RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP

EXPLORING THE DOCTORAL SUPERVISOR–STUDENT CONTEXT IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CANADA

by

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Abstract

Review of research literature revealed that doctoral students' well-being and performance are influenced by the leadership style their supervisors exhibit. The purpose of this research was to explore the nature of relational leadership and the leadership competencies that influence the supervisor–doctoral student relationship within the Canadian university context. I conducted an interpretive phenomenological study and I interviewed 19 doctoral students and 16 supervisors from Canadian universities across all disciplines.

My findings suggest that relational leadership is connected to positive leadership in a symbiotic relationship—they are two sides of the same coin. The relational/positive leadership model (RPL) that emerged from the data analysis can be instrumental for ensuring that doctoral students maintain their well-being and enhance their performance. Data analysis suggests that relational/positive leadership is a spectrum spanning highly relational/positive leaders and non-relational/negative or toxic leaders. Relational/positive supervisors are student-oriented, and they create uplifting experiences for their students with possible negative aspects—normal in any social relationship. However, these negative aspects are few and manageable: the positives outweigh the negatives on this side of the positive spectrum. The RPL side is the optimistic side of the spectrum, comprising realistic supervisors who know that a doctoral program is complex and demanding, requiring their presence, understanding, empathy, compassion and wisdom. Non-relational/toxic supervisors are less people-oriented, valuing self-interest over their students' interest, and some are absent, or overly authoritarian. They display negative attitudes and create undesirable experiences for their students.

This model can be significant for improving doctoral supervision. The relational/positive leadership approach to doctoral supervision is supported by four influential factors: accessibility, approachability, and psychological presence (AAPP); trust; efficacy; and mentorship. These influential factors are, in turn, nourished by core leadership competencies: ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social. The findings can be used to inform further research and also policy and practice at different levels. At the individual level, supervisors and students can use the RPL model to evaluate and enhance their practices. At the group level, relational/positive supervisors can collaborate and utilize the findings to create a positive culture in each department. At the departmental/institutional level, current policies and programs can be reviewed and improved using this study's findings.

Acknowledgements

"And my success can only come from Allah. In Him I trust, and unto Him I return." [Holy Quran, 11:88]. I am grateful to Allah Almighty for blessing me with the opportunity to conduct important research with a hope and a mission to make positive change. I am grateful to Allah Almighty for providing me with motivation, momentum, determination, patience, and resilience, and for blessing me with some exceptional supportive people who believe in me, in my research, and in my capability as an emerging scholar with a well-established life experience.

To my wonderful family, I am forever indebted to you. You are the main source of my energy, and with you, I have learned to see the glass half-full. My doctoral journey was only one dimension in my life, and you are my entire life. Special thanks to my beloved father and my beloved husband for walking the entire journey with me, providing insight, support, and wisdom. Your genuine interests in my happiness, my progress, and in my research has informed my thinking and allowed me to stretch my capacity to make it happen, while enjoying quality time with the family. Thanks to my mother for her beautiful prayers and for constantly reminding me to disconnect, take breaks, do some gardening, and adore my stunning flowers. Thanks to my superb sons and daughters, who actively listened to me talking about my research, and who filled my journey with different perceptions, games, fun times and joyfulness. Thanks to God, for blessing our life with our precious grandchildren, who have coloured our lives with lots of cheerfulness and gratification. Thanks to my great siblings and their families for their love and continuous encouragement. I am so blessed to have such an amazing family, and I am so grateful to all of you. I could have not done it without you. Words can be found to write countless

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My heartfelt appreciation goes out to all those that participated in my research, doctoral students (current and former) and supervisors. You are the champions of my work, and I cannot thank you enough for your time, trust, and your willingness to share your stories with me. I value each one of you and it is an absolute privilege to have my research as a venue to make your voices heard.

During the time I was working on this research, two Canadian professors were awarded the Nobel Prize; which shows how Canadian professors are contributing to nations. The professors were Arthur McDonald, a Queen's University professor, who is the co-winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics, and Donna Strickland, a University of Waterloo professor, who is the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physics.

I was honoured that I got a chance to connect with Dr. McDonald. He was not a participant in my research, but I invited him to offer his wisdom about doctoral programs in my dissertation. So, to all doctoral supervisors, who are keen to make a difference, and to all doctoral students out there who might be in the field collecting data, trying to meet the deadlines, or working on their data, trying to make sense of their results, , or even in the lab dealing with an experiment that is not working, I invite all to pause a little bit, breathe and listen to what Dr. McDonald says to you about "experience and dedication":

> I was fortunate to lead an exceptionally talented group of scientists and technical people for our very successful Sudbury Neutrino Observatory project, for which the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded. We had 273 authors on our scientific papers, of which over 200 were graduate students or Post-Doctoral fellows at our international partners. It was the dedication of this team, inspired by the very fundamental nature of our objectives that led to our success. Of the 200, about 25% are now University Professors, carrying on that educational tradition. For the remainder, about one-third are CEO's of their own companies or are leading technical areas of other companies, one third are working in major national research laboratories in a variety of fields and one third in government or finance. The experience gained during their graduate and post-graduate work in obtaining credible data and using it to come to strong conclusions on important topics is now being applied in a wide variety of diverse areas where experience and dedication continue to be essential.

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List of Abbreviations

ABD   All But Dissertation

CE   Collective Efficacy

CIHR   The Canadian Institutes of Health Research

EI   Emotional Intelligence

HE   Higher Education

LSE   Leadership Self-Efficacy

NSERC   The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

PhD   Doctor of Philosophy

RL   Relational Leadership

RLM   Relational Leadership Model

RLT   Relational Leadership Theory

RPL   Relational/Positive Leadership Model

RSE   Research Self-Efficacy

SE   Self-Efficacy

SSHRC   The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Preface

A researcher's paradigm influences the path they follow with their study.

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 24), a *research paradigm* is defined as:

> A set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. The beliefs include, but are not limited to, ontological beliefs, epistemological beliefs, axiological beliefs, aesthetic beliefs, and methodological beliefs.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) further reminded researchers to define their stance: "The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)" (p. 11). This reminder is important to me because highlighting my worldview and communicating my epistemological and methodological stances will shed light on how I conducted my research, and why I made the choices I made.

As an independent management consultant with an MBA background, I came to conclude that most organizational issues are related to ineffective leadership. I have always been interested in understanding the true meaning of leadership. How can leaders influence people with whom they work in a positive way? How do they interact with them in an uplifting manner? How do they foster positive workplace relationships? These are just some questions that puzzled me and the questions that initially motivated me to join the doctoral program.

As I started the program, I realized the work environment in higher education (HE) was critical not only for staff, faculty, and professors, but also to students. People in HE

need to interact with one another, and it is only within a positive workplace environment that people can function well, and in particular, generate productive scholarly ideas. By a positive workplace environment, I mean a work environment in which people communicate and interact in an encouraging and elevating way. Equity is treasured, and there is a space for everyone to flourish and for people to respect and support one another. People enjoy a safe culture, in which they can freely disagree. They are more willing to speak up, and conflicts are viewed as opportunities to learn. Actions and inactions are ethical, and favouritism does not exist. There is a genuine alignment between behaviours and words, and differences are accepted, appreciated, respected, and not diminished or judged. In other words, people in a positive workplace environment know how to act and react professionally.

My interests in learning about leadership and cultivating positive workplace environments led me to my first year of my doctoral program and my dissertation topic. After I completed my initial coursework with a focus on relational leadership, and developed my first draft of my conceptual framework, I needed to find a context to investigate relational leadership within. I had some context options, but surprisingly, I did not think of the doctoral supervision context until I received an email with a link directing my attention to an event at Queen's called "Leaders in Graduate Student Supervision." The university was celebrating the winners of the Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Supervision. Reading through this link, I found that the students were describing their supervisors in a way that I found relational. That email was the trigger that opened my eyes to understand that doctoral supervision was an ideal context in which to examine relational leadership.

I started reading the literature on doctoral supervision and found that it was a massive and messy area. Every time I read an article, I became more convinced that this area needed my close responsiveness. One of the few books that I read very early on was the one that Barbara Lovitts (2011) wrote about doctoral experiences. This book resonated with me when I met some doctoral students at different conferences, workshops and social events, who were delayed in their doctorate for various reasons, or who left their programs because of ineffective supervision.

I was astonished by the stories that I heard from these students, and I empathized with them. Because I introduced myself in these events as a doctoral student who was researching doctoral supervision, some doctoral students approached me and asked for my contact information for themselves or for their friends who were struggling in their programs. All of a sudden, I found myself in the role of an advisor, someone who was providing assurance, encouragement, and advice to other doctoral students who trusted me with their stories. Being in a position to offer help or maybe just an ear was, and still is, a true privilege.

I agree with Fletcher (2012) who described the relational interactions that characterize effective leadership (in this case, effective supervision) as "mutual, collaborative, and two- directional, with followers playing an integral, agentic role in the leadership process" (p, 86). These interactions are complex, and my interest in unpacking the complexity of the dynamic relationship in the doctoral supervision context allowed me to recognize two conditions for my research: (a) I needed to conduct research that included both doctoral students and supervisors; and (b) I needed to highlight where I placed myself along the *positivist and social constructionist* continuum, which was far closer to the social

constructionist side. Hence, I have selected a constructionist approach (qualitative

research) to help me explore how doctoral students perceive, co-create, and act upon their

supervisors' practices, and I chose a phenomenological methodology to situate my research

study. I have to emphasize that I do not believe in one singular or universal approach to

viewing or understanding the world; considering multiple viewpoints, perspectives,

positions, and standpoints makes more sense to me. As such, I plan to conduct a

quantitative research in the future to test my findings.

Researching doctoral supervision has fueled my interests in this area more and

more, and it has been a profound experience for me at the personal level, as well as the

professional level. For instance, every time I conducted an interview, I experienced

different emotions that require me to take some reflection time. Some stories, for example,

broke my heart and made me feel like finding solutions to these students' problems. One of

the important lessons I learned firsthand in conducting research—especially through a

qualitative perspective—is that the powerful nature of the stories and experiences which

are shared and told to researchers can change how researchers see themselves as humans

interacting with humans, their views of themselves and others, and their roles in their

families and communities (Rosenblatt, 2001). These changes are positive, and the

transformational process is one of the doctoral programs' benefits.

The fact that I am an emerging researcher-doctoral student, living what I was

researching was an advantage. It helped me establish rapport with my participants—both

supervisors and students. I felt they trusted me with their powerful and insightful stories,

and provided a lot of rich details believing that I was able to hear their pain, as well as their

satisfaction. As such, I believe that being a doctoral student myself has given insights to

my work and enriched my dissertation. Additionally, my research has augmented my own

supervisory experience and helped me complete my program in a timely manner,

regardless of the barriers that I faced. My final thought is that I consider my dissertation as

a mission of making doctoral programs better places for students to enjoy and benefit from

their experiences.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Humans are inherently social (Duck, 2007), and societies are made up of relationships among individuals (Cooley, 1902). These relationships—including those across cultures—are far more complex, diverse, and wide-ranging than those of any other species (Fiske, 1991). Social relationships are generally central to an individual's behaviors, and emotions (Baldwin & Fergusson, 2001); motivation (Kahn, 2007); resilience (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003); aging well and happiness (Vaillant, 2008); vitality and meaningfulness in life (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003); and they can be "life-giving, or life depleting" (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003, p. 263). Social relationships can be defined as:

> Two or more people [who] coordinate with each other so that their action, affect, evaluation, or thought are complementary. That is, what each person does (or feels, judges, or thinks) makes sense with reference to what the other persons do (or are expected to do or feel): their actions complete each other. . . . [R]elationships are patterns of coordination among people; they are not properties of individuals. (Fiske, 1998, p. 4)

Social relationships are constructs, and they are getting attention in different research fields (e.g., education, sociology, psychology, and business) (Noble & McGrath, 2012; Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett, & Ybarra, 2000; Reis & Gable, 2003; Kahn, 1998; Kram, 1996) in an attempt to understand how and why people are connected or disconnected at the dyadic (Tepper, 2000); group (Kastel, 2012); organizational (Dutton, 2003); community (McCarthy & Vickers, 2012); and society levels (Roffey, 2012). Most workplaces require

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social interaction among individuals and groups. Workplace relationships are defined as:

> Unique interpersonal relationships with important implications for the individuals
> in those relationships and the organizations in which the relationships exist and
> develop. Workplace relationships function as decision making, influence-sharing,
> and instrumental and emotional support systems. (Sias, 2005, p. 377)

This definition indicates the importance of keeping these working relationships positive
and healthy.

In higher education, the quality of the supervisor–student relationship in doctoral
programs is found to be one of the "invisible" problems that make doctoral attrition rates
go up to 50% in some disciplines (Lovitts, 2001, p. 1). Doctoral attrition is a "decades-old
and multifaceted problem, affecting institutions and students world-wide" (Ames, Berman,
& Casteel, 2018, p. 84). This attrition is a significant problem in Canadian, Australian,
British, and US universities (McAlpine & Norton, 2006), and delay in completion has been
an ongoing drawback since the 1950s (Gottlieb, 1994). One study suggested that an
expected delay in PhD completion—which can lead to attrition—happens for different
reasons, such as institutional or environmental factors (e.g., available resources), or
characteristics of the PhD candidates (e.g., motivation) (Schoot, Yerkes, Mouw, &
Sonneveld, 2013). The participants in this study also reported that ineffectiveness of
supervision (absence of clear guidance and communication) as essential to explaining their
expected delays. Elgar (2003) stated that some students choose to drop out when they find
that their work is not up to academic standards in their disciplines, which is
understandable. Nevertheless, the author added that "the painfully slow attrition of all-but-
dissertation (ABD) students that occurs years after all other program requirements are

successfully completed is expensive to universities and exhorts a significant toll on students and their career prospects" (p. 7).

According to Looker (2018), there were 49,419 doctoral students enrolled in full-time programs in 2015 and 2,709 enrolled as part-time students. This report suggested that the number of students completing their programs successfully has been increasing in recent years. Based on data gathered from eight of the fifteen research-intensive Canadian universities (U15), Tamburri (2013) highlighted how graduation rates among different disciplines varied from an average of 65.1% in the social sciences to 75.4% in the physical sciences and engineering. In comparison, a decade ago, Elgar (2003) reported the lowest graduation rate among arts and humanities doctoral programs at 44.7% and the highest in life sciences at 70.4%.

There has been progress in the retention rates in Canada, but the time-to-completion rate within a 9-year period in doctoral programs (University Affairs, 2013) is still a valid concern. Tamburri (2013) showed that among students who entered PhD programs in 2001, 70.6% across disciplines took 9 years to complete them. Spending almost a decade in doctoral programs is a long period that greatly disables students from advancing their careers and contributing to their families and societies, which leaves them stressed, depleted, and potentially more likely to drop out.

The majority of PhD students in Canada are funded by the government—meaning that the funds come from the contributions of taxpayers—the monetary loss when students do not complete their programs is massive. Devos et al. (2016) conducted an empirical study and compared the experiences of doctoral students who completed the program with those who quit. They disclosed that the main difference between the two groups was a

feeling of progression on a meaningful research project and the ability to work without stress and anxiety. Moreover, they shared that "supervisors' support was central to the participants' stories" (p. 61). They also highlighted how supervisors' roles are complicated and require further examination.

The supervision style employed in a supervisor–student relationship is one of the main aspects influencing a student's experience (Leonard, Metcalfe, Becker, & Evans, 2006). The literature has highlighted doctoral supervision as an imperative leadership context, in which different leadership styles can influence a student's performance and well-being.

A recent study revealed an alarming finding: one third of PhD students are at risk of developing or have developed a psychiatric disorder—especially depression (Levecque et al., 2017). This study showed that the supervisor's leadership style is one of the various organizational factors correlated with the prevalence of students' mental health problems. It reported a sample of 3,659 students at universities in Flanders, Belgium, 90% of whom were studying the sciences and social sciences. The scholars aimed to evaluate the occurrence of mental health problems in a representative sample of PhD students and compare it to highly educated people (N = 1694) from three different segments: the general public, employees, and university students (not in the doctoral programs). They identified 12 mental health symptoms to test and then assessed the organizational factors that predict the mental health issues of PhD students. Their results unveiled that 32% of PhD students risk developing "a common psychiatric disorder, especially depression." This percentage was notably higher compared with the other three groups. The organizational factors they found were: work–family interface; job demands and job control; the supervisor's

leadership style; team decision-making culture; and perception of the prospects of getting a career outside academia.

Although this research was specific to Flanders, and the subject doctoral students were mainly from the sciences and social sciences, it is an eye-opening study that informs practice and research in higher education in other countries too. As Emilsson and Johnsson (2007) reported: "[T]he dilemma facing supervisors is very similar across the industrialized countries, as many of the basic issues are similar and that disciplinary identities are more powerful than national differences" (p. 164).

Most importantly, while the supervisor's leadership style is only one element out of the five identified in the study, I argue that it is significant and can influence the other elements (e.g., perception of a career outside academia)—and as a result, students' mental health. The importance of the supervisor's leadership style stems from the difference that transformational leaders can make, such as motivating people (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 1999; Pielstick, 1998), and one of the leadership styles that emerged from the transformational theories is relational leadership.

The term "relational leadership" is relatively new (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Drath, 2001; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2013; Uhl-Bien, 2003, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012), but it may be one of the most beneficial styles of organizational leadership (Barling, 2014). A recent study uncovered that the relational leadership style has a significant influence on increasing the innovative ability of employees (Akram & Haider, 2016). This is an important finding, even though relational leadership was examined in the

IT industry in China. This finding is important because innovation is a key feature in graduate programs (Wendler et al., 2010).

According to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) leadership is "inherently a relational, communal process" (p. 74) and can be defined as "a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change" (p. vii). The consensus is that qualities of relational leadership include characteristics of caring, empowering, being ethical, being inclusive, and having a vision (Carifio, 2010; Regan & Brook, 1995; Komives et al., 1998, 2013). Based on the literature I reviewed on leadership, I found that relational leaders have four types of core competencies that serve them in establishing positive relationships with their followers. These include ethical (e.g., Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011), cognitive (e.g., Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2006), emotional (e.g., Hersted & Gergen, 2013), and social (e.g., Drath, 2001) competencies.

The applicable definition of leadership I adopted in my research is that leadership is an ethical and relational process of people (supervisor and student) together attempting to achieve a positive change (Gandossy & Effron, 2004; Komives et al., 2013). The positive change includes well-being (Noble & McGrath, 2012) as well as a positive process and outcome in the relationship (Ragins & Dutton, 2007, p. 9).

Developing positive working relationships in the workplace is generally a complicated process (Fiske, 2004), but it can be even more sophisticated in a power dynamic (leadership) context, such as the relationship between supervisors and doctorate students. As such, exploring how relationships manifest themselves and change in this specific context, determining how they are understood and perceived by supervisors and students, and identifying a potential leadership style that helps students thrive rather than

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just survive is an urgent necessity. In other words, examining what works and what no longer works in doctorate programs is a serious matter (Walker, Golde, Jones, Conklin Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of relational leadership and the leadership competencies that influence the doctoral supervisor–doctoral student relationship within the Canadian university context.

This study was guided by one primary research question and two subquestions: What is the nature of relational leadership that exists in the doctoral supervisor–student context? And the two subquestions:

(1) What are the perceived influential factors that contribute to the doctoral supervisory relationship?

(2) To what extent do relational leadership ethical, cognitive, emotional and social competencies influence the doctoral supervisor–student relationship positively? and how they are demonstrated in the doctoral supervision context.

Significance of the Study

Using a qualitative exploratory design will help close a gap in the leadership literature, add to the scarce knowledge in this developing area, and advance our understanding of relational leadership. This study is also timely and will contribute to higher education literature. Both higher education literature and universities will benefit from this study. Egan, Stockley, Brouwer, Tripp, & Stechyson (2009) suggested that "doctorate students require a personal and holistic style of supervision to obtain maximum benefit from their graduate studies" (p. 338). Furthermore, Bøgelund (2015) noted that

despite the many manuals published about PhD supervision that are addressed to both supervisors and supervisees, the mainstream literature reported the views of students but failed to adequately explore their supervisors' perceptions.

The body of research that examined the perspectives of supervisors on their roles is limited (e.g., Halse, 2011; Halse & Malfroy, 2010; Franke & Arvidsson, 2011; Lee, 2008; Wright, Murray, & Geale, 2007), therefore the need to explore these roles and the dynamics of the supervision relationship is pressing (Devos et al., 2015). As such, my research will help close a gap in the literature because exploring the supervisors' perspectives in addition to the students' will provide a holistic supervision style that can contribute positively to doctoral students' well-being and performance. Furthermore, the high cost of excessive time-to-completion rates and attrition rates signifies that improving students' doctoral experiences will benefit not only the students but also the universities, institutions, and governments that fund these programs and seek to gain from the new knowledge students create and disseminate.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the dissertation:

Academic supervision. A task of creating a smooth transition for a student to become successful in their field and research as well as assisting their abilities to adapt (Pearson & Brew, 2002).

Positive workplace relationships. A mutually valuable connection between two or more people in a work environment that is constructive, productive, and based on consideration and accommodating behavior (Ragins & Dutton, 2007).

Negative workplace relationships. An obstructive connection between two or more people in a work environment that is undesirable, dismissive, and based on uncooperative behavior (Venkataramani, Labianca, & Grosser, 2013, p. 2).

Well-being. The overall state of a person based on their happiness, comfort, and health (Noble & McGrath, 2012).

Performance. Students' performance in this research refers to the extent to which students can hit their milestones and graduate in a timely manner.

Trust. An understanding between two people that allows them to be open and vulnerable with each other while believing that what they share will not be abused or manipulated (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998).

Self-efficacy. An individual's inner belief that they are capable of performing at a level adequate to allow them to achieve a set target (Bandura, 1994).

Mentorship. A positive two-way relationship between a mentor and mentee centered on the mentee's best interests and sensing their needs to provide them with skills, knowledge, support, and encouragement (Scandura, 1992).

Competency. An individual's knowledge, skills, and thought patterns which result in effective performance (Dubois, 1998).

Accessible leaders. Leaders who can be reached—physically or virtually—when they are needed.

Approachable leaders. Leaders who are available, warm, and receptive. Those who make people feel comfortable reaching out to them (Brown, 2016).

Psychological presence at work. Being mentally there; being interested, focused, engaged, and aware of what is going on (Kahn, 1992).

Overview of the Dissertation

The overall organization of this study is designed to provide insight into the relational leadership that exists within the doctoral supervision context. The introductory Chapter One outlined the current context of working relationships in organizations, particularly within the contexts of the literature related to supervision and relational leadership; the purpose of the study; the research questions; the significance of this study; and, definitions of terms. Chapter Two presents the relevant literature I reviewed for this study in three areas: (a) working relationships in organizations, (b) the doctoral supervision context, and (c) relational leadership. Using the findings from the three sections as a point of departure, I conclude that (a) the three main influential factors of effective supervision are trust, efficacy, and mentorship; and (b) the core competencies of relational leaders include ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social competences. In Chapter Three, I describe the methodology I used in this study. I employed an interpretive phenomenological approach because exploring lived experiences provides the best understanding of the doctoral supervision phenomenon. In Chapter Four, I present the findings and analysis. Chapter Five consists of a discussion and conclusion. There, I offer a relational/positive leadership model and highlight the limitations of this research as well as implications for theory, practice, policy, and future work. I also present implications beyond the doctoral supervision.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Positive relationships at work matter, especially because 78% of people who work between 30 to 50 hours per week spend more time with their colleagues than with their families (Globoforce, 2014). The working relationship between a supervisor and doctoral student, in addition to the leadership style adopted in this context, greatly impacts the student's well-being and experience. A few studies have shown that graduate students in general (Evans, Bira, Beltran-Gastelum, Weiss, & Vanderford, 2017), and doctoral students specifically (Levecque et al., 2017) are at risk of depression and burnout, which means that their mental health and the causes of their increased risk of mental illness is still an under-examined area (Devos et al., 2015).

In the following sections, I present the literature I reviewed on working relationships in organizations and working relationships in the doctoral supervision context, and I then highlight the relational leadership area. Finally, I use the leadership competency lens to explore relational leadership within doctoral supervision.

Working Relationships in Organizations

In most organizations including higher education institutions, people are supposed to collaborate and interact with one another to achieve organizational goals. The mutual benefits that both individuals gain from enjoying a positive workplace relationship serve them when times are good, and they "provide support and strength when relationships are tested" (Pratt & Dirks, 2007, p. 117). Research has clearly informed us that these benefits should by no means be underestimated.

Positive relationships at work have a significant influence on individuals' feelings

of inclusion and sense of importance (Blatt & Camden, 2007), motivation and energy

levels (Cross, Baker, & Parker, 2003), engagement (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris,

2008), resilience (Luthar, 2006), wellness (Kutsyuruba, Walker, Stasel, & Al Makhamreh,

2019), mental health (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), performance and productivity (Losada,

1999), career development (Kram & Isabella, 1985), quality of information shared, and

commitment to the organization (Sias, 2005).

Although people go to work to do specific jobs, social interaction with other

individuals and workplace relationships are an important aspect and can make the work

experience more enjoyable. Luthar (2006) synthesized five decades of research on

resilience and concluded that "resilience rests, fundamentally, on relationships" (p. 780).

This is an extraordinary finding, especially with the rise of interest in resilience and well-

being (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2015).

According to the Globoforce report (2014), 89% of people said work relationships

mattered with respect to their quality of life. This is not surprising because people have a

natural need to belong and a desire to establish positive social relationships with others

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The challenge is that workplace tasks can sometimes be

boring, menial, or hectic, demanding, and overwhelming, which in all cases means that

adding difficult working relationships can influence the quality of life for people

dramatically. Social support, which employees get from coworkers as well as leaders, can

either play "an intrinsic motivational role" because they enhance employees' growth,

learning, and progress or "an extrinsic motivational role" because they act as instrumental

factors in accomplishing work goals (Bakker et al., 2008, p. 191).

Organizations benefit when positive workplace relationships are fostered because these individuals exhibit citizenship, and employees' loyalty is beneficial to the organization (Venkataramani & Dalal, 2007). In contrast, employees' organizational attachment is impacted when they experience negative workplace relationships such as avoidance (Venkataramani et al., 2013). Negative events at work also include "negative feedback, failure experiences, and rejection," which are considered to be "among the most powerful negative events people experience" (Taylor, 1991, p. 74). These toxic working environments could lead to workplace stress and eventually withdrawal (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). It is noteworthy that the outcomes of negative workplace relationships were "more consistently and . . . strongly related to well-being than were positive social outcomes" (Rook, 1984, p. 1097). The impact of these workplace relationships on well-being—whether positive, negative, or even neutral—should not be undervalued.

