve: Ummh i also expected my supervisor to...pause...ahaa...pause to be honest with me, that is all that must happen.
52.	Me: yes
53.	Eve: Mmmh particularly because it is a power relationship that is a bit unbalanced you still stay a junior colleague with a senior supervisor.
54.	Me: Senior supervisor
55.	Eve: So the professional identity and the student identity really got mixed up.
56.	Me: sure
57.	Eve: So my expectations was that, to be treated fairly
58.	Me: What does that mean to you doctor
59.	Eve: Not to be discussed with other people.
60.	Me: Ahaa
61.	Eve: Because I am a colleague
62.	Me: Yes
63.	Eve: Ummh also to be exposed to the network that my supervisor had at that time, at that point in time (Me, Mmmh) because I moved from one area into something different.

64.	Me: Yah
65.	Eve: I had a bad experience before, so my expectations was not to have a repeat of the bad experience.
66.	Me: was it in your masters?
67.	Eve: Actually in another PhD
68.	Me: Ok, that is where you had a bad experience.
69.	Eve: Yes
70.	Me: Mmmh, yes what did you say honest opinion, is it your supervisor to tell you this is not right and let us go this way?
71.	Eve: Yes, to critique your thinking process and not just accept...pause... that because you are a colleague, they cannot tell you the truth or give you critical feedback on things that you need to think.
72.	Me: Mmmh
73.	Eve: So it was difficult to ...pause...Ummh, luckily I trusted this particular person and I knew from the first experience, that is why I say it is not a traditional set of expectations because I was an insider.
74.	Me: Yes
75.	Eve: So the trust relationship was built over 20 years before I engaged in this particular experience.
76.	Me: Yes
77.	Eve: you cannot equate that to a student that is coming from another, a new person and you have an initial meeting (Me, Mmmh) and trust need to be established, I did research on you on the internet and therefore, you are my best supervisor to assist me in my proposal.
78.	Me: Yah
79.	Eve: we, right from the beginning decided to work on the journey.

80.	Me: Ahaa
81.	Eve: And then three times I had a different topic
82.	Me: three times
83.	Eve: Yes, and that is the honest opinion the way I wanted
84.	Me: Ahaa
85.	Eve: that is not going to work, let us go to another plan
86.	Me: Ahaa
87.	Eve: change this, this is not the most efficient effective way of doing it
88.	Me: let us go this way
89.	Eve: yah and having the authority to actually tell you that. So my expectations were also that I should have enough trust and at that particular point in time Ummh...pause, my expectation was that, I could trust this person until he ...pause broke that trust but he did not.
90.	Me: He did not
91.	Eve: but it was at the back of my mind, I will go with it until the trust is being violated.
92.	Me: Ahaa but once the trust is still there you maintained.
93.	Eve: Yah and the trust actually became more and more, so my supervisor is that, my experience is that he worked at keeping my trust.
94.	Me: Mmmh
95.	Eve: And my trust was three things, to be treated fairly and with respect
96.	Me: with respect.
97.	Eve: and therefore, not discussing me with anybody else because i worked with other people in the faculty.
98.	Me: in the faculty

99.	Eve: I did not mind if it is being done with expertise outside (Me, outside) but not in the faculty because there is too much ...pause, experience, too much students being, and their work being discussed in open forums.
100	Me: open forums
101	Eve: All the things that you say, I will not be identifiable or I will not be able to..., is not working
102	Me: What was your expectation initially about how much are you going to do and how much is your supervisor going to do
103	Eve: unfortunately, again I am a staff member I knew exactly what I was supposed to do
104	Me: Exactly
105	Eve: I was driving the process he is giving the feedback
106	Me: Ahaa, as you have told me, which was very important, and in terms of resources also you had all the resources as a staff
107	Eve: Yes, it is my own lack of resourcefulness if I could not find the resources, the library is open, I have got some access to resources that he has.
108	Me: Yah
109	Eve: But what did help is that he would ahaa..., sort of sent to his students' things of interest, he was quite busy.
110	Me: lastly on that Dr Eve, would you say most of your expectations were met at the end or some were not
111	Eve: Ummh...pause, I don't like the word most
112	Me: Ahaa
113	Eve: Because it might be the most important or the crucial expectations that was not met, 90% of the rest would have been met and then, there is a dilemma, so I don't like the word most
114	Me: Mmmh
115	Eve: Were many of my expectations met? Yes..., publications taking the relationship further than just graduating and working past the stage
116	Me: Mmmh
117	Eve: It is an issue; I think we need to negotiate much longer on the relationship with PhD students than just seeing a person working across the stage

118	Me: Sure
119	Eve: What happens with publications after that, whose responsibility, whose expectation, my expectation was that we would publish together, that did not happen yet
120	Me: It did not happened
121	Eve: Yes, that is due to faculty commitment
122	Me: Mmmh
123	Eve: That is the drawback of being a staff member. So although being a staff member is giving you some inside information, giving you access to different resources, it is also doing a different set of challenges in that, how to you negotiate your student or doctoral identity and it is also balancing expectations from the faculty of education who reasons that you owe them something because they gave you the time to do your studies.
124	Me: Mmmh exactly
125	Eve: My expectation was that the process could have been driven a little bit more and my supervisor retired just after I finish
126	Me: After you finish
127	Eve: And it has been the whole support network fall away
128	Me: Ahaa
129	Eve: So that expectation was never met and now you need to define, when are you a successful doctoral candidate, how to do you define a successful doctoral candidate? Do you define only being able to get the degree and work across the stage or to you define it has having publications out of your PhD, where does the process stop?
130	Me: Mmmh, mostly defend on your journey, if your journey was satisfactory, the all entire process to completion
131	Eve: Then my expectations were never met
132	Me: Ahaa
133	Eve: Then my expectations were not all met
135	Me: Thank you Dr Eve, we can move to the next item

Interview continues