According to Schermuly and Meyer (2016), positive relationships at work matter because they influence the psychological health of employees, which can impact the organization as well as society overall. The authors uncovered some disturbing findings: mood disorders account for billions in US productivity losses per year. Moreover, these psychological health issues contribute to early retirement and raised risks of suicide, and they create massive personal and financial problems for employees, organizations, and societies. This implies that the influence of a positive or negative working relationship between two individuals not only impacts the two individuals directly involved but rather can reach different levels, including the group/organization and society itself. In the following section, I highlight these relationships within the doctoral supervision context.

The Doctoral Supervisor–Student Relationship

Graduate students join doctoral programs for different reasons, such as to qualify for or acquire a new job, gain an enriching experience, or "do something for themselves at last" (Wisker, 2007, p. 20). They also go to doctoral programs in different stages of their lives. For example, some graduate students are "near equal, in seniority or expertise (quite common with part time or mature students)," to their supervisors (Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 308). In spite of the motive behind joining a doctoral program and regardless of the students' stages in life when they join—whether they are in their early careers or professionals who bring their own knowledge and expertise to the program—there is no doubt that these doctoral students require a good experience that allows them to succeed.

Doctoral programs are places where graduate students gain valuable knowledge and training, produce new and innovative ideas, and seek to change and impact their societies (Davis, Evans, & Hickey, 2006; Millett & Nettles, 2006; Wisker, 2007). One of the central features of these programs is academic supervision. Effective academic supervision involves a positive working relationship between the supervisor and student. It requires a mentoring relationship in which the supervisor helps the supervisee develop into an autonomous researcher, critical thinker, and innovator (Brockbank & McGill, 2007; Manathunga, 2005; Millar, 2007; Lin & Cranton, 2005; Wendler et al., 2010; Wisker, 2007).

Researchers have argued that the supervisor–student relationship is significant in the success of a doctorate journey (Golde, 2000; Ives & Rowley, 2005; Pyhältö & Keskinen, 2012; Sambrook, Stewart, & Roberts, 2008; Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007), particularly because doctorate programs are challenging. They are different from other

programs students may have experienced previously because they are lengthy and coupled

with stress, which can lead to emotional issues and social isolation (Ali & Kohun, & Levy,

2007). This tough process includes many occasions for discouragement and may even

tempt "the most positive student" to leave the program (Baird, 1995, p. 30). On top of that,

supervision is a hierarchical power relationship between the supervisor and student, which

is "perceived to be unequal, with a good relationship between a student and supervisor

important for a doctoral [student's] success" (Morris, 2011, p. 547). The power dynamic

can add more challenges to the relationship, such as students' willingness to express their

feelings or perceptions regarding the effectiveness of supervision they receive.

The attrition rate in graduate education is a substantial problem in some countries

(McAlpine & Norton, 2006), resulting from different contextual variables such as

supervisory relationships, available infrastructure, institutional systems, structures,

procedures, and government policies (Orellana, Darder, Pérez, & Salinas, 2016).

Nevertheless, research has clearly shown that supervisory effectiveness plays a major role

in reducing attrition (Berkowitz, 2003; Egan et al., 2009; Haksever & Manisali, 2000).

Scholars have suggested that the relationship between a supervisor and their doctoral

student is an essential element in the process (James & Baldwin, 1999; Lee, 2008; Wisker,

2007). Both the supervisor and student should be aware of the way their relationship is

developing because this relationship "cannot be made predictable" (Leonard et al., 2006, p.

32). The lack of predictably can result in a negative relationship if it is combined with a

lack of awareness from one or both individuals.

Effective supervision is a multifaceted process, and this social interaction is

influenced by different variables (e.g., students' needs, skills, attitude, supervisors' roles,

and institutional conditions) in addition to supervisory styles (Orellana et al., 2016). These findings are consistent with Elgar's (2003) views, who noted that students and supervisors might have opposing work styles and personalities. In conjunction with the unequal balance of power, this may rapidly turn problematic relationships unpredictable and volatile.

Positive working relationships between supervisors and their doctoral students are linked to students' progress in their programs as well as their satisfaction (Ives & Rowley, 2005). Further, a poor or negative supervisory relationship can damage a good doctoral project "regardless of any or all of the other elements which may support it" (Jones, 2013, p. 12). The literature I reviewed defined a number of different factors that can influence the supervisor–student relationship. In particular, mutual trust, efficacy, and mentoring can influence its depth and quality and vice versa (Bandura, 1997; Benaquisto, 2000; Pearson, 2000, 2001; Pearson & Brew, 2002). These three influential factors are discussed in the following sections.

Trust. The significance of trust in the workplace is well established in the literature as the primary element of positive relationships (Abrams, Cross, Lesser, & Levin, 2003; Cherry, 2016; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Hattori & Lapidus, 2004; Pratt & Dirks, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2003, 2014; Williams, 2001). Trust is defined as:

> The extent to which an individual engages in a reciprocal interaction and a
> relationship in such a way that there is willingness to be vulnerable to another and
> to assume risk with positive expectations and a degree of confidence that the other
> party will possess some semblance of benevolence, care, competence, honesty,

openness, reliability, respect, hope and wisdom. (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015, p. 109)

Trust is viewed as the backbone of all relationships. For instance, in high-trust relationships, individuals can say the wrong thing but still be understood, while in low-trust relationships, individuals can be very measured and accurate but still be misinterpreted (Covey & Merrill, 2006). Mutual confidence is a major element in the supervisory process and must be "informed" rather than provided on "blind faith," in that the supervisor must have confidence in the student, and the student must feel confident in the general adjudication of the supervisor (Delamont, Atkinson, & Parry, 1997, p. 103).

Trust between the supervisor and student can be developed in a number of ways. For example, if both parties are willing to view challenges from the other person's perspective, it can strengthen their understanding and commitment (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995; Davis, 1996). If the supervisor, for instance, does not consider the student's opinion, this might threaten the trust and negatively impact the workplace relationship. This is because failing to listen to the other person is a hazard behavior because it is "self-focused, ego-driven, and . . . does not build trust" (Covey & Merrill, 2006 p. 209). As such, understanding the student's standpoint is significant (Sheldon, Davidson, & Pollard, 2004).

However, there are challenges that come with taking the other person's perspective. It can be cognitively demanding, especially with the heavy workload that supervisors usually bear (Williams, 2012). They are faced with increasing undergraduate teaching workloads, continuous pressure to do research (publish or perish), a higher number of PhD students to supervise, and heavyweight administrative obligations, such as grant

applications. As a result, these enormous responsibilities may leave them with little time for their students' supervision (Deem & Brehony, 2000; Levecque et al., 2017).

Accordingly, some research has raised valid questions about whether supervisors are able to meet these extensive demands (Pole, Sprokkereef, Burgess, & Lakin, 1997; Deem & Brehony, 2000). This suggests that while supervisors must apply a perspective taking strategy to enhance trust and build a positive supervisory relationship, students must do so as well. Any dyadic relationship based on trust requires both parties to be involved and contribute to it.

Doctorate students also function in a pressurized work environment and might live the experience as if they were running a marathon with different obstacles they need to overcome, such as vague expectations or unsatisfactory feedback (Austin, 2002), and they are under increasing pressure to finish their candidature within a specified time frame (Ismail, Abiddin, & Hassan, 2011). The supervisor and student both have lives outside campus, and maintaining a work–life balance is a challenge that adds to this tough and hurried working pace (Austin, 2002; Fox, Fonseca, & Bao, 2011).

What this means is that when it comes to building trust, which is developed through interaction, time is a real issue for both parties, and they may need to openly discuss factors that could help them create and maintain trust in their working relationship. Some methods of developing trust include communicating effectively, encouraging a culture of openness and honesty, and minimizing inconsistent and unpredictable behavior (Brower et al., 2000; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2009; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006; Wheatley, 2006).

Interpersonal communication is an important factor that influences trust. It is a dynamic process of exchanging messages or information between people in which "the encoding and decoding of such messages forms the foundation of any communication episode" (Matsumoto, 2010, p. ix). In this dyadic act between the supervisor and student, they both interact by sending and receiving intentional or unintentional messages in which meaning is constructed and understood in context. In this working relationship, both the supervisor and student bring their individual experiences and insights to shape a creative area within which they may develop both "personally and professionally" (Evans, 1998, p. 298). These interpersonal communications must be effective, in that the messages are received and understood as intended, because this is critical to developing trust in the relationship.

Effective communication is crucial to students' success because it helps them enhance the quality of their research and improves their program doctoral experiences (Haksever & Manisali, 2000; Ives & Rowley, 2005; James & Baldwin, 1999; Phillips & Pugh, 2000; Spear, 2000; Wisker, 2007). Becoming a supervisor is a "two-way process . . . [in which] openness about . . . [the supervisor's] and the student's competence may prevent the student from withdrawing or failing" (Moses, 1989, p. 10). This suggests that effective communication—which is key to establishing trust—starts with the supervisor, who builds the foundation for it.

Poor or no communication between supervisors and students is the main source of conflict between the two parties, and if it is not addressed, it can create frustration and isolation, lead to mismatched expectations (which is one of the significant reasons why

supervision relationships fail), and cause attrition (Bloom, Propst Cuevas, Hall, & Evans., 2007; Egan et al., 2009; James & Baldwin, 1999).

Agreement and disagreement are key features in people's communication and do not normally create conflict; however, the way people handle disagreement is often responsible for any conflict that arises (Komives et al., 2006). Sometimes, the supervisory relationship can be difficult and can deteriorate. James and Baldwin (1999), for example, proposed that the supervisory relationship can be unpredictable, and it would be unrealistic to assume that challenges can always be avoided. They highlighted that supervisors sometimes could be the last to know whether their students are unhappy. This implies that the students should take the first step to draw attention to the issue.

Whether students can take the first step in addressing problems in their relationship with their supervisor is a valid question, particularly in a low-trust context. Furthermore, the authority aspect and the power dynamic in a leader–follower relationship might pose a real challenge (Hollander, 1995), causing a student to worry that the supervisor's influence and control could impact their results (Morris, 2011). This might hinder some students from being open and expressing their negative feelings (e.g., frustration) to their supervisors. This indicates that supervisors should create a trustworthy environment that is safe for their students to express themselves. Moreover, they need to be sensitive to their students' needs so they can understand the signals when their students do not feel well or are frustrated (Manathunga, 2005a).

Assessing negative feelings in any relationship is imperative, and the skill of giving and receiving feedback—which includes "negotiating conflict and power dynamic[s]"—is a critical element when conflicts occur (Davidson & James, 2007, p. 137). The process of

giving and receiving feedback about negative feelings could be an opportunity to enhance or restore trust. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that "the idea that trust cannot be restored once is lost is a myth" (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 301). On the other hand, giving and receiving feedback could violate trust, particularly when the situation lacks empathy from either or both individuals. Empathy is the "desire to understand others' feelings and the ability to do so, [which] would naturally contribute to both pattern recognition and problem solving" (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995, p. 496). This general social attitude makes it possible for one individual to take the role of the other (Mead, 1934). It differs from perspective taking in that the latter involves the mind more, while empathy involves the heart more. Empathy means authentic caring and is the foundation for building relationships based on trust. Goleman (2013) noted:

> Empathy depends on a muscle of attention: to tune in to others' feelings requires we pick up the facial, vocal, and other signals of their emotion. The anterior cingulate, a part of the attention network, tunes us to someone else's distress by tapping our own amygdala, which resonates with that distress. In this sense, emotional empathy is 'embodied'—we actually feel in our physiology what's going on in the body of the other person. (p. 12)

Goleman further emphasized that tuning in to others could provide the basis for motivation, persuasion, influence, negotiation, and problem-solving.

Supervisors are expected to encourage students to "make choices and take actions that lead them to positive directions" (McClellan, 2007, p. 47), which could enhance the level of trust in the relationship. This implies that students are expected to be openminded and appreciative as well as view issues from different angles. There is no doubt that both

individuals have roles to play in building and maintaining trust; they should act professionally by being "open to criticism . . . [and] willing to listen to each other and talk openly" (Haksever & Manisali, 2000, p. 27). What makes all of these findings discussed above noteworthy is that trust is a mutual process, making it a major responsibility of the supervisor as well as the student.

Efficacy. There are different types of efficacy exhibited in the doctoral supervision context. Self-efficacy is a main one and defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994, p. 71). The four principal sources of self-efficacy are past performance, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional cues. Self-efficacy is an essential determinant of motivation and performance (Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006), which are two key elements in doctoral students' lives. On the flip side, literature has shown that the lack of a sense of efficacy is associated with "depression and an inability to cope with the demands of the job, and it can be exacerbated by a lack of social support and of opportunities to develop professionally" (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998, p. 64). As discussed earlier, depression and incapacity to cope are costly expenses for individuals (e.g., students) both emotionally and intellectually, and they are costly for organizations and societies, which means that efficacy is a crucial element in doctoral supervision.

On average, supervisors have greater research self-efficacy than their students do because of their past experiences and knowledge (Bandura, 1997). Forester, Kahn, and Hesson-Mclnnis (2004) identified research self-efficacy (RSE) as the students' beliefs about their capabilities to conduct research from research integration to data collection to data analysis to writing the paper. The higher the sense of RSE the students develop, the

more engaged they are in conducting research (Bishop & Bieschke, 1998; Kahn, 2001; Kahn & Scott, 1997). Furthermore, the more the students value the doctoral program's mechanisms such as the mentorship they get and the dissertation preparation they experience, the higher dissertation self-efficacy (their beliefs about their capabilities to write their dissertations) they develop and the more progress they achieve (Varney, 2010). These findings speak to the importance of the leadership role that their supervisors play in enhancing their RSE.

A highly confident leader "would also likely report a high level of self-efficacy for the leadership task" (McCormick, Tanguma, & López-Forment, 2002, p. 36). Nonetheless, because leadership involves influence (Northouse, 2013), it is part of the leader's (supervisor's) role to motivate followers (students) and increase their self-efficacy to achieve their goals. This aspect of influence is supported by what Gelso (1993) underlined: teaching graduate students how to conduct research is not enough because they should be encouraged, excited, and motivated by their work. The author proposed six important factors that contribute to the graduate students' research interest and productivity: (a) faculty modeling appropriate scientific behavior and attitudes; (b) formal and informal positive reinforcement of scientific activity in the environment; (c) early involvement of students in research in a minimally threatening way; (d) emphasis during training that all research studies are limited and flawed in some way; (e) teaching and valuing varied research approaches; and (f) showing students how science and practice can be wedded (Gelso, 2006, p. 470).

The supervisor can increase the level of the student's sense of self-efficacy by (a) guiding the student and encouraging them to enroll in different courses, workshops,

training, conferences, seminars, and research opportunities that universities usually offer to doctoral students, and coaching them to succeed and acquire the required skills to conduct research effectively (past performance); (b) acting as a role model for academic work from whom the student observes and learns (vicarious experience); (c) reminding the student that they have the required skills to succeed and using a positive language to convince them (verbal persuasion); and (d) sending positive messages to the student that make them feel like their potential is valued, such as assigning the student a challenging task (emotional cues).

Guiding students throughout approximately four years to complete all their milestones successfully while benefiting from what their programs have to offer is a big responsibility for supervisors. These leadership responsibilities make it reasonable to consider leadership self-efficacy (LSE) to be critical to their roles. LSE refers to the supervisor's belief about their own capabilities to guide, mentor, coach, and support a student to complete the program successfully. LSE attracted scholars' attention as a component that determines leadership effectiveness (Paglis & Green, 2002; Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998). Paglis (2010) reviewed the literature on LSE and concluded that "those with high LSE achieve superior results, both in terms of their individual performance and in their ability to inspire followers to higher levels of collective efficacy and performance" (p. 779). LSE is defined as:

> A person's judgment that he or she can successfully exert leadership by setting a direction for the work group, building a relationship with followers in order to gain their commitment to change goals, and working with them to overcome obstacles to change. (Paglis & Green, 2002, p. 217)

Role modeling is a principal source of self-efficacy, especially in the supervision context. Graduate supervisors are often prominent role models in their students' academic lives (Baird, 1995; Bloom et al., 2007; Carroll, 2008; Delamont et al., 1997; Donald, Saroyan, & Denison, 1995; Phillips & Pugh, 2000). For example, when the supervisor models the behaviors associated with seeking the highest levels of professional performance, they can motivate students to pursue the highest levels of performance as well (Baird, 1995). Students also learn from observing their supervisors dealing with numerous situations, problems, frustrations, and work–life balance issues (Bloom et al., 2007). Therefore, when confronted with challenges, the leader (supervisor) is expected to model his or her positivity and demonstrate efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). Other studies disclosed that students who observed their supervisors experiencing stress from their work and lacking work–life balance preferred not to pursue faculty careers (Golde & Dore, 2001; Golde, 2005), and this indicates the powerful role modeling the supervisor can have on the students' career choices.

Students need to adapt effectively to their role as graduate students—both academically and socially—because when they are incapable of doing so, they consider dropping out (Golde, 1998, 2005). This demonstrates the importance of the supervisor as a role model who can reflect on their own experiences as former doctoral students to motivate and inspire students to adapt to their roles quickly. Supervisors understand that overcoming those "personal and academic obstacles" to succeed is attainable (Delamont et al., 1997, p. 98) and thus can share their stories with their students to teach them how to be

resilient, and they can build a collective efficacy (CE) in their working relationship together.

CE is defined as "the group's shared beliefs in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required to produce given levels of attainment" (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). In this instance, it refers to the shared beliefs between the supervisor and student. Efficacious beliefs are vital for individual and group motivation, and both leader (supervisor) and follower (student) must rely on each other to accomplish certain tasks (Bandura, 1997). For example, students depend on their supervisors' feedback to enhance their research work, and supervisors count on their students to complete their work on time so that they can provide this feedback. A dynamic feedback relationship that evolves over time determines the quality of work connections (Quinn, 2007). Students need continuous feedback from their supervisors on their work (Heath, 2002), and the supervisor is expected to create a positive environment for discussing feedback. This allows followers (students) to feel motivated to work with "brain, heart and soul" (Larsen & Rasmussen, 2015, p. 50), which means more engagement, better performance, and higher satisfaction.

Research indicated that students were satisfied when they had shared understanding with their supervisors about the *resources* (the most important factors that the doctoral students and the supervisors perceived as assisting and facilitating doctoral studies and the dissertation process), and *challenges* (meaning the most important factors that the doctoral students and supervisors perceived as hindering doctoral studies and the dissertation process) they faced (Pyhältö & Keskinen, 2012, p. 400). Additionally, students start their program with a strong desire to conduct research, but it is their supervisor who affirms, supports, and sustains this desire (James & Baldwin, 1999). Anticipated emotions

(e.g., satisfaction, happiness, and pride) influence people's desire, and their desire ultimately influences their intentions and behaviors (Esposito, van Bavel, Baranowski, & Duch-Brown, 2016). What this means is that when supervisors impact (positively or negatively) the student's desire to conduct research, the student's intentions and behaviors are eventually influenced too. Therefore, it is important for a positive working relationship which includes self-efficacy and CE to develop adequately.

Mentorship. Mentoring "can be an exemplar of a positive work relationship" (Ragins & Verbos, 2007, p. 93). Relational mentoring, which I adopted as a lens in this research, is a "developmental relationship that involves mutual growth, learning, and development in personal, professional, and career domains" (Ragins & Verbos, 2007, p. 92). Supervisors play the role of mentors (Brockbank & McGill, 2007), and scholars have argued that effective supervisors are aware of their active mentoring roles (Pearson, 2001; Pearson & Brew, 2002; Price & Money, 2002). Anderson and Shannon (1988) defined mentoring as:

> A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and /or personal development. (p. 40)

Allen, Finkelstein, and Poteet (2011) suggested that the main focus of mentoring is the growth and development of the protégé or the less experienced person. They added that mentoring relationships are dynamic, and the relational processes and outcomes linked with mentoring change over time. Based on these definitions, the supervisor's ultimate goal is to help the student's growth and development. In doing so, the supervisor listens,

supports, motivates, engages, and shares their knowledge and experience with their student. The students' needs and the "competencies of students and supervisors" change over time as they progress through the program, so the supervisor's involvement and role change as well (Pole, 1998, p. 263).

Brockbank and McGill (2007, p. 304) proposed that supervisors have three primary roles: (a) formative, which includes teaching, evaluating, and monitoring professional/ethical issues; (b) normative, which includes administering, structuring, and organizationally consulting; and (c) restorative, which includes relating-counselling (using counselling skills). The authors added that "mentoring" is a role that has two main functions: career and relationship. Career functions, including sponsorship and coaching, enhance career advancement (for the mentee). Relationship functions (acceptance, confirmation, and affirmation) enrich a "developmental" relationship. This kind of relationship fulfills the individual's (student's) development needs because it offers them needed information, support, and challenge.

Students greatly "appreciated faculty who took their advising and mentoring roles and responsibilities seriously" (Bair, Grant Haworth, & Sandfort, 2004, p. 716). An important finding—although dated—has shown that 83% of the reporting doctoral students believed mentoring was important to their studies (Luna & Cullen, 1998). This is understandable because graduate students go through different stages and challenges in their programs, so having their supervisors as mentors could help them overcome these obstacles. For instance, Ahern and Manathunga (2004) emphasized how some graduate students stall in their programs, which happens for different reasons such as cognitive, emotional, or social issues as well as simply the demanding task of conducting research.

They suggested that supervisors should act as clutch starters for their stalled students by being alert to stall signals, identifying the cause of the stall, and offering the appropriate support to motivate and strengthen their students.

In one study, graduate students reported that positive relationships with their supervisors facilitated the process of their studies (Gardner, 2008). These students explained that meeting with their supervisors and the support they got from them were more important than the supervisor's "particular research interest" was (p. 340). By the same token, Heath (2002) argued that the quality of supervisor meetings is more important than their frequency is, although both are essential. These findings signify how meetings and the quality of them can offer good opportunities for supervisors to demonstrate their mentoring skills and influence their students positively.

The role of mentoring has a positive impact on students, not only throughout the program but years after completing it. A longitudinal study on mentoring and doctoral student outcomes revealed that mentoring influences students' RSE, and having a mentor within the first two years of the program predicted students' research productivity four years later (Paglis et al., 2006). It is safe to suggest that professional growth is one of the most important aims for doctoral students (Austin, 2002), and this means that mentorship is imperative. The professional growth for graduate students as a result of mentoring was evident in Godden, Tregunna, and Kutsyuruba's (2014) study that explored the teaching assistant (TA) experiences of graduate students. The scholars also found that a commitment to mentoring enhanced the working environment. This signifies that creating a positive working environment for both students and supervisors relies to some extent on the mentorship role that supervisors play in the supervisory relationship.

Developing students, mentoring them, coaching them through their research projects, and sponsoring their participation in "academic/professional practice" are all effective and facilitative supervision practices (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004, p. 99). Lee (2008) identified how the mentorship approach is helpful because it leads to personal growth and strengthens students' abilities to cope with challenges when they occur. However, doctoral supervision is an authoritative context that, according to Lee, could render the mentorship toxic if the power were misused. One major finding in the literature is that supervisors' styles are influenced by the way they themselves were supervised as PhD students (Delamont, Atkinson, & Parry, 2000; Fillery-Travis et al., 2017; Lee, 2008). For example, Grant (2003) shared how when she works with supervisors in supervisory skills workshops, she asks them to reflect on their experiences as former PhD students. The stories they shared with her were negative, "painful," and full of unfortunate moments in which they felt lonely and unsupported; they further stated that "people have so much power over your life" (p. 167). These findings imply that supervisors are expected to be mindful of their own previous experiences so they can mentor, coach, and sponsor their students and help them succeed while maintaining their well-being.

Mentorship in the doctoral context can be understood through the social cognition theory, which examines how people mentally organize and use information about themselves and others (Fiske, 1992). This knowledge capacity, which guides people's behaviors when they interact, is referred to as schema. Markus and Zajonc (1985) explained that people develop schemas via their past experiences. These experiences—whether positive or negative—influence people's expectations about their own behaviors, the behaviors of others, and the types and consequences of their future social interactions.

Applying the social cognition theory to mentorship means that supervisors should be mentally aware of their past experiences when they were doctoral students or when they started supervising students, and how these experiences might impact their relationships with their students. Moreover, they should be able to utilize their past experiences in a way that creates a positive impact on these relationships. This includes adjusting their expectations and behaviors to fit the current social interaction. Scholars demonstrated that new relationships might be evaluated based on comparisons with previous ones (Ritter & Lord, 2007). What this means is that supervisors should be cognitively vigilant of the impact of their past supervision experiences on their relationships, whether new or well established.

In sum, the supervisor–student working relationship can be a positive experience and result in mutual benefits for both parties. Positive relationships offer people the "desire, agency, and capacity to fully utilize their strengths, make important contributions, and grow and develop" (Roberts, 2007, p. 34). Creating this positive relationship requires both individuals to pay attention to different factors that influence their social interaction context such as trust, efficacy, and mentorship. In addition, exploring the leadership aspects of this context is vital to understanding how these relationships evolve and change, and I present a literature review on relational leadership in the following section.

Relational Leadership

Relationship in leadership has been mentioned in the literature as early as 1948 with Ralph Stogdill's work. Stogdill published a review of 124 studies and surveys that emerged in print between 1904 and 1947. He declared, "a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits, but the pattern of personal

characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers" (Stogdill, 1948, p. 64). Northouse (2015) defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 6). The author explained that the word "process" implies that leadership is an interactive event between a leader and follower. There is no doubt that this process is a social one that has a solid relational component (Russell, 2003), and the leadership construct "is and always been inherently relational" (Fletcher, 2007, p. 347). However, we still know little about one of the core components of leadership, which is relationships. In the following sections, I provide a historical overview of the development of relational leadership.

In 1958, Edwin Hollander was among the early scholars who explored leadership as a relational process (Hollander, 1958, cited in Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 657). In his paper, Hollander explained that social behavior depends on the traits of the individuals, conditions of the situation, and inputs to a vibrant system arising from their interaction. In 1975, Dansereau, Graen, and Haga built on Jacob's work (a scholar who reviewed more than 1,000 basic and applied research studies on leadership in 1970) and introduced a new leadership approach: the vertical dyad linkage theory (VDL). This theory explores the individual dyadic relationships formed between leaders and their subordinates (Dansereau et al., 1975). Some scholars suggested that it provided the bases for the leader–member exchange theory (LMX), which is one of the foundational leadership theories exploring the relationships between leaders and followers (Brower et al., 2000).

The LMX explains two kinds of relationships that exist within the leadership context (Creary, Caza, & Roberts, 2015; Erdogan, Bauer, & Walter, 2015; Pundt &

Herrmann, 2015). LMX proposes that some subordinates tend to engage more with the leader than others. This leads to two distinct groups—the in-group and the out-group—and as a result, the relationships between these two groups are different. The relationship between the leader and the out-group is more formal; there are fewer interactions, and leadership support tends to be limited (Buch, 2015). In contrast, the relationship with the in-group is based on greater interaction, trust, higher rewards, and more informal relationships (Niemeyer & Cavazotte, 2016). Therefore, LMX suggests that the relationships between leaders and subordinates vary in quality. The difference between VDL and LMX is that VDL focuses on developing the in-group and out-group, while LMX concentrates on the quality of these relationships.

LMX has been used in higher and distance education leadership contexts. Power (2013) explained that this is because LMX is related to transformational leadership, which has the potential to transform higher education institutions to encounter the constantly changing demands of society. Transformational leadership is a leader-centric framework that focuses on the leader's traits and behaviors (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). According to Bass (1998), transformational leaders "motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible" (p. 4). Scholars had extensively studied this framework in an attempt to explore effective leadership (Barling, 2014).

One of LMX's main strengths is that it was the only leadership approach that put the dyadic relationship at the heart of the leadership process (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, LMX has been criticized for its potential to isolate some subordinates who belong to the out-group, which does not seem fair, and these low-quality dyadic relationships could lead to bitterness among some followers (Harter & Evanecky, 2002;

Lunenburg, 2010). Not only researchers but also organizations have criticized LMX and "objected on grounds of fairness and justice as some followers receive special attention of leaders at workplace and other followers do not" (Management Study Guide, 2012). Furthermore, scholars demonstrated that LMX is not fully developed; it tells leaders what happens when they develop high-quality relationships with their subordinates, but it does not explain how to create these exchanges (Anand, Liden, & Vidyarthi, 2011). Interestingly enough, Uhl-Bien (2006), who is one of the key scholars of LMX, claimed that the theory does not answer some key questions concerning how relationships are developed. This led her to approach the leadership area differently and started to use the term "relational leadership," calling for more research to explore how relationships are developed in the leadership context (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

The term "relational leadership" started to emerge in research in the '90s with Regan and Brook's (1995) book entitled *Out of women's experience: Creating relational leadership*. This is an important book because it documented and explored the practices of women in leadership positions, which was missing from leadership literature. The authors argued that because feminine perspectives in leadership had not been explored, we only had half the knowledge about leadership. They defined "relational leadership" as "a balanced practice that can inspire us all to find creative solutions" (p. 4) and suggested that relational leaders exhibit five qualities: collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision. Their notion of balanced practices proposed that a caring leader, for instance, could still be a tough leader if the situation required tough decisions. Therefore, the question to ask is how to care, so that leaders "can integrate both sets of attributes [masculine and feminine], focusing a greatly enhanced knowledge base on the intractable problems of schools and the

world" (p. 3). Despite the fact that relational leadership was explored in this book through the feminine lens, the authors asserted that "knowledge created from women's experience is accessible to both women and men, in the same way that knowledge created from men's experience became accessible to women once they had access to education" (p. 95). It is worth mentioning that the relational leadership movement can be credited to many scholars, including Helen Regan and Gwen Brook.

In 1998, Komives and colleagues edited a book entitled *Exploring leadership: For college students who want to make a difference*, and they offered their own relational leadership model (RLM) (Komives at al., 1998). According to them, leadership is "a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change" (p. vii). Their RLM involves the elements of process and purpose by being ethical, empowering, and inclusive.

In 2006, Uhl-Bien published an article in which she reviewed the relational leadership research that was available in the early 2000s and offered a relational leadership theory (RLT) that encourages scholars to explore leadership in a nontraditional way (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In this study, Uhl-Bien found that there are two perspectives that looked at relational leadership: entity and social process. She first highlighted the perspective that focused on the entity, which looked at individual traits when engaged in interpersonal relationships. The second perspective she explored looked at leadership as a social process, where individuals' understanding of leadership shapes the relationship developed within the context. This article generated a lot of debate among scholars, which led Mary Uhl-Bien to coedit a book with Sonia Ospina in which they invited 37 leadership scholars to discuss relational leadership (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). They concluded:

Relational leadership considers leadership to be a collective capacity (e.g., dyads, groups, teams, networks, social movements), and recognizes that leadership occurs not only in formal, managerial contexts (e.g., manager, subordinate) but also in contexts that do not involve formal authority (e.g., informal and collective leadership processes). It includes elements associated with both individuals (e.g., those who engage in leadership) and collective processes (e.g., social constructions, patterned interactions and behaviors, and discourses of leadership). That said, scholars who study relational leadership often vary in the extent to which they 'privilege' the individual or the collective in their study of leadership. (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p. 571)

Komives et al. (2013) considered the recent changes in educational leadership in the latest edition of their book and highlighted positive psychology and positive leadership to explain their RLM. Positive psychology focuses on "strengths rather than weaknesses, health and vitality rather than illness and pathology" (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004, p. 46). Positive leadership focuses on people's strengths, capabilities, positive communication, and optimism. It also acknowledges negative aspects by building on them to develop positive outcomes (Cameron, 2008). Komives et al. (2013) proposed that the five components of their RLM are connected to positive psychology and positive leadership because: (a) being purposeful requires leaders to facilitate positive meaning, achievement, and spirituality; (b) being ethical requires leaders to sustain positive relationships through focusing on what's right about people and organizations; (c) being empowering is strength based and connected to resonant leadership and positive emotions; (d) being inclusive involves positive leadership, engagement, and building positive

environment; (e) being process oriented is strengths focus and involves resonant leadership, and appreciative inquiry.

In essence, relational leadership is described in the literature I reviewed as a style that exists within a collective capacity that places positive relationships at the heart of the leadership process (Brower et al., 2000; Drath, 2001; Komives et al., 1998, 2006, 2009, 2013; Murrell, 1997; Ospina & Schall, 2001; Reitz, 2015; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012).

Based on the review of the above literature, and for the purposes of my research, I conceptualize relational leadership as a formal style that involves facilitative processes undertaken within a collective context (dyads and groups), which focuses at its heart on positive relationship development and support (e.g., Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). The processes encompass leadership ethical (e.g., Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011), cognitive (e.g., Komives et al., 2006), emotional (e.g., Hersted & Gergen, 2013), and social (e.g., Drath, 2001) competencies.

The previous sections focused primarily on the three influential factors in the supervisory relationship: trust, efficacy and mentoring, which could contribute to our understanding of how relationships are developed in the doctoral supervision context. The leaders' competencies within the leadership context feed these factors, and investigating them might shed light on why some supervisory relationships succeed while others fail. These competencies are discussed in the following sections.

Relational Leadership and Doctoral Supervision: Using the Competencies Lens

The doctorate supervisory process is a form of leadership where supervisors exhibit different leadership styles, such as developmental, relational, authoritarian, servant,

democratic, and laissez-faire (Crookston, 2009; Garvis & Pendergast, 2012; Frischer & Larsson, 2000; McClellan, 2007; Taner & Özkan, 2014).

Scholars have argued that the supervisors rather than the students should adapt their interventions to accommodate the learning styles of supervisees (Caroll, 2008). This means that it is the supervisors' responsibility to adjust their leadership style to best fit their students' needs. Susanne Garvis (Garvis & Pendergast, 2012) reflected on her successful experience with her supervisor and noted that the relational approach helped her succeed and achieve her goal. She referred to this kind of supervision as a relational supervision style.

Both individuals—the supervisor and student—bring their own competencies to the relationship, which could impact it positively or negatively. Hartle (1995) defined competency as a "characteristic of an individual that has been shown to drive superior job performance" (p. 107). The author used the metaphor of an iceberg with visible competencies of knowledge and skills and underlying competencies of social role, self-image, traits, and motives. The literature used *competency* and *intelligence* synonymously. For example, Mayer and Salovey (1993) explained why they used the term "intelligence": "Emotional intelligence could have been labeled 'emotional competence' but we chose intelligence in order to link our framework to a historical literature on intelligence" (p. 433). *Competence* and *competency* have the same meanings, according to dictionaries: "Competence (noun): a. The state or quality of being adequately or well qualified; ability. See Synonyms at ability. b. A specific range of skill, knowledge, or ability" (American Heritage Dictionary, 2006). "Competency (noun): The quality of being adequately or well qualified physically and intellectually" (Princeton WordNet, 2019). Conversely, the

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literature provided two different definitions for "competency" and "competence" (Teodorescu, 2006). Competency refers to "[t]hose characteristics—knowledge, skills, mindsets, thought patterns, and the like—that when used whether singularly or in various combinations, result in successful performance" (Dubois, 1998, p. v). But "competence" is "a function of worthy performance (W), which is a function of the ratio of valuable accomplishments (A) to costly behavior (B) . . . W = A/B" (Gilbert, 2007, p. 18). Competent people are "those who can create valuable results without excessively costly behavior" (Teodorescu, 2006, p. 28).

In this research, I used the term 'competency' even when I refer to Mayer and Salovey's (1993) work, who used the term 'intelligence.' When I use the term competency, I refer to abilities—which include skills, knowledge, and the 'growth' mindset—that allow leaders to perform successfully. I emphasized the term *growth* in mindset because the literature distinguished between fixed and growth mindsets. For example, Dweck (2006) suggested that the ability to develop a growth mindset rather than a fixed one is a fundamental element that helps people develop and excel.

When discussing leadership competencies, it is important to consider self-confidence, which is well recognized in the leadership literature as an essential trait for effective leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; House & Aditya, 1997; Northouse, 2015). "Self-confidence" is defined as:

The ability to be certain about one's competencies and skills. It includes a sense of self-esteem and self-assurance and the belief that one can make a difference. Leadership involves influencing others, and self-confidence allows the leader to feel assured that his or her attempts to influence others are appropriate and right.

(Northouse, 2013, p. 24)

It is also vital to differentiate between self-confidence and self-efficacy, which are two different constructs. Self-confidence is a personal attribute that is not subject to change. In contrast, self-efficacy is a personal belief and judgment about one's task-specific capabilities, and it can be acquired (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy is "one's belief about his or her ability to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action necessary to execute a specific action within a given context" (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998b, p. 66). This means that self-efficacy, which I discussed earlier in this research, is an underlying feature for relational leaders when constructing or enhancing the four core competencies. In this instance, self-efficacy refers to the leader's (supervisor's) beliefs about their capabilities to acquire, build on, or enhance their ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social competencies, which could lead them to practice relational leadership. In the following sections, I discuss these competencies and their applicability to the supervisory relationship.

Ethical competencies. I define ethical competencies as the individual's ability to perform in an honorable manner successfully. Ethics is the heart of leadership (Ciulla, 1998), where leaders' actions, inaction, and the information and values that feed their decisions can determine their followers' well-being, social health, and success in their roles (Hollander, 1995). Ethical leaders behave in a way that creates and enforces trust (Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009; Salamon & Robinson, 2008). Ethical leadership is defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison,

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2005, p. 120). As stated in this definition, ethical leaders behave in an acceptable manner and engage their followers when making ethical decisions.

People often use the terms *ethics* and *morals* interchangeably because they are both related to right and wrong behavior. The basic rule is that people's actions/inactions and decisions should not harm any person (Weinstein, 2011). But the two terms differ in that ethics in the workplace, for instance, refer to what a professional should or should not do in their profession. It also involves a great deal of the professional's life in which they need to reflect that behavior in all their dealings. On the other hand, *morals* or *moral values* refer to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong. Scholars referred to this as the *moral person* element of ethical leadership, which includes the leader's traits and personality (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003; Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000). Ethical leadership, then, involves both ethics and morals (Brown & Treviño, 2006), and relational leadership includes ethical leadership as a central piece (Komives et al., 2013).

Komives and colleagues (2009) argued that ethics and morals differ not only within different cultures but also among individuals in the same country. This implies that relational leaders are expected to be individually sensitive, discuss with their followers what is considered as right and wrong, and create collective values that are clear for both individuals. One example is "favouritism or mistreatment" (Löfström & Pyhältö, 2012, p. 9), which I discuss later under the justice/fairness subsection below.

Relational leaders are ethically competent (e.g., Komives et al. 2013). They make ethical and moral decisions based on their professional conduct and individual values, as well as the collective values in the leadership relationship. Ethics are a critical competency, especially in the case of an authoritative or position leadership context that has power in its

nature (Hollander, 1995). Northouse (2013) suggested that "position power" is the power an individual gains from a specific office or rank in a formal organizational system, and it includes "legitimate, reward, coercive, and information power" (p.12). This indicates the significance of ethical competencies in position leaders, such as doctoral supervisors. The ethical competencies that are expected in the leadership context and found in the graduate supervision literature (see Lowenstein, 2008 for a comprehensive review on ethical foundation in academics advising) are (a) commitment (e.g., Lowenstein, 2008); (b) stewardship (e.g., McClellan, 2007; Menyah, 2013) (c) honesty (e.g., Barnes & Austin, 2008; Bolton & Bolton, 2009); (d) justice/fairness (e.g., Hopkins & Weathington, 2006; Jones, 2013; Mayer, Nishii, Schneider, & Goldstein, 2007); (e) benevolence (e.g., Colquitt & Salam, 2009; Komives et al., 2006); (f) nonmaleficence (e.g., Weinstein, 2011); (g) respect (e.g., Canals, 2010); and (h) autonomy (e.g., Löfström & Pyhältö, 2012).

Commitment. This is about the supervisor's ability to fulfill an obligation to helping the student achieve their goals. Commitment refers to "an act, or ongoing activity relating a person as agent and chooser to aspects of his life in which he invests his energies, his care and his identity" (Perry, 1970, p. 135). In the supervision context, there are two types of commitments. The first is the supervisor's commitment to helping the student succeed, which is built into the role they have taken (Lowenstein, 2008). The second goes beyond the basic supervision role and comprises the supervisor's aim to help the student excel rather than merely succeed. This second type reflects the relational supervisor's genuineness, which is expected to be received with appreciation by the student. This type is called "stewardship" and is discussed in the following section.

Stewardship. This competency refers to the supervisor's ability to fulfill the student's potential and to encourage inquiry, enjoyment, and creativity. As a steward, the relational leader (supervisor) is a collective-minded one who makes decisions and takes actions that will benefit the follower (student) and demonstrate altruism (Menyah, 2013). When the leader (supervisor) demonstrates unselfishness, the level of trust increases (Frost, Stimpson, & Maughan, 1978). When the level of trust increases, the follower (student) can then rest assured that their leader (supervisor) is their key supporter and that they are in safe hands (Tschannen-Moran, 2014) and consequently will be willing to back up their leaders' (supervisors') decisions (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Inspiring the students to publish and participate in national and international conferences is important (Donald et al., 1995), and this implies the importance of stewardship as a competency that supervisors should demonstrate. Supervisors are also expected to expand the students' knowledge by finding opportunities to discuss their thoughts with other scholars in their fields (Brown & Adkins, 1988). This also means that supervisors need to be aware not to mock or demolish the student's ideas or impose their own values on them (Jairam & Kahl, 2012).

Honesty. I define the honesty competency as the individuals' ability to display trustworthiness and integrity in the supervisory relationship. Honesty is an important value (Bolton & Bolton, 2009), and it means telling the truth and being trustworthy. Honest people are truthful with others as well as themselves. One of the major supervisor's responsibilities is to confirm that the student's work is done well and up to standards (Fowler, 1999), and they are also responsible for helping students maintain honesty with themselves and others about their successes and limits (Lowenstein, 2011). This suggests

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that honesty is an essential competency that plays a primary role in the supervisory relationship. Being an honest individual necessitates the leader (supervisor) to explain to their followers (students) the rationale for their feedback, actions, or decisions honestly and clearly, but this should be achieved in a genuine, transparent, trust-building manner (Luthans et al., 2015). When leaders (supervisors) display a higher level of transparency, their followers (students) will trust them more and view them as leaders of higher integrity (Simons, 2002, 2008; Simons, Friedman, Liu, & McLean Parks, 2007).

Relational transparency is a major element of honesty, and it refers to "leader behaviors that are aimed at promoting trust through disclosures that include openly sharing information and expressions of the leader's true thoughts and feelings" (Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Oke, 2011, p. 6). Providing noncontrolling positive feedback and recognizing the student's perspective are important (Sheldon, Davidson, & Pollard, 2004). Feedback is a two-way process, and this helps supervisors guide their students in a genuine and honest manner. In one study, supervisors reported that honesty in their advising relationships should always be combined with reinforcement, kindness, and support (Barnes & Austin, 2008). When honesty is practiced in this ethical manner, the possibility of creating harm when offering honest advice will be minimized. Honesty is a shared responsibility in which both the supervisor and student should act in a truthful manner (Benaquisto, 2000). It is a mutual competency in the supervisory relationship, and relational supervisors who model genuine honesty enforce this positive behavior within it.

Justice/fairness. The justice competency is the supervisor's ability to treat all their supervisees fairly or equitably, granting no one any privileges that are not accessible to all; further, any differences in treatment should have a defensible basis and must not create

inequalities (Lowenstein, 2008; Weinstein, 2011). It is understandable that individuals

expect to be treated fairly (Bolton & Bolton, 2009), and research has highlighted issues of

discrimination, equity and equality in the graduate students (Jones, 2013). This is

problematic, especially if the lack of equality comes from the supervisor, whom students

rely on most. Followers (students) expect their leaders (supervisors) to display moral

values such as justice and equality because the perception of fairness is important to them

(Yukl, 1994; Hopkins & Weathington, 2006; Mayer et al., 2007).

The followers' (students') emotions are influenced by the way their leaders

(supervisors) treat them whether fair, biased in their favor, or biased in favor of another

(Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999). Followers feel a sense of fairness when they can

use their voices and see that they are heard (Komives et al., 2006). When followers are

treated fairly, they tend to demonstrate positive behaviors such as higher levels of job

performance and more organizational citizenship (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng,

2001), and they experience fewer conflicts (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Followers (students) expect their leaders (supervisors) to use two kinds of justice:

(a) procedural justice (tangible) and (b) interactive (intangible)/interactional justice.

Procedural/tangible justice refers to fair processes when allocating resources (Konovsky,

2000), and it affects cognitive and affect-based trust and mediates the relationship between

employee development and trust in leaders (Jones & Martens, 2009).

Interactive/interactional justice refers to fairness of the interpersonal treatment individuals

receive from others (Bies, 1987, 2001; Bies & Moag, 1986; Brockner & Wiensenfeld,

1996; Sitkin & Bies, 1993), and it predicts trust in one's direct leader (De Cremer, van

Dijke, & Bos, 2006). Both types of justice are important for students and could impact the

supervisory relationship positively or negatively. Research has indicated that supervisors find balancing tasks to their students in a way that they perceive to be fair to all is problematic, which makes them fear complaints of "favouritism or mistreatment" (Löfström & Pyhältö, 2012, p. 9). This is a valid challenge, but it is still the leader's (supervisor's) responsibility to demonstrate their ability to make right-versus-right choices such as justice versus mercy with compassion and empathy (Kidder, 2005). Moreover, supervisors need to display their ability to communicate their actions in a way that enforces rather than violates trust.

Benevolence/beneficence. The benevolence or beneficence competency refers to the leader's (supervisor's) ability to display goodwill, which is a key element of relational trust between a trustor and a trustee (Solomon, 1960; Strickland, 1958). It is about benefiting others (beneficence) and promoting their interests above self-interest and self-gain (Komives et al., 2006). Benevolence is defined as "the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 718), and it enhances trust over time (Brower et al., 2000). Benevolence happens through frequent demonstrations of goodwill and frequent interactions between the leader (supervisor) and follower (student), and it requires some time for the follower (student) to judge the leader's (supervisor's) benevolence (Colquitt & Salam, 2009). This indicates the importance of frequent communication in creating trust and displaying benevolence, especially because time, which I highlighted earlier, is a real challenge for both the supervisor and the student.

Nonmaleficence. This competency is about the supervisor's ability to demonstrate a do not harm ethical rule (Kitchener, 1984; Weinstein, 2011). This competency is about the supervisors' genuineness and mindfulness of their emotions and behaviors and their

impact on their students. This requires leaders to pay attention to their own and others' values, knowledge, strengths, and context (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004).

When supervisors' actions or decisions unintentionally harm their students, they have an ethical obligation to admit their mistakes and make an effort to ease the consequences, whether tangible or intangible. In the same token, the student's actions or decisions must not harm their supervisors in any way. For example, switching supervisors for any reason—such as mismatched expectations—should be done professionally. This means that the student is expected to be mindful and to follow the *do not harm* ethical rule when dealing with the processes and consequences of switching supervisors.

Respect. This refers to the supervisor's ability to build a mutual-regard environment in the supervisory relationship (Ismail et al., 2011; James & Baldwin, 1999; Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005). It is about the leader's (supervisor's) ability to regard, handle disagreement, and work effectively with their follower (student), even if the follower (student) has strongly held views that differ from the supervisor's views (Komives et al., 2006).

A common perspective of ethics embraces "respect for the dignity of individuals" (Canals, 2010). This means that leaders (supervisors) are expected to behave and communicate in a way that creates mutual respect and high regard (Bolton & Bolton, 2009). Supervisors who managed to build this healthy and respectful relationship with their students were described as wise, and their former students still seek their advice (Bloom et al., 2007). These supervisors tend to treat their students as rational, autonomous agents, not as "things that can be manipulated" (Lowenstein, 2008, p. 40). Manipulating students

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could leave them with bitterness and is a major threat to trust in the supervisory relationship.

Autonomy. This competency refers to the supervisor's ability to provide the perfect amount of independence—not too little or too much (Delamont et al., 1997; Johnson, Lee. & Green, 2000; Löfström & Pyhältö, 2012). Allowing students to make decisions is an ethical obligation (Lowenstein, 2008) and is described as a "delicate balance [where] a supervisor has to strike between ensuring the planning is done but not undermining the student's autonomy by 'taking over' the research" (Delamont at al., 1997, p. 6). Relational leaders and relational supervisors are aware of the importance of autonomy and can provide it properly.

To summarize, these ethical competencies are important for building a positive relationship with students. Fulfilling them could increase the level of trust, which is the underlying element of this relationship. Failing to demonstrate any of these competencies—intentionally or unintentionally—is hazardous because it could violate trust or even break it.

Cognitive competencies. Cognitive competencies are defined as "general mental ability" and comprise the "broad ability to learn and make sense of familiar and unfamiliar surroundings, to think abstractly, and to devise strategies" (Sharma, Bottom, & Elfenbein, 2013, p. 300). Out of all the cognitive abilities required for leaders, the most important is problem-solving (Tong, Dodd, Li, & Greiff, 2015). This is not surprising, especially because organizational problems vary from well to ill defined (Dillon, 1982).

People in the workplace sometimes view the leader as the problem-solver—the one who comes up with the perfect solution only from their knowledge or own experience. This

might be because "many people's understanding of leadership is based on a trait orientation," which characterized the leadership movement in the '80s (Northouse, 2013, p. 4). However, effective leaders consider the various incomplete solutions proposed by their followers (Kelly, 1994). This implies their ability to make logical connections and to recognize the power of solving a problem collectively (Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Laughlin, Hatch, Silver, & Boh, 2006). Furthermore, effective leaders view problems as learning opportunities, and they know how to generate rich discussions that allow their followers to see the picture from different angles (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Working with the followers to solve a problem requires both parties to collaborate to "frame and reframe the issue" that needs to be solved, and this involves labeling the problem clearly and identifying the potential solutions (Komives et al., 2006, p. 109).

Graduate students signify a substantial range of diversity such as age, culture, needs, expectations, experiences, competencies, program structure (part time or full time), and whether they are domestic or international (Ismail et al., 2011; Humphrey & McCarthey, 1999). In spite of this diverse landscape, doctorate students need stimulating opportunities for professional growth (Austin, 2002). This suggests that supervisors should evaluate their students' needs and make proper adjustments in the assistance they offer accordingly (Hodza, 2007). When students face problems—whether personal, indirectly research related, or directly research related—there is no right or wrong approach that supervisors must take, so supervisors are expected to solve problems by adopting "flexible supervision strategies depending on the requirements of their individual students" (Haksever & Manisali, 2000, p. 28). Furthermore, facing problems requires leaders (supervisors) to employ a strength-based approach in which they focus on the positive

aspects of the situation rather than the negative ones (Komives et al., 2013). What this means is that supervisors need to work with their students to identify challenges, positive aspects, and plans to solve problems collectively.

As people who have successfully completed a graduate school to attain their PhDs and pursued academic careers, supervisors are expected to use their cognitive abilities to help their students complete their programs too. For instance, time constraints are a significant issue that faces both students and supervisors (Brown & Krager, 1985; Spear, 2000). This proposes that time management skills are a core component for students to complete their programs.

Guiding or encouraging students to manage their time well, organize their work, plan ahead, and start working on their research at early stages is well recognized in the literature (Allen, 1973; Joyner, Rouse, & Glatthorn, 2012; Mauch & Park, 2003; Roberts, 2010; Zuber-Skerritt & Knight, 1985). In one study, students and supervisors described inadequate supervision or a lack of guidance as the main challenge in their doctoral program (Pyhältö & Keskinen, 2012) because it can frustrate students (Malfroy, 2005) and create conflict in the supervisory relationship (Cullen, Pearson, Saha, & Spear, 1994). Adequate guidance requires supervisors to be mentally engaged in their roles as program guides.

It has been noted in the literature that supervisors who are engaged and enthusiastic "bring the whole of their experience, knowledge and skill to supervision" to benefit their students (Hughes, 2005, p. 210). More importantly, supervisors are expected to help their students realize their potential. Roberts (2007) called this positive behavior "relational transformation," which mainly lays in "helping others to see their value; [as a result],

sincere appreciation for another's perspectives and contributions can open the door for

clarifying expectations, being influenced, deepening understanding, and receiving mutual

benefits from engagement" (p. 38). Consequently, trust will be enforced, and the level of

self-efficacy and CE will be increased in the supervisory relationship. These findings

altogether suggest that supervisors are expected to demonstrate their cognitive

competencies in the supervisory relationship.

Emotional competencies. Human emotions are biological responses experienced

by individuals to environmental stimuli. They result in physical and psychological changes

to the individual and a subsequent readiness for action. They serve as a signaling

mechanism for individuals to adapt their behavior when they encounter specific

environmental conditions (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Frijda, Manstead, & Bem, 2000;

Plutchik & Kellerman, 2013; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). Emotional states influence an

individual's intention to act and their commitment to this action (Cho, Rutherford, Friend,

Hamwi, & Park, 2017; Esposito et al., 2016).

Relationships and connectedness are fundamental in organizations, and they require

a fresh perspective of leadership that encourages engagement, commitment, and resilient

practices (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Wheatley, 2006).

Additionally, acknowledging the importance of emotions in the workplace is an essential

step in the right direction (Brief & Weiss, 2002)—especially recognizing that they play a

central role in the leader–follower interaction process (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002).

Emotions "can be distinguished from the closely related concept of mood because

emotions are shorter and generally more intense" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 185).

Research indicated that people who score higher on managing emotions in themselves and

others (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test-MSCIET) (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002) tend to exhibit higher quality social interactions and less conflict in their relationships with others (e.g., Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003; Lopes et al., 2004; Lopes, Salovey, Côté, Beers, & Petty, 2005).

Emotional competencies and emotional intelligence (EI) are described in the literature in different ways. The most popular models are the ability EI-based model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, 1997), the trait EI-based model (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007), and the mixed EI-based model (Goleman, 1996). I chose the ability EI-based model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, 1997) to apply in my research because I aim to distinguish between emotional and social competencies. The ability EI-based model focuses on emotions as tools of information that are beneficial in social interactions and relationships (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, 1997). It highlights four separate but interrelated abilities: the abilities to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions. The first three—the abilities to perceive, use, and understand emotions—are self-awareness abilities. The last one—the ability to manage emotions—is a self-management ability.

Emotional self-awareness is the first step in EI and encompasses the leaders' ability to understand their own emotions and what causes them. The second step is what demonstrates the person's emotional competency, where the leader can regulate and manage emotions (in the self) effectively (George, 2000; Goleman, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1997). This is also described as "emotional resilience," which means, "being able to control one's emotions and to maintain performance when under pressure" (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016, p. 34).

Both leaders (supervisors) and followers (students) need to keep disrupting emotions and impulses in check when they interact with others or face challenging situations. For instance, doctoral students experience different emotional states throughout their program. Parsloe (1993) suggested that formulating the research question phase leaves the students with feelings of frustration, confusion, and anxiety. According to Parsloe, the whole process—from starting the research to submitting a thesis—is an emotional experience for the student as well as their family in addition to being an intellectual process. As such, being emotionally competent or emotionally resilient is important for students. This competency allows people to cope well with the environmental demands and pressures (Martinez, 1997) they experience, which places less stress on the supervisory relationship. Emotional competency is important for both individuals in the supervisory relationship. If the student lacks this competency, the supervisor can help the student increases their sense of efficacy to acquire it.

Well-being in doctoral programs. Well-being is "an overarching term that encapsulates an individual's quality of life, happiness, satisfaction with life and experience of good mental and physical health" (Noble & McGrath, 2012, p. 32). It allows individuals "to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community" (Government Office for Science, 2008, p. 10).

Understanding emotions in the workplace is imperative in explaining many aspects of employees' performances and organizational behavior (OB), such as supervisors' support (Grandey, 2000). Similarly, the "dominance of the Western philosophical tradition that judges emotions to be the anathema to academic research" should be challenged

(Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2009, p. 64). It is normal for doctoral students to experience strong emotions when conducting research. Varying emotional states are part of the process, and Coffey (1999) explained how researchers should acknowledge these emotions, whether positive or negative, and further argued that these emotions are "fundamental feature[s] of well-executed research" (p. 158).

Morrison Saunders, Moore, Hughes, and Newsome (2010) proposed that all doctoral students experience "emotional swings . . . [and] even those for whom the doctoral process is overall a very positive experience, some negative emotions are encountered" (p. 24). These positive and negative emotions occur in the early, middle, and final stages of the program. The scholars argued that positive emotions do not cause problems, and students "need to be aware of those negative emotions that deactivate from the task and long-term goal of the PhD" (p. 19). At the same time, offering quality supervision regardless of the power difference in this context means that students should remain actively engaged in the supervision process (Grant and Graham, 1999), which also means that supervisors should provide a safe space for their students to offer their input and express their feelings regarding the effectiveness of the supervision they receive.

Social competencies. Social competencies are the individual's ability to make connections between the self and others (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). These competencies characterize social people and facilitate their interaction with others in the workplace. According to Northouse (2013), leaders who display sociability are "friendly, outgoing, courteous, tactful, and diplomatic. They are sensitive to others' needs and show concern for their well-being" (p. 26). The author highlighted that social leaders enjoy good interpersonal skills and build supportive relationships with their followers. Having good

interpersonal skills means that these leaders have effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

Effective communication is well acknowledged in the literature as a central piece of social interaction (e.g., Matsumoto, 2010). However, the relational leadership literature proposed that the term 'communication' does not explain how leaders and followers make sense of meanings when they interact with one another. Communication is a complex participatory activity, and with this view, training individuals to be good listeners or speakers is not enough anymore (Hersted & Gergen, 2013). As such, the term *dialogue*, which is deeper than *communication*, started to emerge as a fundamental social element in relational leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Drath, 2001; Larsen & Rasmussen, 2015; Hersted & Gergen, 2013; Ospina & Schall, 2001; Reitz, 2015; Svane, Hersted, & Schulze, 2015). Brockbank and McGill (2007) underlined dialogue as an essential social engagement factor in learning. Doctorate students are engaged with their peers, faculty, and scholars in their field, which means having an effective dialogue could facilitate their learning.

People often use the term *dialogue* interchangeably with other terms such as *communication*, *conversation*, and *talkin*g. Dialogue is not a "didactic talk" but rather a "real talk" which requires deep listening and engagement in the conversation, and it is a "mutually shared agreement that together [individuals] are creating the optimum setting so that half-baked ideas can grow" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986, p. 144). Dialogue is more than spoken words transferred between people because it includes "the tone of voice, laughter, pauses, difficulty in finding the right words, and amount of discussion needed to come to some meaning" (Komives et al., 2006, p. 240). It also

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includes "emphasis, body language, clothing, manners, [and] use of silence" (Hersted, Larsen, & Rasmussen, 2015, p. 68). It is defined as "a conversation between equal parties that relies on mutual trust, openness and respect." (Svane et al., 2015, p. 82).

Mutual respect in dialogue means individuals demonstrate reciprocal high regard for one another. The reciprocity principal is an authentic behavior in which someone does a valuable thing for the other with no expectation of anything immediately in return (Baker & Dutton, 2007). It requires both individuals to be mindful and pay attention to the verbal and nonverbal messages they are sending. This concept is well addressed in Buber's dialogue philosophy (1970). Buber proposed that genuine relation is mainly based on "acceptance of otherness" (Buber, 1923, as cited in Charmé, 1977, p. 169). He distinguished between two kinds of dialogues—I-Thou, and I-It. The former refers to when two individuals meet in an equal relationship based on respect. The latter refers to viewing the other party as an object in the relationship, which shows disrespect. I-Thou defines relational leadership (Reitz, 2015), while I-It is a negative attitude that "on the part of the supervisor will be experienced as empathic failure and will be met with anger" (Evans, 1998, p. 293). I-It is a hazardous behavior and attitude that harms not only the relationship but also the individual's self-perception and identity (Buber, 1970).

I-Thou is a positive behavior. It requires the leader (supervisor) to view the follower (student) as an equal partner in the relationship, especially when sending information and emotional stimuli to them and also when receiving information and emotional stimuli from them. Leaders are involved in displaying emotion and inducing emotion in others (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000), which are important aspects of social competencies. A study on mood contagion provided evidence

that a follower listening to their leader's emotional expression is enough to automatically induce a matching mood state (positive or negative) in the follower, even when their leaders are not providing any verbal or semantic information about their emotion (Neumann & Strack, 2000).

Moreover, studies have demonstrated that moods have a significant influence on how people construct and maintain beliefs about social situations (Forgas, 2000). The feel-good, do-good phenomenon suggests that people tend "to be helpful when already in a good mood" (Myers, 1995, p. 458). What this means is that moods play an essential role in social interaction. As such, supervisors and students need to be mindful about the impact of their emotions and moods when they interact. No one is immune from experiencing a blue mood (after bad news), and this highlights the importance of displaying empathy in the supervisory relationship, as discussed earlier in the trust section. All the above findings on social competencies indicate that relational leadership requires supervisors and students to send and receive information and emotional stimuli effectively. The relational leadership style encourages them to engage in effective and positive dialogues.

To recap, the four competencies discussed above require relational leaders or relational supervisors to have an effective *inner dialogue* with *themselves* when involved in ethical decisions, cognitive analysis of situations, and self-emotional understanding and control. It also requires them to have an effective *outer dialogue* when sending and receiving information and emotional stimuli with their students. For students, they are expected to fulfil their ethical obligations. Enhancing or acquiring their cognitive, emotional and social competencies could be achieved via increasing their sense of efficacy, which require their supervisors' help and support. A relational leader or a relational

supervisor, then, is a helper or a facilitator—someone who engages their soul (ethics), brain (cognitive), and heart (emotions) when interacting socially with followers and who creates a positive environment for collective interaction so views and ideas can be exchanged freely to facilitate coordinated understanding, awareness, and appreciation.

Conceptual Framework

Putting together all the findings that I highlighted in the previous sections, I developed the following conceptual framework for my dissertation research.
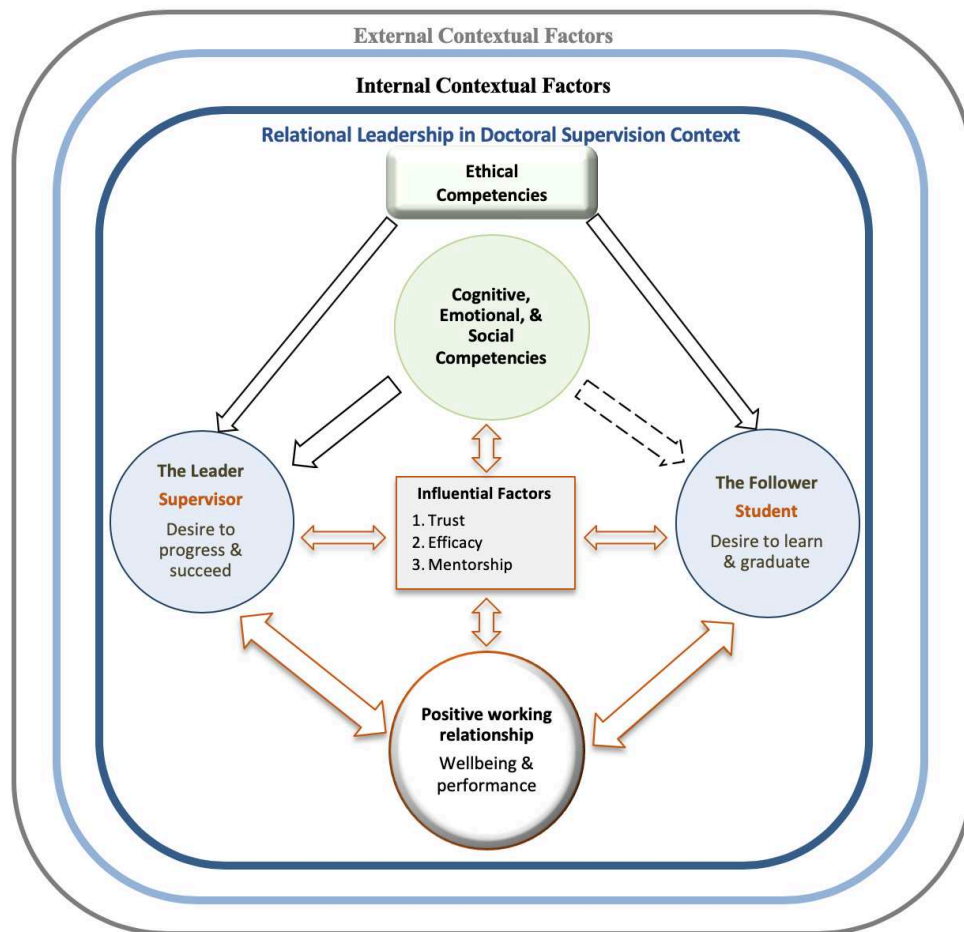
Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework.

Doctoral supervision is a leadership context in which supervisors can exhibit different styles of position leadership. The relational leadership style could help develop

and maintain a positive supervisory relationship that could benefit both individuals, and influence the students' well-being and performance. The relevant literature I reviewed suggested that when supervisors and doctoral students interact, there are three influential factors that can influence their workplace relationship (positively or negatively): level of trust, sense of efficacy, and mentoring relational behaviours. These influential factors are nourished by four types of relational leadership core competencies: ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social. While both parties are expected to fulfil their ethical obligations and display their ethical competencies, the other three types of competencies are only essential to supervisors as leaders in this context. This means that while enjoying a positive supervisory relationship is a shared responsibility, it relies more on the supervisor or leader, and it can result in some beneficial outcomes for both individuals, such as resilience, progress, and satisfaction.

The arrows around the three influential factors are double-sided because these influential factors explain the process of building trust, efficacy and mentorship that requires the supervisor's and student's interaction. Moreover, having these factors established (or not established) impacts the student as an individual who has some personal/professional goals, as well as the supervisor. These influential factors are also influenced by the competencies, and they contribute to these competencies as well. Additionally, these influential factors that are nourished by the competencies result in positive working relationships, and having or not having a positive working relationship influences the two individuals, as well as the process of trust, efficacy, and mentorship.

It is worth mentioning that there are different contextual factors that can influence individuals, supervisors, and students and therefore the supervisory relationship. I

discussed some of them such as time and heavy workloads, and I highlighted what the literature reported about addressing them. Other examples such as the availability of infrastructure are outside of the scope of my research, but mentioning them helps clarify how the supervisory relationship does not exist in a vacuum.

Conclusion

Establishing positive working relationships in organizations is a serious matter, and leaders are expected to find ways to build and enforce a positive culture that helps employees enjoy their work. The impact of workplace relationships on individuals is substantial. For instance, stress and depression in the workplace are costly for individuals as well as organizations and societies. These psychological disorders can impact people's well-being, productivity, and performance, and they can even lead them to quit their jobs.

In higher education, the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and doctoral student as well as the leadership style exhibited in this relationship are significant areas to explore and investigate. This is because the student's well-being and performance are associated with the leadership style. As such, conducting an empirical study to examine the nature of relational leadership that exists in the doctoral supervision context—and the influential factors and the leadership core competencies required for a positive relationship is imperative. This could inform both relational leadership literature regarding how relationships are developed, and the higher education literature, in terms of how supervisors create positive environment for their students' performance and well-being.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Method

Langdridge (2007) defined methodology "as a term referring to the general way to research a topic, whereas method is the specific technique(s) being employed" (p. 4). In this chapter I define my methodology as a qualitative, interpretive phenomenology; and my methods as semi-structured interviews.

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of relational leadership and the leadership competencies that influence the doctoral supervisor–doctoral student relationship within the Canadian university context. As such, I employed a qualitative methodology to examine my main research question: What is the nature of relational leadership that exists in the doctoral supervisor–student context? And the two subquestions:

(1) What are the perceived influential factors that contribute to the doctoral supervisory relationship?

(2) To what extent do relational leadership ethical, cognitive, emotional and social competencies influence the doctoral supervisor–student relationship positively? and how they are demonstrated in the doctoral supervision context.

The qualitative methodology approach aims to "produce explanations or arguments, rather than claiming to offer mere descriptions" (Mason, 2002, p. 7). An interpretive phenomenological methodology was selected to frame my research design. The interpretive phenomenological research approach seeks to study the individual lived experience by exploring, describing, and analyzing its meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Bentz and Shapiro (1998) explained how the lived experiences of human beings

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included "the whole system of interactions with others . . . in an environment that is fused with meaning and language" (p. 171).

This approach values the fact that no one is better in sharing lived experiences than those who lived them (Mapp, 2008), which means that doctoral supervisors and doctoral students alike were the best people to inform me about what it means to work together towards a mutual goal of obtaining a doctorate, with all the ups and downs that characterize such a program. Van Manen (1990) asserted the following:

> The point of phenomenological research is to 'borrow' other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole human experience. (p. 62)

Philosophical phenomenological research could be conducted based on Heidegger's interpretive approach, also known as hermeneutic phenomenology and existential phenomenology (Laverty, 2003; Spinelli, 2005); or on Husserl's descriptive method, also known as transcendental phenomenology (Langdridge, 2007; Reiners, 2012).

Heideggerian approach— interpretive phenomenology—is based on the use of language and the interpretation of a person's "meaning-making," as well as his or her ascription of meaning to phenomena (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Interpretation requires analyzing text to find meanings by "searching for themes, engaging with the data interpretively" (Sloan & Bowe, 2014, p. 9).

Interpretive phenomenology is unlike descriptive phenomenology, which requires researchers to suspend their preunderstanding and knowledge (i.e., bracketing) to get to the essence of a phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Heidegger's approach rejected

Husserl's notion that researchers should clear their minds of previous knowledge to study a phenomenon (Wilke, 2002).

I chose the Heideggerian interpretive approach because it fitted the purpose of my study and could answer my research questions. Additionally, my paradigm aligned well with its core, which acknowledges that researchers cannot remove or detach themselves from the process of examining and identifying a phenomenon (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Strauss (1987) highlighted that researchers come to their studies with background, knowledge, and personal experiences that should be acknowledged. He even described these elements as a treasure when he suggested "mine your experience, there is potential gold there!" (p. 11). I also agree with Wright Mills (1959, as cited in Maxwell's, 2005), who argued.

> The most admirable scholars within the scholarly community . . . do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other. (p. 195)

In my interviews, and throughout my dialogues with participants, they kept engaging me in their reflections. Therefore, even if researchers suspend their viewpoints or bracket them, their participants will invite their viewpoints to take place, whether we like it or not. This is a part of the dialogue that cannot be avoided when you act as an ear to someone willing to share his or her experiences, with all its ups and downs.

Maxwell (2005) stated that "separating your research from other aspects of your life cuts you off from a major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks" (p. 43). Maxwell also built on biologist Heinrich's (1984) ideas of how "even carefully collected results can be misleading if the underlying context of assumptions is wrong" (p. 151) and

emphasized the importance of a conceptual framework in the research design. The conceptual framework, which refers to "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 39) helped with designing the research plan and interview questions. My framework conceptualized my understanding of relational leadership in doctoral supervision, based on the literature that I reviewed. This conceptual framework has three influential factors (trust, efficacy and mentorship), and four core leadership competencies (ethical, cognitive, emotional, social) that they influence students' well-being and performance.

LeVasseur (2003) fostered Salsberry's (1989) ideas on phenomenological research who discussed that "all knowledge of the external and internal world is mediated by conceptual frameworks" (Salsberry, 1989, p. 11), adding that these conceptual frameworks not only are important to researchers' designs but also act as reminders to participants who are supposed to share their stories. Additionally, I found that expecting participants to always remember what they need to share about their lived experience in a one-hour interview is nearly impossible. Participants need to see the questions in advance, as became clear during the pilot test of my interviews. The questions were based on the conceptual framework, making it possible to share the questions before the interviews.

The first draft of my conceptual framework was developed very early in my program. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that a conceptual framework can be "either [graphical] or in narrative form" and should include "the main things to be studied, the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 18). My conceptual framework was my main mind map, developing throughout my program as I read, researched, thought, and wondered about my phenomenon. Thus, it was

an important part of my interpretive phenomenological study.

Given that interviews can generate in-depth dialogues between the researcher and participants about a phenomenon (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008), the semi-structured interviews in this study offered some rich insights into perspectives that characterize the supervisory work relationships.

Sampling

My participants were doctoral students and supervisors—a heterogeneous group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon of doctoral supervision (Creswell, 2013). In this phenomenological study, criterion-based sampling (Creswell, 1998) was applied to select participants who meet these criteria: (a) have experienced (or were currently experiencing) the phenomenon under investigation, (b) from Canadian universities and studying/working in either the social sciences, humanities, or sciences; (c) doctoral supervisors were at the Associate Professor level or above; and (d) willing to articulate their experiences.

In some Canadian universities, the professors' and doctoral students' contact information are publicly available. Using the criteria above, I applied a purposive sampling strategy (Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2006), and I selected different universities in different provinces, and searched for doctoral students and supervisors. I collected several hundreds of contact information, and I organized them in an Excel sheet. I used the Excel to select potential participants from different provinces and different disciplines, and I sent them emails and invited them to participate in my study. I also applied a snowball strategy, asking current participants to recruit future participants from their connections.

Although Litchman (2006) stated that acceptable qualitative research often had 10 or less participants, a sample size of 5 to 25 participants with direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation is recommended in phenomenological studies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1989). Wertz (2005) stated that "it is not always possible to determine the required number of participants before conducting the research and carrying out analyses" (p. 171). Both Wertz (2005) and Creswell (2013) recommended saturation to determine the adequacy of the sample size. Saturation level is the point in data collection when new data no longer provide further insights in response to the research questions (Mason, 2002). In this research, I had two different segments that participated in my study, supervisors and doctoral students. Students and supervisors were independently recruited, and no efforts were made to link responses. The reason behind recruiting individually was to include all students, even those who had dysfunctional supervision experiences; obviously it would not be possible to bring together a supervisor and his or her student who did not have a functional supervision relationship.

The participants provided rich data on their lived experiences regarding the phenomenon under investigation—doctoral supervision—and saturation was reached after 19 interviews with doctoral students and 16 interviews with supervisors. My participants were doctoral students (N =19) and doctoral supervisors (N = 16). They were from Ontario (n = 26), Manitoba (n = 5), Alberta (n = 3), and New Brunswick (n = 1). Supervisors were from different career stages: full professors (n = 8), associate professors (n = 5), and professor emeriti (n = 3). I provide more details in the following Table.

Table 1.

Participants' Program/Demographics–Supervisors

Name	Disciplines	Age at time of interview	Years of experience	Number of doctoral students supervised /supervising
Noel	Social sciences & humanities	52	18	1
Randal	Social sciences & humanities	42	5	3
Rachel	Social sciences & humanities	62	5	7
Norman	Social sciences & humanities	60	7	12
Nigel	Social sciences & humanities	58	11	11
Lawrence	Social sciences & humanities	65	28	71
Henry	Natural sciences & engineering	49	12	2
Robert	Natural sciences & engineering	49	11	10
Dana	Natural sciences & engineering	66	25	7
Thomas	Natural sciences & engineering	70	28	12
Reina	Natural sciences & engineering	74	36	15
Nathan	Natural sciences & engineering	80	45	30
Samuel	Health sciences	50	11	3
Lance	Health sciences	63	35	11
Richard	Health sciences	74	44	26
Turner	Health sciences	71	41	30

The doctoral students were nearly all full-time students; only one was part-time. Nearly were all domestic citizens; only one was international. They were from different stages of their programs: graduated (*n* = 11), All But Dissertation (ABD) and fifth year (*n* = 3), third year (*n* = 2), and second year (*n* = 3). I provide more details in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Participants' Program/Demographics–Doctoral Students

Pseudonyms	Disciplines	Age at Completion of PhD	Age at time of Interview	Stage in the Program
Laura	Social sciences & humanities		28	Finishing 2nd year
Daisy	Social sciences & humanities		26	Finishing 2nd year
Natasha	Social sciences & humanities		28	Finishing 2nd year
Tiffany	Social sciences & humanities		26	In 3rd year
Sara	Social sciences & humanities		29	In 5th year (ABD)
Stephanie	Social sciences & humanities	30		Graduated in 2018
Heather	Social sciences & humanities	50		Graduated in 2018
Michael	Social sciences & humanities	38		Graduated in 2017
Nora	Social sciences & humanities	53		Graduated in 2013
Nicholas	Natural sciences & engineering		26	In 5th year
Ronald	Natural sciences & engineering		29	In 5th year
Chris	Natural sciences & engineering	33		Graduated in 2015
Reginald	Natural sciences & engineering	27		Graduated in 2010
Adam	Natural sciences & engineering	27		Graduated in 2008
Leslie	Health sciences		41	In 3rd year
Nancy	Health sciences	27		Graduated in 2013
Lamar	Health sciences	48		Graduated in 2005
Randy	Health sciences	26		Graduated in 2004
Nelly	Health sciences	28		Graduated in 1997

Data Collection

I emailed the selected supervisors and students an invitation letter. When they

agreed to participate, I sent them a thank-you message for their interest. I also shared with them the questions to expect in the interview. I informed them that since the interviews would be semi-structured, there would be follow-up questions based on the conversations. I also attached the letter of information and consent form for them to sign and return (see Appendix A).

 I conducted semi-structured interviews in the summer and fall of 2018: face-to-face ($n = 3$), Skype audio ($n = 3$) and video ($n = 20$), phone ($n = 8$), and Zoom video conferences ($n = 1$), depending on participants' locations and preferences. Supervisors' interviews lasted an average of 65 minutes, and students' interviews lasted an average of 55 minutes. I asked for participants' permission to audio-record the interviews. I used QuickTime (recording Software for Mac). The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, with all proper names and identifiers removed and changed to pseudonyms. I recruited a professional for expedient transcription of audio files.

I developed two interview protocols for supervisors and students. I pilot tested them with a group of PhD students in one of my program courses and three local professors to produce final interview protocols. The two protocols were similar, only differing in how the questions were directed to each participant group (see Appendices B and C).

Data Analysis

I catalogued all data to assist with categorizing, storing, sorting, and retrieving data for analysis. I analyzed my data manually, and I applied a thematic analysis approach, or a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis can potentially provide a rich and thorough yet complex account of data: it aims to search for themes that emerge as important to the description of

the phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). This type of analysis also involves the identification of themes through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p. 258). A theme is defined as "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 161).

   I was keen to be attentive and tentative—"attentive to the data, and tentative in [the] conceptualizations of them" (Dey, 2003, p. 108). This meant I needed to employ a close reading strategy in which I focused on the text within each individual's transcripts and across all transcripts before generalizing the findings. I first incorporated a deductive analysis approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999), followed by a data-driven inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998). My deductive/inductive analysis involved a continual moving back and forth between the codes, the entire dataset, and the data analysis in each section.

   The dual deductive /inductive (Harper & Thompson, 2011) supplemented the research questions by allowing the conceptual framework to be integral to the process of deductive thematic analysis while allowing for themes to emerge directly from the data using inductive coding. Deductive thematic analysis was based on the conceptual framework, which included the three influential factors in the supervisory relationships and the four core competencies critical to the relational leadership context. Inductive analysis allowed me to explore a new theme in the data that was not included in the conceptual framework. I called this theme accessibility, approachability, and psychological presence (AAPP).

   Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997) criticized the word "emerg[ing]" when referring to themes related to the inductive analysis, explaining that the language

Can be misinterpreted to mean that themes "reside" in the data, and if we just look

hard enough they will "emerge" like Venus on the half shell. If themes "reside"

anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating

links as we understand them. (pp. 207–208)

To avoid any potential misinterpretation of the word when referring to themes in this

research, I want to clarify that the inductive theme that I identified emerged from the

interaction between the data and my thinking and the way I conceptualized my

understanding of the datasets. I used the following six-phase guide to conducting thematic

analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step one: Familiarizing myself with the data. I received the transcriptions within

24 hours of sending them, allowing me to work on them while they were fresh in my

memory. I learned that data analysis – the interaction between our minds and data – is a

continuous conscious and unconscious process that starts as soon as the interview begins.

There are no defined lines between data collection and data analysis. This dynamic

interaction is translated into writing the notes or memos, which also means that producing

the report in step six is an accumulation process that starts in this phase.

I read each transcript while listening to the audio several times to verify

completeness and accuracy and familiarize myself with the data. In addition to taking notes

during the interviews, I took notes while listening to the audio and throughout the whole

process. My main strategy was to work on the datasets within each transcript as an

individual piece and then across the transcripts as a whole.

After conducting each interview, first, I gave the interviewee a pseudonym. Then, I

read and reread my notes and wrote a brief summary about each interviewee's lived

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experience. The purpose of reading each transcript as a whole was to obtain a general understanding of each lived experience and some holistic awareness of individuals' experiences. I was not looking for details in the first stage; I was only looking for a broad understanding of each participant's experience. I was also moving between the students' and supervisors' transcripts without any specific sequence.

Step two: Generating initial codes. Before I started this cycle, I created an excel spreadsheet to use for the deductive thematic analysis, which included the seven main concepts: trust, efficacy, mentorship, ethical competencies, cognitive competencies, emotional competencies, and social competencies. Rubin and Rubin (2012) indicated that when planning questioning techniques carefully, themes should be simply stated during the first cycle of data analysis. Because my questions were created based on the conceptual framework, it was easy to apply the concept coding (Saldaña, 2012).

I also created a master word document in which all the participants' answers were organized under the main concepts; I printed a hardcopy and used pen and paper to code and recode. I kept going back and forth between the excel spreadsheet, the master word document and the hardcopy, as sometimes I preferred to work behind the screen and sometimes I felt like my interpretation of the data needed a pencil, eraser, sharpener, and different highlights. I was keen to update my master word document based on the hardcopy, where I developed tables and narratives for each concept. The excel spreadsheet was visually very convenient when I opened two versions to compare and contrast the supervisors' beliefs/values with the students'. Working on the three different documents at the same time offered me full understanding and awareness of each story and allowed for complete engagement and deep analysis.

Using this hardcopy, I read and reread the participants' answers closely, line by line, sentence by sentence, and as I did, I applied simultaneous coding (Saldaña, 2012). For instance, the participants talked about trust when I asked them to talk about it. Simultaneously, trust was also mentioned indirectly when some participants talked about mentorship, ethics, and other concepts that I invited them to talk about. As an example, student Michael suggested that trust is "an evolving concept" that "continued to grow" when I asked him to reflect upon trust. Simultaneously, and when he reflected on his perspective on mentorship, it was obvious that he trusted his supervisor to genuinely mentor him like a parent.

Nested codes were another type that I created under each of the main concepts (Saldaña, 2012). For example, under the concept code of trust, a number of nested codes emerged in the students' segments: reciprocating trust, caring supervisors, consistency and empowerment, opportunities for trust, and threats to trust. I grouped all of these subthemes under building trust theme.

Furthermore, for this interpretive phenomenology study, I tried to incorporate my understanding of the context to interpret the direct message (semantic) and the implicit message (latent). For example, when Laura (student) shared how her supervisor gave more time and attention to other more "needy" students, as she described it; she ended her thought by saying, "Like I don't really need more attention." Putting her thought into context, it was quite obvious that Laura needed more attention, even though she said she did not.

Step three: Searching for themes. Since I conducted a deductive approach in step two, in this cycle, my search here included an inductive approach for themes. While

reading the supervisors' answers closely and coding their beliefs/values in step two, their supervision philosophies, which included their beliefs and values, led me to focus on their reflections as former doctoral students. I grouped their transcripts based on the level of satisfaction they experienced in their lived supervision experiences as former doctoral students, and I grouped the students' transcripts based on the level of satisfaction they experienced in their lived supervision experiences. I ended up having three groups in each segment (students and supervisors): positive, average, and negative experiences. These three groups became clearer when I analyzed the datasets related to the mentorship question. In this step, and as I conducted a deeper level of analysis, the new inductive theme of AAPP emerged.

Step four: Reviewing themes. I verified my themes — the ones I identified deductively and inductively — by constantly revising my different documents and memos as well as comparing, reflecting, reading, rereading, coding, and recoding (Boeije, 2002). Having all the data organized in a master word document that has one section for supervisors and one section for students, with all my analysis, allowed me to recognize that in most of the sections, supervisors and students were talking about similar challenges and similar opportunities, such as the need for feedback, and learning and adapting as a continuous process. Moreover, both segments pointed out directly and indirectly that being a student-centred supervisor was a main ingredient for effective supervision.

Step five: Defining and naming themes. In this step, after continuous revision of my themes in relation to my data, I was able to grasp the meaning of what each theme represented and the aspect of the data each theme addressed. I created a new word document and wrote a general narrative with all my data. I reviewed the narrative several

times to make sure each subtheme with its own narrative fit the general narrative of the

concept the subtheme belonged to. For example, in the trust section, I identified five

subthemes in the supervisors' datasets, and after reviewing their accuracy (whether they fit

the general narrative of the trust concept the subtheme belonged to), I renamed some of

these subthemes so that readers could immediately get a sense of what the subtheme was

about.

Step six: Producing the report. Writing was an essential part of the whole

process. It started "in phase one, with the jotting down of ideas and potential coding

schemes, and continue[d] right through the entire coding/analysis process" (Braun &

Clarke, 2006, p. 15). In my final analysis phase, when writing up chapter four and five, I

tried to tell the stories of my participants in a concise and logical way while providing

sufficient quotes for each theme. Harper and Thompson (2011) suggested that using the

dual deductive/inductive approach and coding the latent/manifest data, as I did in this

research, are important to high-quality qualitative work.

Trustworthiness

Ensuring quality research requires researchers to take active steps that enforce

trustworthiness as a critical element. First, I kept what Finch (1984) suggested in mind

throughout the whole process: qualitative methods—such as interviewing—impose a high

level of trust among participants, putting a significant responsibility on researchers to make

sure that trust is not violated by defaulting on any activity of the research process or by

generating explanations that may harm the interests of participants. Further, as a

researcher, I needed to anticipate how others might use my research, or how they might

misappropriate it (Mason, 2002). This trustworthiness issue urged me to check with my

advisory committee about the language I used in my research and how it might be interpreted or misappropriated.

Returning to participants for validation is a common strategy, but it is not the only way to make sure one's research is rigorous. In fact, "Giorgi deems it inappropriate to ask participants or external judges for validation" (Reiners, 2012, p. 2). Therefore, I chose to involve a critical friend when analyzing my dataset in the mentorship section, revealing three quality levels of mentorship experiences. The reason I selected this part for a validity check is that I wanted to make sure each participant was placed in the right mentorship group. I provided the critical friend with six transcripts in total—two transcripts from each mentorship type, one for a student, and one for a supervisor. I explained to the critical friend the three types of mentorship experiences and asked him to label each transcript based on the level and quality of support each student needed and got from the supervisor, based on his or her overall satisfaction. This task required the critical friend to conduct an in-depth reading of each transcript to understand the whole experience of the doctoral student. Out of the six transcripts, he placed five transcripts similarly to the way I placed; he was not quite sure about one. After discussing this transcript and some further consideration, we reached 100% agreement about where to locate it.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlighted how researchers can maintain trustworthiness and rigor throughout the study by using memos. I wrote my memos during the interviews as well as during the data analysis activities. These memos informed my thoughts when I analyzed the data, reminding me of some important details I needed to consider before drawing conclusions.

Transparency is another important ethical strategy in qualitative research that

ensures reliability. Transparency refers to making "the process of knowledge generation open to outside scrutiny" (Porter, 2007, p. 85). This requires researchers to look at three central reflexive questions concerning each stage (data collection, data analysis) of the research: "what I did, how I did it, and why I did it" (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017, p. 126). Being able to answer these three questions and communicate them with my committee, and making the process of knowledge generation open to them, helped ensure reliability in my qualitative research and findings. I was the only researcher who analyzed the data. However, involving my committee in the process, and benefiting from their knowledge and experiences enforces trustworthiness and reliability in my research.

Research Ethics

Prior to conducting the research, ethics approval was obtained from Queen's University's General Ethics Review Board, ensuring that ethical guidelines were followed and adhered to (see Appendix D).

Possible risks versus possible benefits. This study posed little risk to participants. I did not predict any physical, economic, or social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy, and/or reputation). No deception was involved. However, the questions in the interviews required participants to reflect on their supervisory experiences, and this might have caused anxiety for some. I clearly informed them that if they experienced distress after the interview, they should contact community mental health services in their local area.

There were some possible benefits from participating in this research. Through involvement in this study, students and supervisors had the opportunity to express their opinions and experiences about their doctoral supervision. Participation in studies is

usually viewed as a rich form of professional learning (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). It also allowed participants to reflect on and examine their beliefs and practices in relation to effective supervision styles. Almost all the interviewees told me how much they benefited from the conversation, and some of them told me how they had never thought about some of the questions I asked, and they appreciated the reflection opportunity from the interviews.

Letter of information for the study and informed consent. As I mentioned earlier, I emailed the participants a letter of information for the study and consent form (combined document), asking them to sign it and email it back to me before the interviews (see Appendix A). Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study without penalty (two weeks after the interview), however no one withdrew.

Confidentiality. I am committed to maintaining the ethical practices and expectations required for this study. The ethical protection of each participant was and still is honored, and participants' identities were protected to the fullest extent possible. Each participants' personal identities were protected using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. No personal references or names were used. Documentation of data analyses was secured electronically with a password on my computer. All recordings of interviews and other written transcripts remained in a locked cabinet in my home office. Emails were saved in a separate file (only I have access to my email), and I kept changing my password every month for extra security. As a researcher, I will maintain all expectations of confidentiality as noted in the confidentiality agreement. All research data will be kept for a minimum of five years and then be destroyed—paper data will be shredded, and digital data will be deleted.

Chapter 4

Findings and Analysis

Chapter four is divided into three main sections. The first section details findings about the four influential factors that contribute to the doctoral supervisory relationship in response to research subquestion one. Then, in the second section, I provide the findings about the relational leadership core competencies, which respond to research subquestion two. Finally, a combination of all the findings presents a response to the main research question, which is discussed in the last section. Throughout the entire chapter, the analysis begins with the supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives and is followed by the students' lived experiences and perspectives.

The Four Influential Factors

Responding to Research Subquestion One

In this section, I present the findings in response to research subquestion one: What are the perceived influential factors that contribute to the doctoral supervisory relationship? I addressed this subquestion in the literature review, where I identified three influential factors that can make the supervisory relationship a positive one: trust, efficacy, and mentorship. The data were analyzed in a deductive approach for these 3 themes. During the analysis, a new theme emerged through the inductive approach. This theme is accessibility, approachability, and psychological presence (AAPP), which refers to the friendliness and accessibility of supervisors to their students as well as their physiological presence, which encompasses their engagement and interest in their students' research and success. This theme seemed to appear as the dominant influential factor in understanding the phenomenon of the doctoral supervision. Therefore, given its significance in the responses,

I discuss the results in this section under four themes: (a) accessibility, approachability, and psychological presence (AAPP); (b) trust; (c) efficacy; and, (d) mentorship. It is worth shedding enough light on each of the influential factor and present them thoroughly in this section because the findings and analysis of the four influential factors set the foundation for the subsequent discussion of the four core competencies.

Accessibility, Approachability, and Psychological Presence (AAPP)

As evident from the data, accessibility, approachability, and psychological presence of supervisors, are three elements that work hand-in-hand; they are presented under the acronym AAPP. Both from the supervisors' and the students' perspectives, supervisors are expected to be available, approachable, and psychologically present at the same time to guide their students and help them hit their milestones and complete their programs in a timely manner. Accessibility, which is mainly a time factor, and approachability, which is a personality factor, have to work together. For example, having supervisors that were not friendly in the lab on a daily basis did not add value for their students, because they were hesitant to approach them.

In chapter three, I introduced all of my participants in two tables: one for supervisors and one for doctoral students. In the AAPP part, I chose to offer a snapshot of each lived experience in this research, and I elaborate more on each case in the mentorship section. In the rest of this dissertation, and as I synthesized the perspectives thematically, I only selected a few quotes to pinpoint each theme that I identified.

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. Supervisors emphasized the great importance of making themselves available to their students, so they can guide and support them. They valued the open-door policy, physically or virtually, as one of the

critical elements that is significant in facilitating their students' doctoral journeys and ensuring their success. Regardless of whether the supervisors were available (physically or virtually) and approachable, their mental presence was the main aspect of the open-door policy. Supervisors arranged their availability with their students in different ways; some had fixed meeting schedules, some scheduled meetings based on their students' needs and requests, and others were available almost on a daily basis or checked in regularly. The other focal element that goes hand-in-hand with accessibility is approachability. It is not enough to have accessible supervisors, and the supervisors highlighted the significance of being friendly, easy to talk to, and—most importantly—interested and engaged (psychologically present).

Important for understanding of AAPP were the supervisors' philosophies. Some described their philosophy directly by saying, "My philosophy is. . .," while I extracted others' philosophies from their overall perspectives in the data. Clarifying the supervisors' beliefs and values offers context for their lived experiences and perspectives in the following sections.

Weekly meetings. Reina, Thomas, Rachel, Noel and Dana run weekly meetings to ensure their students can access them. Their beliefs are rooted in applying an open-door policy. Reina explained her supervision philosophy accordingly:

It doesn't matter what a student gives me, of course, we're all busy people, but I put that right to the top of my list. . . . I guess I just want to give them opportunities to be able to succeed themselves.

Thomas outlined his supervision philosophy this way: "I've always tried to put them first, make sure that I give them feedback about [their work] as soon as possible." He explained what he learned over the years:

> One of the major parts of trust is that they will have access to my time and attention and feedback when they need [and] that's a big, big issue with a lot of supervisors. . . . One of the most important things is just being available and giving them the time and responding to the problems quickly. In a lot of circumstances, you hear about students who submit a paper for their supervisor for comments because they would like to either include it in the thesis or submit it for publication and the supervisor hasn't been heard back from [for] two, three months—that's not feedback.

While Rachel highly invests in her students, and her supervision philosophy is that she works with them across the four years and demonstrates her interest in their growth as soon as they start the program, Noel respects his students and values "mutual trust" as the foremost aspect of the PhD supervision relationship, and Dana views supervision as "a family thing and . . . if you can make your work part of your family, I think that's the best." She values and respects her students as well.

Meetings as needed. Lawrence, Nigel, Norman, and Robert meet with their students as needed and based on their requests. Randal explained that it is difficult for him to see his students regularly, as a part-time supervisor; however, he said that he could make himself available whenever is needed. The supervisors identified the importance of being engaged and interested in their students' success.

Lawrence reflected on the time constraints that most supervisors have to deal with, and he explained how his work ethic assisted him in playing his role effectively:

Well, time is always a challenge, but . . . you figure that one out as you go. I mean, if you take on an active role, whether as a chair or an active committee member, you're committing, committing that you'll take the time as needed to help the person succeed.

Lawrence explained his supervision philosophy as follows:

Each student is different. Each student needs to be advised [and] engaged . . . in a way that makes sense for them as individuals. . . . You just have to engage with the individual, . . . trying to help them figure out what makes them work [and] what they're excited about, . . . [which] means getting to know each person.

Nigel meets with his students as needed and based on their requests, and when he meets with them, he tries to be "fair and realistic and patient." Active listening is important to him, which he considered as "trying to listen to what students say as opposed to being the talker in the conversation." Norman stressed the importance of listening to students and "being friendly," and he explained, "I try and develop that friendship, that relationship where there is that rapport that I can talk to them, [and] they can talk to me." His supervision philosophy is that he is always there for the students and "interested in their growth." He believes that building rapport should begin as soon as the students start the program.

Robert explained how he makes sure he is accessible to his students:

My door is always open to them physically and virtually. So, they know that they can contact me anytime they want and I'll get back to them—you know, if it's an email, they'll get a response within 24 hours. If it's knocking on the door and then I

stop what I'm doing and . . . they need to discuss something, then that's what I do:

discuss it with them.

Similar to other supervisors, Robert values inclusivity, and being fair with all students. He

checks in to make sure all his students are on the right track. "If I'm concerned about the

progress an individual is not making, I will typically increase the frequency of meetings

that we might have and set smaller goals," he said. He added that if "they're way off in a

direction that I don't think will help them, then I will step in and guide them back onto the

tracks, basically." Robert views his job as part of his "family," and "empowering people"

is his supervision philosophy. "I really believe in empowering the people that I have the

pleasure to work with," he explained. He is interested in his students and said, "I'm

enthusiastic [about] the work that they're doing, and I'm enthusiastic about them as . . .

individuals."

Almost daily interactions. Henry, Nathan, Richard, Turner, Samuel, and Lance

meet with their students almost daily. These interactions help them support their students

and build positive experiences with them.

Henry makes sure he is available, and he builds a caring environment so his

students can always approach him. He said:

I am physically located—my office is located near where the student offices are.

And so, on a daily basis, I'm popping in and saying hello, . . . so that I'm able to

notice when someone's away or whatever, or . . . if they don't appear to be well that

day.

Henry's supervision philosophy is simple: "my first priority is always to my students. So that's one of my core values: . . . my students come first." He shared the key to building positive relationships with his students:

A key philosophy of caring . . . and the key recognition [is] that it's not about me, it's about them, and their success means my success. Those are the key foundational things. . . . It's actually the secret, . . . that it's never ever been about you. It's always been about your students. And for those who recognize that it's about your students, they—they realize that if your students are successful, that makes you successful.

Nathan reported that "typically, . . . I'll see my students, depending on the time of the year, but you know, almost always at least three, four, or five times a week." Nathan believes it is important to his students that he makes himself available to them "despite the fact that I taught over my career maybe as many as 18,000 undergraduates." Nathan is an optimistic leader, and his supervision philosophy is that his students come first:

My approach to life is I'm a very—I'm an optimist. I think all people are good, and I treat them that way, and I try to make them feel comfortable and . . . I try not to do anything to make them feel that . . . their future is unimportant. That idea that I think my future is more important than theirs, I've never done that.

Richard shared that doctoral supervision is a "very personal thing," and he sees his students every day:

I mean, the thing is that I'm there. I get there really early. They always know that if they need to see me, I'll be there. . . . You try to meet with people whenever it's necessary, so you see them over lunch, you see them first thing in the morning, you

see them at the end of the day. There's always lots of time to talk, and as soon as

you have somebody who's not turning up, you can tell there's something wrong.

Richard's supervision philosophy is to act as a "booster rocket" and to keep the process

going, challenging students but in "a positive [way] rather than a negative [way]."

Turner is very accessible to his students; he has an open-door policy and treats his

students as his children, as if they were part of his family. He explained how availability

could save his students a "lot of time":

> The philosophy that I operate on is that a lot of times the student has a very simple
>
> question—'Should I mix a with b?'—and if I'm around, for them to ask, I can save
>
> them a lot of time, whereas if I'm not around, then they may go ahead and mix a
>
> and b together, and that's the wrong thing to do. I just feel in the long run that it's
>
> better that I'll be accessible.

Samuel also has an open-door policy. He explained, "As a supervisor, you know, I

see my students on a daily basis in my lab. I have an open-door policy. . . I interact with

my students and have conversations with them on a daily basis." He works with his

students to create positive experiences for them, and he said that "with my students coming

in . . . positive experiences create trust, and negative experiences . . . prevent trust from

being formed." Samuel has regular communication with his students, and he is very

interested in getting to know them as people. He explained:

> I try and get to know them as people and . . . I'm far more interested in their
>
> development as people quite honestly, than in their development as students. My
>
> philosophy is that if I support them as people and create a positive learning
>
> environment for them and I genuinely take interest in them as . . . individuals, as

[people] along with the research, . . . it creates a much better relationship, a student–supervisor relationship, and beyond that creates a more conducive environment for work.

Just like Turner and Henry, Lance explained how his open-door policy and being in the lab every day helps him read the unspoken signals when his students are struggling. Lance checks in with his students to make sure they are doing well, especially because some graduate students might pretend that "everything's going great." He explained his philosophy of being more interested in his students:

I'm more interested in my students being successful in their futures regardless of what they are than their specific contributions to my research program because . . . if they're good at what they do, then good things will come out of that for me.

These supervisors acknowledged that their students cannot achieve their goals smoothly without them by their sides assisting, assuring and sharing with them knowledge and expertise. It seemed fairly obvious that the primary features characterizing their lived experiences and perspectives were their *beliefs* and *values*, not only regarding their roles as doctoral supervisors or service providers, but also as people that can create an impact in their societies by helping transform other people's lives personally and professionally.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. Speaking about their experiences, doctoral students emphasized that supervisor accessibility intertwined with their friendly personalities and engagement facilitated their learning and development in their programs. These students enjoyed having supervisors that exhibited the three elements of the AAPP. Other students had a mix of AAPP issues that they had to deal with in their programs, which means they had problems with one or more elements of their

supervisors' AAPP. I present the findings under two main themes: accessible, approachable, and psychologically present supervisors, and lack of AAPP.

Accessible, approachable, and psychologically present supervisors. Michael, Heather, Nora, Tiffany, Chris, Nancy, Nelly, Randy, and Leslie all had accessible, approachable, and psychologically present supervisors that made positive differences in their programs. The AAPP facilitated their progress and demonstrated how much their supervisors cared about their success.

Michael was in his late 30s when he graduated in 2017, and he now works in academia. His supervisor was "very student-centered, . . . [and her] students came first." He relished his doctoral supervision experience and recognized his supervisor as "very sensitive" and a "phenomenal" person:

> I don't think I have ever worked with anybody, not just a supervisor, but any professor who is sensitive in her language, sensitive in her responses, [and] quick with her, communication, whether it's email or a telephone call.

Heather was a mature student in her early 50s. She graduated in the fall of 2018. She had a co-supervision structure, but for the purpose of this research, I asked her to reflect on her experience with the primary supervisor—the one she interacted with the most. Heather started her program with another supervisor. She said, "I didn't really feel in that first year that I had a lot of communication with him." After her comprehensive exam, she decided to switch supervisors because she "realized very early on that I wanted to be challenged beyond what I thought . . . I really just needed to be challenged, to be pushed, and to be the best that I could be." Heather selected two supervisors who she illustrated as "very optimistic [and] very supportive." She said that she had a better line of

communication with her new supervisor (the main one), who she called "brilliant" and provided her with "confidence in my own ability and my own self-advocacy." Heather's experience with her second supervisor was successful and positive.

Nora graduated in January of 2013 when she was in her early 50s. Nora enjoyed her program; she said it was "an incredible journey," and she talked about her supervisor as an "incredible [and] awesome" person. Her supervisor was "accessible" and "respectful." She described her accordingly:

> Very warm and open, very understanding. . . . Her intrapersonal skills and her interpersonal skills are very high . . . [and] she's very confident. She's very knowledgeable. She's very experienced. She's very calm, very cooperative, [and] she's very flexible. She has a wonderful sense of humor and . . . that's just a start that just comes to mind at this point.

Nora added how she benefited from having an AAPP-focused supervisor:

> Because my supervisor spent a lot of time with me, she was almost able to mind read me, so she would sense . . . if I needed to slow down or speed up or calm down or work harder or whatever it was, and be able to—she'd know what direction.

Tiffany was in her early 30s and in her third year. She had the same supervisor in her master's and PhD programs. Her supervisor was approachable and respectful. She said that her supervisor was "amazing" and "honest"—someone who made her supervision experience enjoyable. Tiffany was very passionate about her work, and her supervisor built a positive and encouraging culture for her. Tiffany viewed her as a caring person, and having her around helped her progress. Tiffany appreciated the lab meetings she had every week because they afforded her the opportunity for one-on-one meetings with her

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supervisor if she needed them. Her supervisor was accessible and approachable; she said, "So, definitely, she always says, always email me no matter what. It's usually the fastest way to reach her."

Chris graduated in 2015 while he was in his early 30s, and he now works in academia. He had the same supervisor for his master's and PhD programs. He was happy about his supervision experience and termed his supervisor as attentive: "I think he was a very caring type of advisor. Yeah, somebody who would put the growth of the students and the people around him ahead of his own growth." Chris explained how he enjoyed having an accessible supervisor:

> We had an office across the hall, so there would be at least weekly, if not daily, interactions—usually weekly scheduled meetings at the beginning, which towards the end would tailor off into monthly meetings.

Nancy was in her late 20s when she graduated in 2013. She did her master's and PhD degrees with the same supervisor, and she now works in academia. She spoke about how some supervisors "are grumpy and don't have . . . an open-door policy, and they seem to be frowning a lot, [which] may make a student more hesitant to talk to them, which isn't always a great idea." But she enjoyed how her supervisor was accessible, approachable, and engaging:

> [My supervisor] encourages being open, and he has an open-door policy, and he didn't make you feel like you were less of a person if you made a mistake. I think he was very understanding that people make mistakes. And he was fine with you making a mistake as long as you corrected it and—and tried to fix it later. So, he was . . . approachable . . . [and] he was very accessible.

Nancy added that she had "a really good graduate school experience. . . . [It] is probably why I ended up staying in academia: . . . I enjoyed it."

Just like Nancy, Nelly appreciated her supervisor's open-door policy. Nelly graduated in 1997 when she was in her late 20s, and she did her master's and PhD degrees with the same supervisor. She had a positive experience with her supervisor, who she labelled as "inspiring" as well as "very positive and upbeat." She explained, "An open-door policy was huge. . . . I really appreciate that; it's important. . . . I probably had a one-on-one meeting every day. She was always there."

Randy graduated in 2004 when she was in her mid-20s, and she now works in academia. She joined the program because she knew that she wanted to "work in research and so the best way to do that is to do a PhD." She called her supervisor "outstanding." Her supervisor was very accessible and interested in her learning, which was essential to her and made her happy. She recalled:

> We would talk virtually every day. He was in the lab almost every day. He was always available, which was great, . . . and I think that was very valuable. . . . If you're absent, if you see your students once a month and you're just—and you send them a few emails, that—in my opinion— is not really proper mentoring of a grad student.

Leslie was in her early 40s and finishing her third year. She joined the program to advance her career. She had co-supervisors, but I asked her to reflect on the one she interacted with the most. This supervisor was approachable and interested in her success. Leslie characterized him as "brilliant" and said he provided her with "positive reinforcement."

Lack of supervisors' AAPP. Typically, AAPP–which is a relational and socially-oriented practice–were needed as one package, and when only one or two elements of the supervisors' AAPP were offered, students were challenged. Sara, Adam, Laura, Natasha, Daisy, Reginald, Ronald, Nicholas, Lamar, and Stephanie had different AAPP supervision experiences that impacted them in different ways.

Sara was in her fifth year as an All but Dissertation (ABD) candidate and in her late 20s. Her supervisor was accessible only to some extent and approachable but not engaged or not psychologically present. Sara struggled in her program and avoided her supervisor because she was not progressing as she should have been. Her supervisor did not notice that Sara was absent and did not check in with her, which left Sara feeling invisible and frustrated.

Adam was in his late 20s when he graduated in 2008, and he is now in academia. He had a good supervision experience in general. Adam reflected on his supervisor's accessibility: "I saw him every day, so it was—it was much less informal," but not that friendly. Adam said that his supervisor sometimes "got short just because he would be stressed or . . . [if] I asked a stupid question." Adam noted that his supervisor was "compelling" and that the most important thing he got from him was "resilience" which was important to his well-being. At the same time, his supervisor was "never inviting or friendly" and "people will say he's a very angry person, which is quite funny. I would openly tease him about it . . . just to kind of lighten . . . things. Maybe that's why our dynamic worked." Despite the supervisor's lack of approachability, who was fairly new, Adam managed to approach him whenever he needed to, and he appreciated his

supervisor's honest guidance: "my supervisor was an excellent mentor. . . . He was very honest about everything."

Laura and Natasha, who were both in their late 20s and approaching their third years, did not generally have bad supervision experiences. However, their experiences were unique in that they both relied on other professors to guide them. Laura passed her comprehensive exam and became an ABD doctoral candidate. She explained that she was a motivated student who had a clear plan: "I'm on top of things, and I'm getting things done, and I'm doing [well]. So, I had, like, a plan." Laura's supervisor was accessible to some degree and "kind." However, Laura rarely saw her supervisor because she provided more time and support to other "needy" students, which troubled Laura and left her with a lot of questions about a supervisor's responsibility toward all her students rather than only some.

Natasha talked about herself and said, "I'm a pretty independent person, and the support that I need is more about the logistics of doing a PhD, like, did I sign up for the right courses? Or how do I go about writing my comprehensive exams?" Just like Laura, Natasha rarely met with her supervisor. They both relied on other professors to provide them with guidance and get through their programs.

Daisy was in her mid-20s, and she had just finished her second year in September and was going into her third year. She did not have a bad relationship with her supervisor, and she acknowledged that she was "supportive and reassuring," adding:

Without my supervisor, I wouldn't be able to know how to navigate, where to go, [or] what to do. I'm the type of student [who] knows where to go, but I'm also very shy to ask for help. I want to be more independent, [but] that's just my own personality.

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Daisy was a bit behind in her program; she had not done her candidacy exams yet, and this made her nervous. Although her supervisor was nice, Daisy still felt challenged by a lack of accessibility because her supervisor was not there full-time and did not check in with her to see how she was doing. It seems that accessibility (meeting with students)- and part-time supervision are problematic that challenged both supervisors (as noted earlier by Randal, who is a part-time supervisor), and students (mentioned by Daisy).

Reginald graduated in 2010 when he was in his late 20s, and he now works in academia. He joined the doctoral program because he had "always wanted to do research." Reginald started his PhD project "with two joint supervisors," but "after about 18 months," he found out he was on the wrong track with his research experiment because he had not received proper feedback to guide him through. After this hindrance, he decided to work with one supervisor instead. With this new arrangement, Reginald shared that his supervisor's accessibility was based on his students' needs, and he managed to graduate.

Ronald and Nicolas were in their late 20s, and they were in their fifth year. Ronald had the same supervisor that he had during his master's degree, while Nicholas did not have a master's degree. Both their supervisors had accessibility issues, which prevented Ronald from graduating as planned and caused Nicholas to waste a lot of time on the wrong track. Ronald said that his supervisor was "ambitious" and "a really hard worker" but also prone to "a lot of micromanagement" in the lab. Ronald wanted "to be more independent" and asked for this change. He explained that he took issue with his supervisor taking a very long time to get back to him with feedback on his research:

Well, that's the main point of conflict. [It] would be more [than] one to two months, and I hadn't gotten, like, not even half of the [written work reviewed],

right? . . . So maybe it was more than two months until he started looking at my work.

Similar to Adam, who shared how people would say his supervisor was "a very angry person," Ronald shared how his supervisor was "a nervous person," especially under pressure. The difference between these two kinds of supervisory relationships is that Adam was comfortable enough to talk to his supervisor about it, which indicates that his supervisor was still approachable to him (although was not approachable to other students), while Ronald's supervisor was not. Ronald elaborated on this point and said:

I think, especially near deadlines, different people react in different ways under pressure. Right? So, my supervisor, for example, . . . became very stressed, very anxious, and, well, in those occasions, I preferred to stay home, actually. [He] was just a nervous person.

Nicholas recognized his supervisor as "knowledgeable," but he let the students run the lab in a very independent way. While independence is what Ronald was seeking, Nicholas needed more involvement from his supervisor. He provided a critical example about how his supervisor's laissez-faire style demotivated and negatively impacted his research project:

I think one of the issues that happened because of, I guess, the very independent nature of our lab was towards the end of my first year, where I was really just trying to define my research project and my research area. I'd spent a lot of time going in a certain direction, which wasn't the direction that I wanted, but I didn't know because there wasn't a lot of feedback.

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Lamar was in her late 40s when she graduated in 2005, and she is now in academia. Stephanie was in her early 30s, and she graduated in the summer of 2018. Lamar's main struggle centered on her supervisor not being very accessible or approachable. On the other hand, Stephanie's supervisor was accessible but had a toxic working style, which impacted her negatively. Lamar clarified her frustration:

> What I really would have liked is, say, weekly or biweekly meetings where we could [have] just sat down and talked about what my thinkings were [and] where I was looking . . . and have [had] her, then say, 'You're on the right track,' or, 'Have you thought of this?' That did not occur.

Stephanie's supervisor was accessible, but he was not friendly at all; he even looked down on people, which made him inaccessible. Furthermore, his ego made her experience very difficult. Her supervisor provided her with a lot of feedback comments, but they were negative and "a bit meaner than they needed to be," which stressed her.

Students–those who enjoyed having AAPP-oriented supervisors and those who missed one or more elements of their supervisors' AAPP–all understood doctoral programs to be self-disciplined, in which the nitty-gritty of learning and research required them to be active learners. However, they added that their supervisors' roles were concrete to their success in the different stages of their doctorate.

Summary: AAPP. To conclude, both supervisors and students perceived and experienced AAPP as a foundation that could make the difference in doctoral supervision. Data analysis revealed that AAPP was ingrained and reflected in the participant supervisors' beliefs, values, behaviors and practices. From the students' perspectives,

AAPP showed them how their supervisors valued their success, which helped them move forward in their programs, satisfied them, and boosted their morale.

On the other hand, data showed that some students struggled with the lack of AAPP in their supervisory relationships, which left them bothered, unsatisfied, or even stressed. Having a very accessible supervisor who is in the lab on a daily basis but "grumpy" or "very nervous" and therefore unapproachable is a problem. Furthermore, having a very kind supervisor who is mostly absent is a real challenge that can impact students negatively. Additionally, having a disengaged or psychologically absent supervisor can lead to poor performance and frustration. The findings in this section positioned AAPP as the building block of the factors influencing the doctoral supervisory relationship. The subsequent sections will show how AAPP can either help the other three factors (trust, efficacy, and mentorship) develop or hinder these factors' development.

Trust

The results indicated that when supervisors practice AAPP, they create an opportunity for trust to develop. Different themes emerged in the data within each segment (supervisors and students), and when I analyzed the themes across the two segments, two main ones highlighted the participants' lived experiences and perspectives: (a) pending trust, which starts as soon as the supervisory relationship begins; and (b) building trust, which includes how pending trust develops and gets approved or disapproved via interaction.

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. Supervisors' views of trust were found to be an essential input to the supervisory relationship, and a process that needs both parties' efforts, and also as an output and outcome that are beneficial to supervisors

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and students. The input, process, and output (outcome) circle are obvious in the two main themes, pending trust and building trust. Under the pending trust theme, I describe the analysis of participants' responses about how trust between two individuals originates, and under building trust theme, I present five subthemes that pinpoint how trust is built in the supervision context.

Pending trust. Expecting both supervisors and students to start their doctoral supervision relationship with "the commitment to do the work necessary" (Nigel), while being dedicated to roles and responsibilities according to "the student-advisor guidelines," is the backbone of trust (Randal). It is obvious that trust is a pending process that is given to students at "the beginning of their [program]s" (Norman), even when supervisors "first recruit them" (Dana) and "before [they] actually arrive" (Richard). Students usually choose to approach supervisors to work with them based on their expertise or research interests, which indicates that they "should in theory be starting off in . . . a place of at least [having] perspective on the individual [they]'re working with" (Robert).

Trust in doctoral supervision is defined as "the expectation that someone's going to behave or perform in a particular way, and you assume . . . that things will work out as both sides" (Thomas). One main dimension of trust focuses on achieving goals and is described as a "very transactional trust relationship" (Nigel), which requires supervisors to talk to their students early in the program to understand "each other's motivations or desires" (Noel). They "allow [students] the freedom to set their own goals and timelines" (Henry), while believing that students have "the ability" to learn and do what they need to do to achieve their goals and meet their milestone timelines. For example, the supervisor might expect the student to "do the reading, write the papers, do the work conscientiously

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so that [supervisors do not] end up having to do more work on that student's behalf" (Nigel). This pending trust process is the first phase in the supervisory relationship, and through interaction, the second phase—the building trust phase—begins.

   Building trust. Trust is "something that's built over time in a relationship" (Samuel), and it is either strengthened or demolished depending on how the relationship develops "during the progress of interaction." (Dana) This interaction is key to building trust and emphasizes the significance of AAPP as a main influential factor in the supervision context (Nathan; Richard). For instance, Richard, who shared how he sees his students regularly because regular interaction and engagement builds trust, elaborated on the difficulty of building trust when there is an accessibility issue and summarized the perspectives of the other supervisors:

> And let's face it, we both know there are some supervisors [who] don't see their
> students even once a month, let alone every day . . . that's something that graduate
> faculty should pay a hell of a lot more attention to, and I know it's different in
> science than in arts and humanities, but boy, if you don't even know who they are,
> how can you possibly trust them? So, I think that's a bit of a conundrum.

He believed that trust must be established within the first six months. Turner echoed Richard's time frame and emphasized—along with other supervisors—that this depends on the individuals and the dynamics of the relationship. Among others, Lawrence specified the dynamics of a supervisory relationship that imposes trust, which include "conversations about their research, conversations about, working, co-authored papers, sometimes teaching together, [and] presenting together at conferences. . . . You're doing as many professional engagements with each other as possible."

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Furthermore, five subthemes were identified as comprising the building trust phase from the responses: reciprocal trust, genuine caring, sincere guidance/feedback, power scene management, and a no-blame culture.

Reciprocal trust. Supervisors talked about mutual trust as an essential element in the doctoral supervision context (Dana; Lawrence; Nathan; Richard; Robert; Turner; Thomas). They viewed trust as "a two-way street: [the] student has to trust the supervisor and vice versa" (Thomas). All supervisors regarded mutual trust as an asset that allows understanding, collaboration, and accomplishments. They were aware that their students had to trust them as leaders who knew their jobs and could guide them in the right direction.

Without the students' trust dimension, the obstacle in this relationship would be difficult or nearly impossible to overcome. They also need to trust that their students will do what is required to hit their program milestones and graduate (e.g., respond to feedback, meet timelines, be transparent about their work, and be honest about their strengths and limits). The supervisors' perspectives on trust emphasized the shared responsibilities each party carries.

Genuine caring. Supervisors testified that having their students' best interests at heart is not just a cliché; it needs to be shown through heartfelt behaviors that their students observe and believe in. It also means more than just being interested in their academic achievement. For example, encouraging students to "take care of their mental health" can boost trust in supervisors (Henry) and demonstrate supervisors' caring personalities, which is a key feature in building trust. Another example came from Nathan, who suggested that when issues occur in the students' personal lives that interrupt their program, offering

genuine advice helps strengthen trust. He shared how he supported a student who was about to quit for personal reasons, but he managed to get the student to complete the program and start a successful career. These supervisors were attentive and could see the burden behind their students' smiles or the frustration behind their silence. Prioritizing their students' best interests made these students trust their advice, judgment, and directions and facilitated their roles as effective supervisors.

Supervisors explained that valuing self-interest over students' interests not only breaks trust but also violates their ethical obligation as trusted leaders. When supervisors demonstrated that they cared about their students' future and growth rather than only their own research, trust was built; "you have to believe [in] the work that students are doing, and they have to believe that you are interested in their best interest, not in your own" (Lance). These supervisors respected their students and cared about their ultimate goals, and they made them feel that "their future was as important or more important" than their own (Nathan).

One way of caring about students' future was to encourage them to focus on their own research—"I don't require them to work on my project"—because students should focus on their research, as well their careers and future goals (Rachel). This kind of trustworthy relationship went beyond a goal-oriented approach and reached a transformational level that included being interested in the students' success personally, professionally, and outside the doctoral program. Supervisors such as Samuel believed that "the PhD is not an end process. . . . It actually is the beginning process. . . . I see part of my job also is to mentor them to be successful beyond a PhD" (Samuel).

Sincere guidance/feedback. Supervisors determined that trust is strongly connected to guiding students, providing learning opportunities, and offering them constructive and timely feedback on their work. Guidance and sincere feedback were found to develop trust, and established trust facilitated the process of guidance and feedback (Noel; Rachel; Thomas). Offering students "fair . . . and honest and sincere guidance for both positive and negative experiences" was critical to building trust (Noel).

Throughout this dissertation, the supervisors mentioned that their main roles were formulated around their beliefs, practices, and behaviors in terms of guiding and leading their students in the right directions while involving them in the supervision process. It is the supervisors' job to "ensure that a [student's] program progresses in a meaningful and timely manner" (Noel). They practiced empowerment when students were ready to be empowered. For instance, they provided hands-on approaches as needed, and gradually offered hands-off approach, and they worked with their students to break their goals down into manageable pieces that they could accomplish so they could achieve their desired outcomes. They also valued consistency as an essential supervision element, which helped their students rest assured that they were in safe hands because their supervisors were trustworthy.

Power scene management. Supervisors asserted that doctoral supervision is a "power scene" and suggested that this imbalanced context should not be left unspoken, so that supervisors could identify the lines between using and misusing power (Nigel; Norman; Robert; Reina). Building trust in an authoritative environment such as the doctoral supervision context required supervisors to acknowledge this context as imbalanced and then act upon this awareness.

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Respecting students, recognizing their experiences, developing rapport, and being friendly enforced trust in this "power scene." The following interview script highlights the supervisors' beliefs, values and practices:

We don't sort of stress that there's that power differential. . . . We're the doctors and you're the student. . . . A lot of these people . . . [are] leaders in their own field and in some cases, they've got more experience as being a leader than what I have. They're principals in a school . . . they run their own businesses, and they're trying to get a qualification that allows them to have some authority in their work environment. . . . So, we're developing that rapport with them. . . . It's trying to be friendly and at the same time keep them aware that we are interested in them. But that's rapport building that starts right from the—from the start. (Norman)

Misusing power—which might take the form of micromanagement or a laissez faire approach—impacts trust negatively and can break it. Supervisors shared that it is their responsibility to be aware of individual differences to balance their approach, and they managed this delicate area by having an "open dialogue" with their students, encouraging "transparency," and implementing "inclusivity" that valued every student regardless of their differences; these were key aspects in building trust in this imbalanced context (Reina; Robert; Nathan).

The supervisors' positive practices in this imbalanced relationship were rooted in their beliefs and values, and they lessened the tension when conflicts occurred. Nigel provided an example of what happens when things go wrong in social relationships—such as with committee members—which leaves students confused and frustrated. He suggested

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that students need to trust their supervisors, who must meet their responsibility of facilitating the process for them, especially because "the student is in a tougher spot."

No-blame culture. Supervisors shared how things sometimes do not work out as expected, which is part of being human. To ensure that errors or mistakes were communicated and handled appropriately without risking trust, they tended to hold themselves accountable when problems were their fault. Furthermore, supervisors' willingness to show vulnerability—which strengthens trust—was reflected in their stories. For example, Reina suggested that mistakes "can happen to anyone. I make enough mistakes myself." She elaborated on how she built a blame-free culture; she has the courage to tell her students that she "may be wrong" in her suggestions, and that they could "ask another expert."

Richard explained that it is better to say, "I don't know that, but I'll look it up," than to be the type of supervisor who would never admit ignorance and accordingly ends up misguiding the students instead. Lance's method of dealing with mistakes was consistent with what Reina and Richard listed. He shared that "honesty" and showing vulnerability should be encouraged to build a blame-free culture in his lab. The professionalism supervisors showed when approaching mistakes they caused is evident in the following interview extract:

> I've made thousands of mistakes. . . . When it's my fault? I tell them I screwed up. I tell them I got it wrong and I'm just as likely to get it wrong as you. But the important thing is when I get it wrong, I acknowledge it. . . . I got it wrong this time. I'm sorry. And you know, everyone, we all get it wrong sometimes, all of us. (Lance)

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Crafting a no-blame culture and valuing accountability in a "power scene" was found to be a vigorous skill that supervisors shared and cherished. This culture was found to be a main ingredient in developing trust, which led their students to perform better while feeling more confident in the process. From day-to-day practices to milestone accomplishments, this culture boils down to finding a positive common language that both parties understand to identify what matters to them and how to translate their roles and commitments into desirable results and outcomes.

This culture protects the supervisory relationship from drifting apart and leaving students in tough spots, hesitant to share their feelings about their supervisors' mistakes (which should be acknowledged and corrected). Suppressing these negative feelings not only breaches trust but also leaves students disturbed and upset, which negatively impacts their well-being and performance.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. Students considered trust to be a major component in the supervisory relationship. They either shared how they lived trust, or how they perceived it. They offered stories and moments that illustrated their perspectives, and what they shared is presented below under the two themes.

Pending trust. For students, trust started early, with both individuals approaching the relationship under the perception that the other party "began with what they would perceive as being good intentions" (Reginald). They entered "into an agreement together: to work together to help each other, more so the supervisor over the student" (Nelly). Therefore, trust started with "shared mutual agreements" (Lamar) that were either informal (Nora; Chris; Nancy; Randy; Leslie; Ronald) or formal (Stephanie) under which each party was committed to their roles and responsibilities. Students were aware that they had to

fulfill their obligations, and they expected the same from their supervisors. The following interview script highlights what students expected from their supervisors:

> Your supervisor is going to set you on the right path and give you a project that will help you to get where you need to be as a student . . . in terms of your research and in terms of your future career goals. (Randy)

It was apparent that some students placed a lot of trust when they were "picking the supervisor" (Lamar) and in "choosing [the supervisor] to start" (Chris). Most students mainly selected their supervisors because they had "research programs in parallel" with theirs and were "content experts" (Lamar), and because some supervisors were "very established scholars" and "internationally known" (Michael). As such, to some students, the selection was "not really so much trust that you think about. [It was] more like, just take me, please take me, work with me, work with me" (Michael).

Some students were comfortable with what to expect from their supervisors, especially because they had known them before; they had either worked with them on projects (Randy) or had them as master's program supervisors (Michael; Tiffany; Adam; Nancy; Leslie; Nelly). However, this previous familiarity did not guarantee that trust would be developed, maintained, or enforced in the doctoral supervision relationship. For example, Stephanie, Ronald, and Sara all worked with the same supervisors in their master's programs, but trust was an issue for them.

Some students did not know the role of their supervisors, such as Nicolas, and they "didn't really understand what was expected of a supervisor" (Natasha), nor did they have early conversations with their supervisors on how the relationship would work. These students started confused and ended up with ambiguity that impacted their performance.

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This suggests that the first impression students get when they start their programs is important in setting the foundation for trust, and supervisors need to pay more attention to how they start their supervision relationships with their students.

Some students were nervous in their first few meetings with their supervisors, such as Daisy, who recounted, "At first I was a bit nervous of my supervisor because I just didn't know what to expect from them." Some felt intimidated from their supervisors' prestigious status, as Laura conveyed: "I think, originally, it's a little bit daunting to meet someone who's so, you know, so highly acclaimed and, like, I've been reading her research for so long." All students reflected how interaction in the doctoral supervision context is the main element that takes trust from what I call *pending* status to a place where it is permitted or not permitted, as pinpointed in the building trust phase.

Building trust. Students shared that trust can be built or lost through interaction and engagement (Chris; Heather; Nelly). Starting from "something as simple as defining the scope of the project" (Chris), the necessary level of trust that is achieved at the very beginning either increases or decreases through interaction. For example, Heather switched supervisors because she had poor communication with her first one. She argued that trust is developed when there is communication, and supervisors who do not interact with their students are less trustworthy.

It was apparent that some students viewed trust or the expectations at the very beginning of the supervision relationship, which I call *pending trust*, as a growing process (Daisy; Heather; Michael; Nelly) that starts out shallow and either deepens or declines as the relationship develops. Some lived it as "an evolving concept" that "continued to grow" (Michael). To others, growing trust was a slow process; for example, Daisy suggested that

trust grows slowly, especially because she had a negative and noninclusive supervision experience in her master's degree, which impacted her well-being. She decided to "start off slow" and take time in her doctoral supervision relationship to figure out her supervisor's interests.

The time limit in which trust must be established varied based on each supervisory relationship. For Nora, building trust was "actually very—quite instant, in my experience. . . . It didn't take a long time to develop that trust; it was immediate." For others, it ranged from "probably a few months for both of us to trust each other" (Adam) to around six months, which was "enough time that the student can perform a number of experiments" (Nancy).

The process of building trust—whether it was instant, took time, or was never built as expected—can be explained by five subthemes: reciprocating trust, caring supervisors, consistency and empowerment, opportunities for trust, and threats to trust.

Reciprocating trust. From the doctoral students' perspectives, trust is considered to be reciprocal. Both parties need to be confident that the other has the capacity—and more importantly, the willingness—to make sincere efforts to contribute to the main shared goals throughout the entire program. Unidimensional trust is not possible because it leads the other party to turn inward and withhold trust in the supervision relationship. For example, because Adam's supervisor was still new, it took them both a few months to trust one another "in terms of whether or not he was a capable supervisor" and "whether or not I had the skills in the lab to be safe and do the things that he wanted me to do and execute." For Lamar, she was also the first student for her supervisor, but her experience lacked trust

because her supervisor ignored her guidance, feedback, and needs, which did not meet Lamar's expectations.

Tiffany narrated that having an experienced supervisor made a difference in the level of trust she had for her. She felt like she was "lucky in the sense that because [my supervisor] has been supervising for so long, she's also gone through so many students." Tiffany shared that there might be less trust if it was "someone who's doing it for the first time" and added that this "might even [cause] confusion."

Caring supervisors. Throughout this dissertation, students clearly expressed the connection between trust and caring supervisors who conveyed a sense of understanding, attention, and compassion, whether these students lived it or wished if they had. Students who enjoyed having supervisors that had their best interests at heart valued how their supervisors were there when needed and how they followed through (Chris; Tiffany; Randy; Nancy). They did not leave their students stranded (Nora; Adam) and did not give up on them or let them quit the program (Heather; Nora). As a result, they all trusted their supervisors' best judgment.

All students were aware when their supervisors were looking out for them and when they were looking out only for themselves instead. The students highlighted that having supervisors who are not self-centered was critical because it allowed them to be themselves—honest about their needs and able to be vulnerable. On the other hand, students who had self-centered supervisors lived inconvenient supervision experiences and could not rely or count on their supervisors; this lack of trust created a tense environment that made their time in their programs arduous (Nicolas; Lamar; Stephanie; Ronald).

Having the students' best interests at heart is a belief that students developed over time when their supervisors demonstrated it to them through actions rather than words. Supervisors could demonstrate care in several ways, and one of them was to know the tools and program requirements, so they could offer informed advice and direction (Randy). At the same time, students were aware that their doctoral supervisors were not supposed to be like "Google. . . . She doesn't have all the algorithms at her fingertips" (Natasha). Therefore, students needed to be connected well with their research communities, so they could benefit from all the valuable resources they had in their departments or fields. This means that having the students' best interests at heart also includes encouraging them to network and build these valuable connections. In other words, it suggests that the concept of having the sole supervisor as the only source of support should be challenged.

Consistency and empowerment. Students reported that trust is fundamentally "encountered on a daily basis" through constructive feedback, informed guidance, and open dialogue (Randy), which makes consistency a treasured element in enforcing trust (Nancy; Reginald). These supervisors were "very empowering" and provided students with a "lot of independence" (Randy) that some needed, thereby enforcing trust and motivating and satisfying students (Heather; Michael; Nancy; Nora).

Randy addressed her trust in her supervisor's judgment accordingly: "I always thought he was very knowledgeable, very knowledgeable, [and] very capable, and I always trusted his judgment and his advice, and it has never led me astray. We still have a very good relationship today." Randy added how she benefited from her supervisor's "hands-on" approach, which she needed. When she submitted papers to him, she would get them back "covered with red ink." Randy reported that because she trusted her supervisor, she

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was fine with having her work marked up with red ink—which quite often makes other students nervous. This implies that when trust is established, students are more open to accept the feedback technique that their supervisor applies.

Students who had to deal with supervisors who were inconsistent (Sara), did not support them (Lamar; Stephanie), or did not empower them when they needed some kind of independence (Ronald) reported that they did not find their supervisors trustworthy, and the lack of trust in their relationships left them worried and trapped in a foggy path that depleted their motivation.

Opportunities for trust. Trust needs opportunities to grow, and it shines in a supportive and safe culture. Students spoke about how they either viewed or experienced trust and how it centered on feeling comfortable enough to talk to their responsive supervisors about their ideas, challenges, problems, negative feelings, difficult issues, and lab mistakes with the faith that their supervisors would respect and understand them, maintain confidentiality, and support them (Leslie; Chris; Daisy; Heather; Nancy; Natasha; Nora; Sara).

This supportive and safe culture aligned well with students' fulfilment needs. This culture fostered transparency and encouraged "being comfortable to communicate" different issues with supervisors (Nora) who were willing to show their "vulnerabilities," and acknowledging that they might not have all the answers to students' queries (Michael).

Some examples of this supportive and safe culture came from Sara and Heather, who both had accidents that impacted their progression. Sara broke her face, and this accident put her "one semester behind." Even though Sara's trust was challenged when her supervisor did not check in with her, she appreciated how her supervisor advised her to talk

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to the department chair, and asked her to "put a statement" into her "annual progress report . . . detailing that and making sure [it] was on my record so that it [wouldn't be] a question in the future."

Heather had "a very serious concussion" in addition to other personal challenges. She reported how trust is about having difficult conversations with supervisors: "Having those conversations [isn't] easy, [but] having that conversation with my [supervisor] was very easy, and I trusted her. . . . I trusted her to have my back and to advocate on behalf of me."

Other examples came from Nancy and Chris, who faced challenges in the labs and felt comfortable enough to approach their supervisors and inform them. Nancy shared a story about when she made a mistake in a lab experiment (an error in her calculations) and how trust helped her approach the problem properly. When facing a problem in the lab, Chris was comfortable enough to approach his supervisor, but he tried to fix it first, while being "prepared to take ownership." This willingness to accept responsibility reflects how students were mindful of their roles in building trust and how they actively worked to enhance it.

Threats to trust. Many students had trustworthy supervision experiences that boosted their energy and minimized personal issues or pressures placed on them that were inherent in graduate programs. These students had peace of mind that they could count on their supervisors, who supported them and created opportunities for them to uncover their potentials. It was evident that students would be better off with mutual trust in their doctoral supervision experiences because this allows them to focus on their progress rather than worry about their performance and well-being.

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However, not all students were so fortunate. Some were in tough positions and observed what I call *pending trust* with which they started their program disappear. These students included Stephanie, who had a written agreement with her supervisor, and Ronald, who had a verbal agreement, which implies that these express agreements did not protect trust to vanish.

Nicholas, Reginald, Stephanie, Ronald, and Lamar disclosed different stories about trusting their supervisors, and some felt like their supervisors mistreated or even bullied them. The similarities in their lived experiences centered on the pain reflected in each story they shared.

Nicholas emphasized that he did not have a lot of interaction with his supervisor, which caused him to end up in the wrong direction for around five semesters (as he mentioned in the AAPP section) and accordingly prevented trust from developing. Meanwhile, Reginald endured "eighteen months . . . where the problem I was working [on] lost momentum." He did not receive proper feedback from the main supervisor, and he had to make a decision and choose one supervisor instead of two, and he chose the other one. When things go wrong and trust is tested, Reginald proposed that acknowledgement and accountability—which are intertwined with support and empathy—should put things back on track, but this did not happen in his case.

As stated earlier, some students worked with the same supervisors in their master's and doctoral programs, and they benefited to some extent from this long-term relationship as they got to know their supervisors better and trust them. On the other hand, Sara, Ronald, and Stephanie all worked with the same supervisors in their master's and doctoral programs, but they unfortunately had negative experiences. Sara was demotivated, and her

trust in her supervisor decreased after she stopped going to the lab and her supervisor never noticed her absence. Similarly, Ronald was stressed but was doing his best to complete the program and graduate.

Stephanie did not consider switching supervisors because she heard stories about the challenges of doing so and because she did not have many options. Nancy—who had a positive supervisory experience—spoke about two of her peers switching supervisors during their programs. She echoed Stephanie's concerns about the challenges this creates:

> I can just picture myself—if I really felt like I needed to switch a supervisor during my PhD, it would have been hard because they are all friends and you don't want to offend someone. You don't really know how.

Stephanie, Ronald, and Lamar were all challenged in their programs because their trust in their supervisors was breached. This occurred under different circumstances, but the similarity in their stories is that the broken trust had a negative impact on their well-being. Stephanie shared how "commitments and timelines" were significant to her, but her supervisor did not always respect them. She explained how she lost trust in her supervisor when he put her through difficult situations. For example, her supervisor allowed her to present her work in the candidacy exam in front of her committee, knowing it "was not fully ready," but convincing her it was, which broke trust. Her disappointment was doubled because her supervisor had done the same thing during her master's program as well. This established a negative pattern in which her supervisor acted as a bully, belittled her perspectives, abused his power over her, and hurt her feelings constantly, which left her frustrated and exhausted.

Ronald trusted the way his supervisor supported him when he arrived in the city where his university was located. Unfortunately, Ronald explained how this trust decreased when he realized that his supervisor was delaying his graduation (as mentioned previously). He explained that what breaks trust "is to perceive your supervisor is acting according to their interests" or "basically hurting your interests to satisfy his." He felt like his supervisor was exploiting him, wasting his time, and leaving him to suffer in a hopeless situation.

Lamar shared that supervisors must have their students' backs and help them succeed. She explained that trust diminishes if a supervisor "[doesn't] come through" if you send an email "saying, 'I really need you,' and she doesn't respond to you," or if she "gives you terrible feedback and doesn't help you identify where you need to go from there." These constant negative and abusive behaviors from Lamar's supervisors left her depleted and impacted her well-being.

To conclude, students believed that trust is mutual and that to have a trusting and functional supervisory relationship, both parties must contribute to building trust through their actions. For them, trust begins when the supervisor is consistent, empowering, caring, and able to build a supportive and safe culture. Different threats were identified that can impact trust negatively (e.g., toxicity and self-interest over students' interests) and eventually impact students' well-being.

Summary: Trust. Trust in the doctoral supervision context was expected to start early as *pending trust* when each party trusts that the other has good intentions and committed to their roles and responsibilities, as outlined in their universities' guidelines. Both students' and supervisors' perspectives showed how moving from pending to

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approved or built trust, one detrimental condition and several behaviors and practices were evident. The condition was AAPP because this influential factor paves the way for trust to develop and could make pending trust become approved.

Key behaviors and practices were found to be there. Reciprocating trust—in addition to supervisors displaying behaviors and practices demonstrating that they had their students' best interests at heart—allowed trust to grow. These supervisors tended to offer sincere feedback and guidance, and they offered balanced empowerment and were consistent, which students appreciated. From the students' perspectives, they trusted their supervisors to the extent they believed the supervisors knew and respected their jobs and had the capacity to guide, direct and redirect the students' paths while caring beyond themselves.

Supervisors emphasized this context as a power scene, and their awareness facilitated their practices in dealing with issues while identifying the lines between using and misusing power—especially when mistakes happened. Students shared their challenges when their supervisors' actions or behaviors were questionable (e.g., misused power) and caused doubt in their minds, which diminished trust and led to negative outcomes that were not desirable. Each story the students shared about trust when it was challenged was unique and different, but the soreness they experienced was a common denominator because a lack of trust impacted their performance and well-being. From both perspectives, building a supportive and no-blame culture was a beneficial aspect in trust in the supervisory relationship.

Efficacy

The findings disclosed how self-efficacy is a crucial factor in the supervisory relationship for both students and supervisors because (a) the supervisors rely on their sense of efficacy—including research self-efficacy (RSE) and leadership self-efficacy (LSE)—to direct their students to achieve their goals; and (b) supervisors play a major role in developing, enhancing, or even decreasing their students' sense of self-efficacy (SE).

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. The data unfolded that supervisors developed their LSE as doctoral supervisors throughout the years. The findings also demonstrated how they helped their students develop or enhance their sense of SE and their RSE as well, and how they worked with them, which reflected the collective efficacy (CE). The findings are organized under two main themes: (a) the supervisors' sense of self-efficacy; and (b) the supervisors' views on the students' sense of self-efficacy SE.

The supervisors' sense of self-efficacy. The data indicated that supervisors have a high sense of RSE in their fields as one noted: "I'm hired as a professor to be a public intellectual that will bring some dimension of . . . knowledge and expertise to a given area" (Randal). However, it was evident that their LSE was fundamental to their roles as doctoral supervisors in guiding their students to timely progress, hit their milestones, and complete their programs.

When people start new jobs, it is absolutely normal to have some kind of self-doubt or uncertainty, and the supervisors were no different. As one explained, "All of us starting out with the first few students are maybe a little bit concerned about how this is going to go" (Turner). Supervisors were mindful of the importance of continuous learning; one said, "I learn from every student and from all the students in the department and all my

colleagues" (Dana). This openness to learn from all sources helped them learn a great deal about themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, and their students. In addition, because the supervisors were once doctoral students who made it all the way through their programs, their own doctoral supervisors were either good role models who helped them learn what to do in a supervisory relationship or bad role ones who showed them what not to do (this idea will be discussed further in the mentorship section), which suggests how their deep reflections on their previous experiences contributed to their sense of LSE.

Supervisors' sense of LSE improved over the years with practice; one said, "I know [and] . . . I'm fairly confident that I'm doing well," and consequently, "I would say that I'm a different supervisor now than I was when I started" (Dana). The experience they gained from supervising graduate students year after year strengthened their beliefs about their abilities as doctoral supervisors (their LSE). One explained that "having . . . a positive experience . . . helps you to feel confident that you are providing good supervision and a good environment, in which [students] can work" (Turner).

Over time, supervisors notably learned about assisting students with "figuring out what their identity is in the profession" (Lawrence) to aid them in uncovering their potentials. They were aware that students' projects were designed for the students themselves and their personalities, which means the students had a significant say in deciding their paths (Reina), and the supervisors' job was to facilitate this progression rather than complicate it. These supervisors recognized very early on that students were different; when "students run into trouble with supervisors," it is often because their supervisors do not acknowledge their differences (Samuel). Therefore, effective leadership behaviors and practices that helped supervisors guide their students and consequently

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contributed to their sense of LSE positively included the following: acknowledging and respecting the students' individual differences; planning to "guide them or show them things or lead them or somehow uncover their own talents so that they could do it" (Reina); making themselves available to students; getting engaged with their ideas and work; listening to them; providing suggestions without belittling their ideas, empowering rather than micromanaging them; sharing their passion about "advancing the field" with their students (Richard); and encouraging dedication, momentum, and resilience.

Unfortunately, it was quite obvious that most supervisors were not supported enough in their leadership roles as doctoral supervisors by their departments or universities. Randal highlighted the importance of supporting new professors before they take on doctoral students. He reflected that he is "still developing as a doctoral supervisor," and that his university does not allow "incoming professors to automatically supervise doctoral students." He reported that this is not the case in all universities because some allow "tenure track assistant professors to supervise doctoral students." Randal elaborated that there needs "to be a time where someone is mentored into that role" because even his "capabilities are still developing." This is understandable because newly hired professors need time to get to know themselves in their new roles. They need to psychologically adapt to comprehend that they are no longer students anymore, they need to get used to be sitting on the professor's side of the table. They need to be assisted in their new roles by senior professors, encouraged, mentored, and granted time by their departments to reflect on their experiences as former doctoral students and start crafting their supervision philosophies in meaningful ways.

Norman agreed with what Randal suggested about the importance of having a system and culture that support supervisors in their leadership roles. Norman said he believes that what is missing in doctoral programs is "that the supervisor is considered by some to be the expert on everything and they don't seek help from others." This culture is problematic: no one knows everything and having a supervisor who is hesitant to ask for help when needed not only disadvantages the supervisor's professional growth but also might lead some supervisors to misguide their students or offer them misinformation.

Thomas, who has been involved with hiring new professors, also criticized the process that only asks candidates to provide a "teaching philosophy or teaching statements," which are "just . . . statements on a piece of paper" that do not provide evidence that the candidate can teach. This perspective sheds light on the importance of the supervision philosophy as well, which should clearly explain how candidates view their jobs as leaders who will work four or more years with heavily invested parties—the students—to help them develop into independent researchers. More importantly, these newly hired professors were not asked in the hiring process what they learned from their supervision experiences as former doctoral students, which could have given them the chance to be mindful of the impact of their own experiences when they started supervising students themselves. This is not to suggest that they would not independently do this kind of reflection if they were not asked during the hiring process. Nor to weed out people who learned nothing; but rather the opposite. Assuming that they learned something, asking them during the hiring process encourages them to remain mindful of how their previous experiences would impact their supervision styles.

Thomas went further and elaborated on another key issue in the hiring process, which is the financial skills that supervisors need to run their research projects successfully:

There's no evidence that people know how to balance a budget and spend [grant] money without running out, and that's a big issue with professors at some point. So, it's interesting; the university process doesn't really examine some of the more important aspects of being a professor.

Nathan provided a comparable perception about the importance of spending grants without running out of money. He added that getting grants is key to his chemistry students (though it is not the case for all disciplines). His perspective shows how getting grants helped his doctoral students and contributed to his sense of LSE: "What you seem to call 'efficacy' is basically what I call the ability to attract grants. . . . It's chemistry. You can't—you cannot have a PhD student without having funding." He had a record of success over the 45 years he supervised doctoral students, which made them feel like they were in safe hands and made him feel good about his efforts while enhancing his sense of LSE.

Lance shared a related viewpoint, which shows how getting grants added to his sense of LSE. He reported that his students "really never had to worry about how much it costs to do something. They've always been told if it's worth doing, we do it. . . . I can get research money." Lance's confidence in getting grants and his sense of LSE allowed his students to focus on their work and thrive rather than worry about how to survive.

Nathan offered his wisdom by underlining how current supervisors are under pressure and compared the present situation to the 1960s and 1970s, when it was much

easier to get funds, and this was "a tremendous positive in the sense that it gave us confidence that we knew we had money, . . . and somebody thought we had a good idea." In contrast, "currently, NSERC [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada] only funds about 50 percent of the new . . . people who start as assistant professors"; for those who do not get funded in their first year, it can be "psychologically very difficult." Funding options in the doctoral world in Canada is outside the scope of my research, but the important point here is that it is one of the elements that can influence supervisors' LSE.

Generally speaking, the data has shown that there are some obstacles that could prevent doctoral supervisors in general from developing their sense of LSE and helping their students' progress; these include not being mentored when they are first hired or even not receiving leadership training, being considered people who should not ask for help, and getting grants and spending money on research projects without running out, which are all serious sources of pressure. These poor departmental systems and cultural issues show how the supervisors' sense of LSE—and thus the whole doctoral supervisory relationship—are influenced by contextual factors.

The supervisors' views on doctoral students' SE. Supervisors emphasized the importance of self-efficacy for doctoral students to develop, produce novel and innovative ideas and be independent researchers, which includes both SE and RSE. The supervisors reported how some students started the program with a low sense of efficacy: "[The] first time, everybody's nervous, [and] there's a lot of self-doubts" (Thomas), and how the supervisor's role as a "positive force" is essential to build their sense of SE and RSE

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(Richard). The following interview script illustrates how supervisors were attentive of their active roles to enhance their students' sense of SE and RSE:

My aim is to get them from the point of not really knowing what it's all about when they first come into the testing: to the point where they can confidently do their own work without me having to have much input at all. (Thomas)

To do so, supervisors applied hands-on and hands-off approaches based on their students' individual needs. They trained their students to acquire research and inquiry skills as well as self-evaluation. They got them to experience achievements quickly because "once they have some early success, they will start to feel comfortable that they themselves are capable of producing research" (Nathan). They also provided their students with learning opportunities and different responsibilities.

Additionally, they created a positive culture that allowed them to work with their students to set mutual objectives, plans, and strategies to execute these plans, while fueling their joint beliefs with positive language concerning their ability to hit milestones and thrive. In this positive culture, they offered their students assurance and encouragement, and they used optimistic language that uplifted and motivated their students. Their feedback was constructive, clear, and honest, and it allowed students to learn from their mistakes and improve their work. The supervisors showed their enthusiasm, and they mentored their students to be successful not only in their doctoral programs but beyond them.

As I mentioned earlier, supervisors noted that they were not the only source of information or knowledge for their students, who were surrounded with valuable knowledge and expertise both within and outside their departments. Accordingly,

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supervisors encouraged their students to "get assistance and help not only from the supervisor, but from elsewhere" (Norman), and they reported the importance of having "the ability to connect people . . . with their experiences and connect with colleagues" (Nigel) to build connections that expanded their horizons. Some reported that "one of the most interesting things about training students is that they learn as much more from each other [as] they do from [us]" (Thomas), which is viewed as "part of the success of operating a lab" (Turner), and they all demonstrated to their students how learning is a lifelong journey.

The supervisors' beliefs about their roles as "positive forces" and their practices of offering genuine support and building a positive culture as well as learning from all sources and networking were effective at creating CE and enhanced their own sense of LSE.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. The students started their doctoral programs with different perception levels of SE and RSE. Their supervisors took part in enhancing or impacting their sense of efficacy, and some experienced CE with them. I present the findings under two main themes: (a) how students experienced efficacy; and (b) their supervisors' role in influencing their sense of efficacy.

How students experienced efficacy. Students portrayed self-efficacy in doctoral programs as a "bar" they believed they could pass "to get [their] PhD" (Nancy). Three subthemes emerged in this section: transitioning from lack of awareness to full understanding; imposter syndrome; and dedication, determination, and resilience.

Transitioning from lack of awareness to full understanding. Most students started the program with a lack of awareness, including a "lot of disbelief" (Tiffany) and

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"uncertainty" (Nelly), and some were "always nervous" at the beginning (Adam) and "a little blind" about "the level of commitment" (Heather), especially when they realized very early on that they needed more than just "the technical skills" they already had (Randy) to advance in their doctoral programs.

As they progressed, their beliefs about their capabilities as doctoral students (SE) and novice researchers (RSE) continued to develop. Taking "a very systematic approach to things" helped enhance their sense of efficacy (Laura). Additionally, when they were "encountering something different each time," their sense of self-efficacy "just increased" (Heather), and this built them up, which they further in "other opportunities down the road" (Nelly). Some even became "the go-to guy" in the lab (Adam), and "by the end" they were "very effective" as scientific writers, presenters, thinkers, and publishers (Randy). They also developed courage and became more comfortable with experimenting and sharing both raw and developed ideas.

All students who enjoyed the sense of efficacy they obtained from their journey from a lack of awareness to full understanding expressed how fulfilling their learning objectives was rewarding, and they said their evolution was mainly driven by their inner voices reminding them that they joined their programs for a purpose and had the capabilities to accomplish their goals. Conversely, their grit did not mean that their motivation or moods were always up because some experienced inner voices that tried to drag them down, which is called the "imposter syndrome."

Imposter syndrome. Among others, Tiffany, Laura, Chris, Sara, and Lamar reported experiencing the imposter syndrome, which one defined as thinking, "I don't think I should

be here" (Tiffany). The following interview script highpoints how students experienced the imposter syndrome:

So, I believed I had the ability, . . . knowledge, [and] skills. . . . However, . . . there is that feeling that you're not smart enough. The classic woman being an imposter, [worrying] that they're going to figure out that I'm really not going to be a—I [am] really not who I say I am, which of course is not true. (Lamar)

These students knew they were capable, so they had to fight their inner negative voices by replacing them with more positive thoughts about their past achievements and future plans upon graduation. Moreover, students who graduated reported how they realized that replacing negative thoughts with more positive ones necessitated their actions. When someone has a dream they wish to become true, they must step up to make it real; these students made their dreams become true through their dedication, determination, and resilience.

Dedication, determination, and resilience. Regardless of all the challenges Lamar, Reginald, and Stephanie faced, having dedication, determination, and resilience allowed them to keep going and complete their programs successfully. They had strong beliefs that they could achieve their ultimate aim of completing the program no matter what.

Lamar reported, "I knew I could do it. It wasn't an easy process and—and I did it." Lamar elaborated how resilience—which she got from her life experience—had helped her: "If you're not strong enough to realize that you can bounce back from [challenges], it could send you into a downward spiral." Lamar considered quitting the program, but then she received an advice from a friend, who said to her, "You can't quit in a valley." Lamar never forgot this "wonderful advice," which added to her determination.

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Reginald shared that in spite of everything he faced, he was very confident and positive that he would be able to complete the program and graduate:

> For me, it was always an unwavering positivity that was . . . 100 percent capable of completing the program, and anything otherwise was fictional. . . . And at no point was I really particularly of any other mind.

Stephanie also lacked motivation and direction, but she had a very strong belief that she could do what it took:

> I did believe that I could do whatever I needed to do to get through. There were times, though, where I—I lacked motivation. And I lacked clear direction, which made me feel as though I [was] not as effective as I could have been.

Evidently, the sense of efficacy in the doctoral students—their beliefs that they could complete their programs and succeed—was mainly charged by their inner voices; purposes and motivation; and full dedication, determination, and resilience. However, because finishing the program was not a solo performance, they had to complete their journeys with supervisors (the main decision-makers), and it was evident that their supervisors had influence on their sense of efficacy. In the following section, I present students' perceptions of the roles that supervisors played in their students' sense of efficacy and how some enjoyed a sense of collective efficacy with their supervisors.

Supervisors' roles in influencing students' efficacy. Students reflected on the roles their supervisors played in enhancing their sense of efficacy (SE and RSE) and creating or not creating collective efficacy (CE). Three subthemes emerged in the datasets: supervisors guiding students in the right direction; the imposter syndrome and supervisors' roles; and toxic, passive, and controlling leadership and their impact on efficacy.

Supervisors guiding students in the right direction. Many students reported how their supervisors encouraged them and positively contributed to their sense of efficacy—both SE and RSE—which led them in the right direction. These supervisors helped their students navigate the system, facilitated the logistical requirements of their programs, connected them, showed them how to conduct research, and supported them all the way through.

The students found their supervisors very affirming, and the supervisors showed their students they believed in them. These supervisors were viewed as exceptionally consistent and provided constant presence, support, and encouragement. Even during times of failure (e.g., issues in the lab), they were funny (had a sense of humor), and they supported students and encouraged them to be resilient. They applied both hands-on and hands-off approaches depending on their students' individual needs. They showed their students their confidence and capabilities in leading and guiding them, and they showed them incredible insight, intuition, and wisdom. They helped their students set realistic goals and deadlines, provided them with multiple lab projects as contingency plans, and helped them do their best. The students were happy and satisfied with their progress, and they even tried to mimic what they valued in their supervisors' styles, which indicates how they looked up to their supervisors as leaders.

Students reported the importance of believing that their supervisors knew the system and process and were up to date with any changes in their departments because without this leadership attribute, students would have been worried and confused. At the same time, they valued how their supervisors were mindful of their own limits and weaknesses. These effective supervisors created work environments that allowed CE to

emerge and grow, where both parties enjoyed mutual belief and understanding to do the required jobs and keep the momentum to achieve their anticipated outcomes.

Imposter syndrome and supervisors' roles. As mentioned earlier, some students talked about the imposter syndrome in their doctoral programs. Tiffany gave credit to her supervisor for enhancing her beliefs about her abilities since she had been a master's student with her. Tiffany reported that whenever she faced a challenge, her supervisor said, "Let's figure this out," which indicates her supervisor's positivity—the positivity all students need.

While Laura's supervisor only helped her organize her tasks, which was not an enough assistance for a doctoral student who had a lot on her plate, Chris had an understanding and caring supervisor who positively contributed to his sense of self-efficacy.

Sara's imposter syndrome was a real struggle with her passive, "easygoing" supervisor. She conveyed how her inability to start writing her dissertation was her main struggle, but her supervisor failed to sense Sara's desperate need for a clear plan to overcome her writing anxiety:

> I'd say, you know, give me—give me a hard deadline to get you a draft. And she's like, well, whenever, whenever it's ready. So, she's really easygoing, which is nice when my motivation is at its peak but not so great when I'm losing it.

Lamar's supervisor also contributed to her imposter syndrome. Lamar elaborated on how the negative feedback she got from her supervisor frustrated her and made her doctoral experience challenging:

[I am the] classic woman being an imposter, [worrying] that they're going to figure out that I'm really not . . . who I say I am, which of course is not true, but it's—it's that inner voice inside of you that tries to sabotage you throughout the process. What contributes to that is when you start to get negative feedback, so then you start to think you really can't do it.

It is obvious that imposter syndrome could be a barrier to some doctoral students, regardless of their ages or life experiences. Among others, Lamar managed to overcome her self-doubts and graduate as a result of her dedication, determination, and resilience. However, having supervisors as positive forces rather than negative ones could make a difference in facing the imposter syndrome with positive thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes toward accomplishing goals and graduating in a timely manner.

Toxic, passive, and controlling leadership and their impact on efficacy. Lamar, Stephanie, Nicholas, and Ronald all suffered from toxic, passive, or controlling supervisors. Stephanie, for example, did not have a good supervision experience; just like Lamar, she received a lot of negative feedback from her supervisor, and she "had to call him out and say, 'What you're doing is not helpful, so I need you to change.'" Stephanie shared that she believed that her supervisor had a high sense of efficacy in regard to research (RSE), but it was mixed with egotism, and he lacked the leadership skills she needed. She explained that her supervisor was "very smart, but he also knew it." She felt that it should have been "more important" for him to "coach and develop others." She wished he had been nicer to her rather than being only "as smart as he was." She added: "I feel like I could have flourished more if his coaching and coaching abilities had been better."

Nicholas explained that his supervisor was passive, which did not help improve his sense of efficacy. He did not get reassurance from his supervisor because his supervisor's style was "a lot more independent," which caused Nicholas to have to "figure things out" on his own, leading him to waste time on the wrong track.

Ronald spoke about a positive role his supervisor played regarding "communicating research" in presentations and conferences. On the flip side, Ronald advised that his supervisor applied many hands-on approaches, which did not work for him. Ronald's supervisor understood his concerns but with a "bit of resistance." Just like Stephanie, Ronald trusted his supervisor when it came to research: "I think when the supervisor is not so confident, then it impacts your work too. . . . That leaves you in a position where you have to take a guess." But just like Stephanie, they both needed more effective leadership roles from their supervisors, which they did not receive.

Because I did not hear from these students' supervisors, it may be problematic to suggest that they lacked a sense of LSE. However, it is safe to propose that their behaviors—which were toxic, passive, and controlling—did not demonstrate any dimension of LSE. Additionally, while Stephanie had the courage to call her supervisor out and express herself, Lamar, Nicholas, and Ronald all preferred to suffer in silence because they knew their supervisors had the power to make their situations even worse. This suggests that (a) supervisors should encourage their students to give them feedback on the effectiveness of their supervision; and (b) supervisors who enjoy a high sense of LSE—the ones who believe they have the skills, knowledge, growth mindset, and wisdom to guide their students to achieve their goals, while maintaining their well-being—are ethical leaders who know their behaviors and practices are what people actually see and evaluate.

Generally speaking, some students progressed from a lack of awareness about research and the program as a whole to a full understanding that helped them improve their sense of efficacy. Some experienced the imposter syndrome, which left them wondering whether they deserved to be in the doctoral program. Others faced some supervision challenges that impacted their well-being and performance.

In all cases, the students' positive thoughts and attitudes—along with their dedication, determination, and resilience—helped them to keep going. Furthermore, it was evident how supervisors played either active roles, which led to CE, or passive ones, which negatively contributed to the students' sense of efficacy and the imposter syndrome. Their supervisors either led them in the right direction or were toxic, passive, or micromanaging (controlling), which left students working hard to succeed on their own and maintain their well-being so they could bear the negative environment in which they had to live.

Summary: Efficacy. The findings from both segments uncovered five types of efficacy in the doctoral supervisor context. Two of them were related to students: SE, which was associated with students' general beliefs about their abilities to complete the different requirements of the programs, and RSE, which was related to students' beliefs about their abilities to conduct research. Another two were related to supervisors: RSE, which they had already developed in their fields, and LSE, which was associated with their beliefs about their abilities to lead their students to achieve their goals and timely graduate. The last one was CE, which concerned how supervisors and students shared mutual beliefs about their abilities to work together and accomplish their desired outcomes.

It is apparent that the central type of efficacy in the doctoral supervision context is LSE. When students had supervisors, who demonstrated positive behaviors that indicated

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their sense of LSE, CE emerged, and students were satisfied with their performance and well-being. When supervisors exhibited negative behaviors and failed to demonstrate a sense of LSE, their students were confused and experienced ambiguity, a lack of trust, and anxiety.

As the supervisors' results exhibited, their sense of LSE was mainly developed through experience, active learning, and deep reflections on how they had been supervised when they were doctoral students themselves (which will be discussed further in the mentorship section). A few mentioned receiving some kind of mentoring before they started accepting doctoral students, but there did not appear to be any kind of supervision training or leadership programs provided by their universities when they started. This means that the process was more of a "sink or swim" exercise, and the first few students were experimental ones. Moreover, it seems that getting grants (in some disciplines) and spending the money without running out were sources of pressure on supervisors that might impact their sense of LSE.

In spite of all of the departmental challenges highlighted above—which some are outside of the scope of my research—ethical, committed, and optimistic supervisors showed a high sense of LSE (from supervisors' perspectives), and they showed positive behaviors and effective supervision (from students' perspectives) that might indicate their supervisors' high sense of LSE. They were always there practicing AAPP, and they managed to master the knowledge, skill, and wisdom of guiding students to achieve their milestones and goals while maintaining their resilience and well-being. These supervisors—who were people-oriented, mindful of their experiences (whether positive or negative), passionate about their disciplines, and enjoyed a growth mindset—found

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different ways to enhance their students' sense of SE and RSE. Their effective techniques

included appreciating, accepting and understanding their students' differences; offering

hands-on and hand-off approaches; providing them with constructive feedback, assurance,

learning opportunities, responsibilities, and connections; and allowing them to enjoy "some

early success" (supervisor Nathan), while learning from mistakes. These supervisors also

exhibited positive beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes while using positive language.

Mentorship

Based on the level of support that students received from their supervisors which

met their needs and impacted their satisfaction, the data showed three different quality

levels of mentorship in this context: authentic, average, and below average/toxic. All three

were evident in the supervisors' data when they reflected on their previous supervision

experiences as former doctoral students. Regardless of whether supervisors experienced

positive or negative mentorship when they were doctoral students themselves, these past

experiences influenced their mentorship styles as doctoral supervisors to some extent.

In the first section, I present the supervisors' experiences. I start by providing the

results that show how supervisors viewed and practiced mentorship in the doctoral

supervision context. Next, I present the data that display how the three different quality

levels of mentorship were evident in the supervisors' past experiences as former doctoral

students and the extent to which they believed those experiences influenced their current

styles. In the second section, I display the students' experiences and shed light on the three

different quality levels of mentorship they received.

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. Supervisors indicated that their

effectiveness as doctoral supervisors depends on how their students perceived it, rather

than how they themselves describe their effectiveness. Conversely, exploring supervisors'

perceptions on mentorship and stories that illustrate their practices in the different parts of

this dissertation, offer comprehensive descriptions and understanding of what works and

what does not work in the supervisory relationship. These ideas are underlined in the first

section, as I present how supervisors viewed and practiced mentorship. In the second

section, I provide the findings from the supervisors' past experiences as former doctoral

students.

What is mentorship in doctoral supervision context? Not all supervisors prefer the

term "mentorship" because some use other terms such as "apprenticeship," "advising,"

"facilitating," and "coaching." Supervisors underlined the importance of engaging the

students in the mentorship process as independent people who have voices. These

supervisors "try to treat [their students] as much as possible as equals" (Nathan) and

viewed mentorship as part of the "day to day conversation" (Richard).

Doctoral students are not supposed to grow into another version of their

supervisors; they must develop their own ways of doing research. Supervisors offered

students space to grow in an encouraging environment. According to the participants,

mentorship is a "co-journey," and empowering students to take the direction that meets

"their own interests" (Henry) and be "independent in the world" (Thomas) is critical. The

supervisors stated that they guided their students "without necessarily driving the whole

process" (Nigel) because they wanted them to be autonomous, as opposed to producing

"clones" of themselves (Rachel).

Providing students with guidance, advice, and "all aspects of research training"

depends on the previous knowledge and skills that they already had (Thomas) and on their

future plans. Some students came directly from undergraduate programs, and others were more mature and came from their respective industries (Samuel). Some students had plans to transit "from the field to the academy" or "want[ed] to go back to the field" (Nigel), which means they needed "career planning" and "professional skills" (Dana). Some students were more motivated than others, especially in different stages of their programs (Robert).

Regardless of all of these differences within the student population, all students' time is precious, and meeting their distinctive needs is vital. This means mentorship should be tailored to the students' individual needs (Norman; Nigel). The tailoring process required supervisors to listen to their students, ask them about their needs, and encourage them to ask when they were not sure about something. Even though supervisors may not necessarily have all the answers when their students ask questions, the communication is what really matters because this leads them to network and explore different options, and both parties eventually learn something new (Norman).

There is no doubt that doctoral students are the heavily invested parties in the program. Their doctoral research is significant to them, and they should be empowered to choose paths and make decisions because "they [live so] depending on [their research]" (Reina). Accordingly, supervisors should demonstrate understanding and be role models for their students (Samuel), and they should be able to use "a brake and an accelerator" and "use the right pedals [in] the right amount" to guide their students (Turner).

Supervisors' experiences as former doctoral students. All the supervisors I interviewed reflected on their experiences when they were doctoral students except for Lawrence. He declined to talk about his experience as a former doctoral student, but he

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stated that he learned from that experience. He believed it is "important to learn from one's past but not get trapped by it." He elaborated by saying that "each student is different," so while his past supervision experience allowed him to engage different individuals in different ways, he did not rely on it and tried not to "make every relationship the same." The rest of the supervisors' thorough reflections disclosed the three different quality levels of mentorship I identified. They also shared how their current styles were influenced by the way they were supervised when they were doctoral students.

Authentic mentorship. This theme grouped the interview transcripts that indicated students receiving a high level of authenticity and support, which allowed students to be engaged and satisfied. Nathan, Robert, Lance, Noel, Samuel, Richard, and Randal all had positive supervision experiences in which their doctoral supervisors were authentic mentors or coaches. They shared how those experiences influenced their current styles as doctoral supervisors.

Nathan reflected on his positive experience when he was a PhD student: "I had a very young, but what I call . . . a very understanding, supervisor. And I've tried to, you know, as much as I could and as much as circumstances allowed, [I've tried] to emulate him." Nathan completed his PhD in 1964, and he reflected on many rich details. He explained, "I remember my PhD time very well. . . . That was an important part of my life." He added that he still visits his supervisor, and he told him and his family, "I owe you an awful lot" because "he taught me how to treat people."

Robert enjoyed being "very much autonomous" and the "no blame culture," just as Nathan did. He said, "It was very positive. . . . My mentor took an approach, I guess, that's similar to what I take." Lance highlighted how his supervisor supported him "100 percent,"

and how he created a "fun environment in the lab" that they all enjoyed. Lance talked about how his successful supervision experience influenced him: "Well, I used the same line: 'This is going to be fun.'" Noel reflected on his previous experience and his "fantastic mentor" when he was a PhD student: "I learned a tremendous amount from him on multiple levels, and, [I] thought that to be a very positive experience."

Samuel accredited that his PhD supervisor as a "very strong and effective mentor" and added, "There were a lot of—a number of aspects of that experience that were positive that I brought forward and I try [to] model . . . now as a supervisor dealing with students." Samuel added that he still counts on his past supervisor "as a close friend". Moreover, he said, "She still continues to be a mentor for me, as, you know, in my—in my research and academic career. . . . That's been very positive."

Richard, who viewed "inclusivity" to be vital in mentorship, noted that his previous experience when he was a PhD student influenced the way he interacts with his students, and he added that it is "the supervisor's job to make it work. It's not the student's job to make it work." He elaborated on this point:

> To make the relationship work, they have to put themselves out for it. . . . This is a—this is just a power scene, right? . . . We've both heard so many stories about supervisors taking advantage . . . of their students. . . . And if you're the supervisor, you're the one [who] has the power—is perceived to have the power—and it's your job to behave responsibly. So, you know, that this is just a variation on that theme.

Randal talked about how he enjoyed his experience as a former PhD student. He explained that he had "an accessible supervisor and an accessible committee" as well as

"access to opportunities outside of my normal doctoral studies, that would allow me to appreciate the experiences of scholarship."

It is noticeable that enjoying an authentic mentorship and coaching style in the doctoral supervision context influenced these supervisors' current styles. Their former doctoral supervisors taught them the proper way to treat students and be positive forces in their programs. This finding suggests the importance of self-reflection for supervisors in their attempt to enhance their performances.

Average mentorship. Nigel and Turner had average mentorship experiences in which they received some support, but it was not enough to meet their needs. Nigel talked about his past supervision experience when he was a PhD student and how he got feedback on his work, but he called the relationship "distanced." Turner spoke about how he had three supervisors during his PhD and postdoctoral program and how synthesizing what he liked about them all helped shape his current mentorship style. They both learned a great deal about proper supervision from what they received as well as from what they found lacking. Accordingly, when they became doctoral supervisors, they found themselves very sensitive to their students' needs—sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. What really mattered to them was to offer their students doctoral experiences that were better than what they got.

Below average/toxic mentorship. When supervisors reflected on their experiences when they were doctoral students, it was evident that some had below average/toxic mentorship experiences. Henry, Rachel, Reina, Norman, Dana, and Thomas all had negative experiences when they were PhD students, and some of their supervisors even seemed to act as bullies who taught them what not to do.

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Henry stated, "I am a product of those experiences in my own life." He recounted how he "worked two years solid without a break, without any feedback" and how this depressed him. However, there were a few positive aspects that he enjoyed in his supervision experience: "The positive things I do emulate or try to emulate, and the negative things I try to avoid."

Rachel shared how she "had a supervisor who hadn't supervised a PhD student in a long time, . . . and she was happy" to have her as a student. Her supervisor lacked knowledge and experience, but most importantly she did not try to learn so that to help Rachel. Rachel was mindful of her negative experience when she was a PhD student. She shared how she decided to switch supervisors after she failed her candidacy as a result of her unsupportive supervisor. Because switching supervisors was not (and is still not) an easy process, she "had to shift to another faculty and get a new supervisor and do it again", which was costly for her financially, physically and psychologically:

> So, I know how it feels to be supported and not supported, and I know the difference it makes. And—and how, a defense proposal— . . . a candidacy defense can go if the supervisor is unwilling to stand with the students. I know how that feels. That has never happened to any of my students. So, I don't—I don't want anyone [who] I supervise to have to go through that—to not have the supervisors standby.

Reina had a toxic supervision experience that caused her stress at the time. She shared how her supervisor kept making her life very difficult without mercy. She spoke about one of the things her supervisor did that she had never forgotten, which indicates his toxic leadership: "So, you know, these comprehensive exams, candidacy exams. . . . [My

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supervisor] bet a case of beer with another graduate student that I would fail that exam."

She acknowledged, "I thought the one thing that was good about him was he read anything

I . . . wrote very quickly. And so, I've always carried that with me. So, I always read things

very quickly."

Norman reflected on his experience when he was a PhD student and stated that he

had an absent supervisor. This negative experience influenced his supervision style.

Norman stated that feedback was the most important thing he needed from his supervisor

but never got. He would send a paper to his supervisor, who would get back to him "six

weeks later" advising him that "it's good." Norman did not know how to make it better,

what to change, or where he could improve. As a supervisor, he said, "When a student

sends me something, now I try and get back or respond, saying, . . . 'I'm at a conference

currently, but I will get it by this date,' you know, and—and I'll give them a date."

Dana had a negative experience when she was a PhD student as well. She had a

selfish supervisor, and she explained that "he wasn't looking out for me. He was looking

out for him." She spoke about how some supervisors could become "kind of a bad role

model" and said "he did not express his own weaknesses well," adding, "I'm aware of my

limitations, maybe from my own experience." Failing to express weaknesses—admit fault

or ignorance, are key aspects in this below average/toxic mentorship. Thomas reflected on

his PhD experience when he was a student. His "supervisors totally ignored" him, and he

believed this had sharpened him and taught him what to do and what not to do with his

students.

These supervisors who received below average/toxic mentorship from their

supervisors when they were doctoral students did not forget these negative moments even

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after so many years, which might seem problematic for their well-being (if they were dwelling on the past). However, their full awareness of those negative experiences allowed them to turn them into practical lessons and positive plans to inform their beliefs and practices when they became supervisors.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. Mentorship in doctoral supervision was summarized by one participant in a way that seemed to also reflect the understanding of the rest of the participants: "Mentorship is everything. It defines the whole experience. If you have a poor mentor, . . . you might be able to succeed, but it will make things really hard" (Adam).

Similar to the supervisors' experiences as former doctoral students, the same three themes emerged in the students' reflections: authentic, average, and below average/toxic mentorship. The students experienced both positive and negative aspects in all types of mentorship (which is normal in human interactions), but with different levels (minor/major), and consequences. One student defined his positive supervision relationship in a way that explains how the positive and the negative aspects exist in all mentorship experiences: "There's no—no relationship [that] is all rosy. I mean, maybe I'm sounding very positive here. Right? But it's that we're always learning from those negatives" (Chris).

Authentic mentorship. The findings here yielded five subthemes. These subthemes are the five characteristics that when combined identify an authentic mentor: presence and engagement; sincere interests; confidence and mindfulness; space for growth; and positivity.

Presence and engagement. Students appreciated supervisors who were present—coaching, facilitating, sponsoring, and helping them navigate the system—especially in their early stages, when they started "a little blind," as Heather outlined it. Whether supervisors were physically or virtually accessible did not matter; what really mattered to students was that their supervisors were friendly, "very respectful" (Nora), approachable, not "grumpy" (Nancy), and psychologically present.

Heather, who had to switch supervisors because her first supervisor was mostly absent and not engaged in the process, found her supervision experience after she made the change excellent: "[My supervisor] . . . was really guiding and facilitating, mentoring and encouraging me along the way." Concurring, Nelly suggested that supervisors are expected to be "rock[s] in support," especially since they are busy fulfilling other responsibilities as well. Nora shared her view of mentors as supervisors who are present to support their people in "good times" as well as in "challenging times." Being present means that supervisors are engaged and psychologically engrossed, which allows them to alter their roles as needed. Michael, for example, explained that mentoring should continually be reassessed and altered because "the mentee will outgrow the mentor." Leslie said that mentorship is about providing opportunities and advice, and this indicates that supervisors are expected to be present enough to know about these opportunities and their students' signs of progress and needs to offer support and advice as necessary.

Sincere interests. Supervisors who had their students' best interests at heart were viewed as authentic mentors. This subtheme also emerged in the trust section and was evident through the entire dissertation. Nelly described mentorship as "having a second pair of parents"; her supervisor provided her with both academic and personal guidance.

Michael echoed Nelly's insight about the "parental" relationship he had with his supervisor, describing how his supervisor genuinely mentored him:

> She's not only supervised my PhD dissertation and not only helped me do a really good dissertation and have a really good experience right through to the defense, but she's also helped me develop as a scholar by engaging me in publication [and] by engaging me in research projects and capacity development.

Both Randy and Nancy appreciated that their supervisors mentored them academically while teaching them "lifelong" matters. For Randy, mentorship is about "taking an active personal interest in a student and in their future, and you want to help them succeed." Randy explained how her supervisor cared about her career and future: "I knew . . . that I wanted to go into research and continuing research. . . . We spoke about it, and he was very supportive." Like Randy, Tiffany viewed her supervisor as an honest mentor who provided good advice, especially when her supervisor talked to her about her career and her plans after graduating.

Not surprisingly, these students trusted their supervisors' advice, opinions, and decisions. Believing that their supervisors had their best interest at heart offered the peacefulness, and made them feel more productive and energized.

Confidence and mindfulness. Participants found it significant to their success to have a confident supervisor (who is the main decision-maker in this context) who knows how and where to guide and who knows the tools a student might need. If a supervisor simply "doesn't know what those tools are, or if the supervisor is struggling in their own lab, then they're going to have a hard time giving the right tools to their own students" (Nancy); this shortage might lead their students to struggle, get stuck, or even drift away

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with their research. However, students articulated that their supervisors were mindful of their own limits, and were willing to show their "vulnerabilities" since they do not "have all the answers" to students' queries (Michael). These supervisors tended to be openminded about learning new things, and connecting their students with other valuable resources to support their students.

Furthermore, students benefited from having supervisors who motivated them by sharing their own experiences as former doctoral students. Nelly, Chris, and Tiffany, among others, expressed appreciation for their supervisors' willingness to share experiences. Nelly highlighted how supervisors "have been through it, and I always appreciated the fact that my mentor shared her experiences with me . . . because it gives some insight." Chris explained how he benefited from his supervisor's sharing of his own doctoral experience:

> So, he would talk about something as simple as his first car, to his indecision after graduating, to thinking of dropping out and going to be a mechanic instead of an engineer . . . Knowing that those are questions that we all face and being able to explore those in a comfortable setting—I think that's what mentorship is for me.

Tiffany valued the way her supervisor made her feel that she had been where Tiffany was, which raised her confidence. She elaborated on how having a mindful supervisor reflecting as a former doctoral student impacted her own thinking and evoked respect for how psychologically present her supervisor was during their meetings:

> She tells stories where she would talk to her supervisor. He'd be at his desk, but he would be reading something else. Where I've never had that with her . . . I think she

realized she didn't like that, and she knows that she wouldn't do that. If you need

the time, she'll give you the time.

Whether these supervisors had positive or negative experiences during their own time as

doctoral students, it seems that they were mindful of those experiences, and they learned

both what to do (Chris's supervisor) and what not to do (Tiffany's supervisor) when they

mentored their students.

Space for growth. Students benefited considerably from supervisors who provided

them with sufficient autonomy. Their supervisors developed their research identities by

offering both hands-on and hands-off approaches as needed. Nora, among others, treasured

the way her supervisor engaged her in the supervision process, and how he provided her

with "the freedom to contribute to the process." Chris valued the way his supervisor cared

about his growth without directing it. Leslie narrated how her supervisor was not trying to

make her another version of herself, which was essential to her as an emerging scholar

developing her own identity:

> They're not trying to make me . . . into mini-them, because they know it's not what
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> I am. They sort of support whatever direction I want to go in, and help me decide if
>
> I don't know what that direction is.

The students found their supervisors as very affirming and very supportive. Their

hands-on and hands-off approaches, based on the students' individual needs, along with

their demonstrated belief in their students' capabilities, were all listed as positive practices

that encouraged students and allowed them to progress and find their personalities as

emerging scholars.

Positivity. Supervisors with positive behaviors and attitudes were found to be "very optimistic . . . very empathetic" (Heather), "very positive and upbeat" (Nelly), and could help transform something that seemed to be a problem into an opportunity (Chris). Additionally, these supervisors were respectful, kind, confident, patient and humble (Tiffany, Leslie, Nancy, Randy), and had their egos under control. These positive behaviors and attitudes made their students feel respected, listened to, hopeful, resilient, assured, and willing to share their thoughts and gave them the courage to experiment and to go out of their comfort zones.

Egotism was found to be a threat to positivity. Heather, for example, explained how supervisors should leave their egos out of the supervision equation to help their students feel comfortable around them. They should acknowledge their students as individuals with different needs and facilitate the program for them. She added,

> So, you know, I love bell hooks—you know, leaving the ego at the door, so that you can fulfill the needs of others; and so emptying ourselves, walking through that doorway, so that it's not about our ego—it's about the students and facilitating their learning.

Nelly echoed Heather's idea and emphasized the importance for her of having a supervisor as a facilitator "not [to] be above the student, but [to] be beside them," so that students can express themselves and their ideas without fear of judgment or ignorance.

Average mentorship. This section presents the findings of two students, Daisy and Reginald, whose average mentorship experiences could have been better. These students seemed to have neither negative nor positive mentorship experiences. Daisy had a very negative and noninclusive supervision experience while earning her master's degree;

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however, she said that her PhD supervisor was "great" and "caring." She respected how her PhD supervisor helped her navigate the system, especially given that Daisy is a shy person who, during her first year, was still "trying to learn how to swim." Her main challenge was that her supervisor was more of a seasonal mentor, which made it difficult for her: "I feel like my supervisor is there but not there through other months. . . . She's a great mentor throughout the year, but then when it comes to the spring and summer months, we get lost." This present/absent supervisor's situation left Daisy with no true guidance and delayed her in taking her candidacy exam. For most of the year, she was left alone to make decisions for herself. She explained that because she is a shy person, she did not know how to clearly express her feelings and needs to her supervisor. Moreover, she is a very considerate student: "I don't want to be an overwhelming student on their end as well." She worried that requesting help from her busy supervisor, who had other responsibilities, was too much to ask.

As mentioned earlier, Reginald started his program with co-supervisors. He had a better experience after he decided to choose a single supervisor to work with. He suggested that mentorship for him means "redirecting a problem or deciding when it's time to divest." He shared how he spent 18 months on a project that was not getting him anywhere, which encouraged him to make the decision to work with one supervisor only. His second supervision arrangement was not a negative one. He respected his supervisor's consistency, but he needed more understanding or encouragement, which he did not get from his supervisor.

Clearly, both Daisy and Reginald needed more time and attention from their supervisors. Daisy's supervisor did not check in to see how she was doing, even though

Daisy was a shy, unexpressive person, which shows how her supervisor did not consider the fact that her student would not take the first step to draw attention to her struggles. By contrast, Reginald became an expressive student in his program, one who knew his own needs and made decisions; unfortunately, his supervisor failed to recognize that.

   Below average/toxic mentorship. The datasets disclosed three subthemes that clearly pointed toward what may be called "below-average/toxic mentorship." Lamar asserted what summarized the other students' perspectives: "your supervisor will make or break your experience." Students' individual experiences in this section do not indicate that all of these supervisory relationships were completely negative or absolutely toxic but simply that the negatives outweighed the positives. These subthemes include absenteeism, over-authoritarian, and, negative attitudes.

   Absenteeism. Absenteeism characterized supervisors who were physically/virtually or psychologically not present, not engaged, or not sensitive enough to their students' needs to the extent that harmed their students. The category of absenteeism also includes passive supervisors who did not check in to see how their students were doing, to the extent that their students were debilitated.

   Sara, for instance, did not deny a number of positive mentorship aspects she got from her supervisor; but for her, mentorship "is not only helping me through the topics or the methodology of a research project, but it's also building me as a future academic." Sara, who portrayed her supervisor as supportive but "easygoing," lacked motivation because of multiple difficult personal problems she faced. Because Sara was not progressing well, she "avoided the hallways" that her supervisor might use and stopped going to the lab. She felt frustrated that her supervisor did not even realize that she had

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stopped going to the lab or that she did not check in to see how Sara was doing. Sara felt as if she were invisible, and her absence went unnoticed by her supervisor, which demotivated her even more.

Nicholas explained that his supervisor ignored his needs to discuss his research with him, and that he lacked feedback, guidance, and support, causing him to waste a lot of time following the wrong track with his research question. Natasha and Laura did not have bad supervision experiences in general; however, they did not receive much mentoring from their supervisors and thus decided to rely on other professors for guidance. Laura explained that she relied on another professor that she called her "unofficial supervisor" because her own supervisor devoted time and attention to more "needy" students. Sometimes, Laura questioned this in her mind:

> I guess I kind of felt like, 'Oh, should I be having a breakdown in her office?' You know, it does make you think, 'Should I—should I be more open or more, I don't know, more needy or something with them to get more attention?' But [at] the same time, like, I don't really want more [attention] sometimes. Like, I don't really need more attention.

Lamar managed to graduate, even though she did not get support, guidance, or constructive feedback from her supervisor. Other students with absentee supervisors were stuck, did not know how to confront their challenges, and were unable or hardly able to move forward. Observing their *scarce time* and energy washed-out with less control exhausted them and left them helpless and hopeless.

Over-authoritarian. Over-authoritarian mentorship is the opposite of absentee mentorship. The supervisors here were heavily involved but in an undesirable way. Ronald

criticized that he had "too much mentoring," which he did not appreciate: "I think really . . . the whole experience, the whole supervisor experience. There's mentorship everywhere . . . I mean, there is really a lot of advice coming from your supervisor." Ronald explained how he felt that his supervisor valued his own interests over his students' interests. Having his supervisor misusing his power and delaying his graduation for no valid reason was not fair, according to him, and it stressed him out:

> Recently I have been trying to graduate, but I had the impression that my supervisor was delaying my graduation because he wanted me to publish a paper in a deadline that is in March. . . . So, there's this perception that it's better for the professor to finish a paper while you are still a student . . . I thought that my supervisor was delaying my graduation because of that.

Stephanie, who graduated just before the interview, explained how she received a lot of feedback but that it was all negative, and in different cases, "mean" and "threatening." She developed depression throughout her program, from which she was still working hard to recover: "I really wish he would have been able to give me positive feedback a lot more, and I wish he would have been more self-reflective around his own inability to help me." She added how her supervisor had reflected on his experience when he was a PhD student: "He talks about a lot of his challenges, which you would think he would then make it be less challenging with me, but he always compared [me] to his own challenges and, like, what he faced was worse." Stephanie wished that her supervisor were mindful of what he had learned from his negative supervision experience to provide her with more positive feedback, support, and guidance, especially considering that he knew the bitter feelings of being unsupported. Stephanie now works as a consultant in leadership

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and coaching. She hopes that no doctoral student has to suffer as she did, which is why she participated in this research, regardless of her emotional state; she was still recovering from her depression at the time of the interview.

These supervisory behaviors and practices did not include any aspect of sincere interest, confidence/mindfulness, space for growth, or positivity. The opposite was true; there was selfishness, lack of mindfulness, ignorance, and bullying (threatening and excessive feedback). The phrase "below average" is insufficient to describe this mentorship style; it may better be described as toxic. For this reason, I have used "below average/toxic" as an umbrella category for supervision that is neglectful, actively abusive, or negative.

Negative attitudes. Supervisors with negative attitudes seemed careless, apathetic, impatient, disrespectful, and even exhibited uncontrolled ego, which affected their students adversely. Among others, Nicolas did not find his supervisor respectful, Lamar found her supervisor carless, and Ronald suffered from his supervisor's impatience. Stephanie, who had an apathetic supervisor, got sick of her supervisor's uncontrolled ego. She did not see her supervisor at any point as a role model because he made her feel small and disengaged:

> I felt as though he did a lot of things that . . . I would never want to work for someone that is like that again . . . just to criticize people continuously and to not encourage them. . . . And then to just also not recognize how, when you were being kind of pretentious or you think you're above people, how that can make them feel less engaged.

These students who had to deal with negativity or ego issues were thereby disadvantaged, which affected their progress and performance. The common irritant in their stories was

their distrust in their supervisors, and how they made students feel uncomfortable and puzzled.

In many cases, the students who had to deal with supervisors who were absent, toxic or negative supervisors, suppressed their struggles and preferred to differ in silence. Ronald, for example, detailed that he kept his challenges to himself as he did not want to complicate his tough situation more. Ultimately, their doctoral experiences became deleterious and did not meet their hopes or expectations.

To conclude, the different quality levels of mentorship/coaching that supervisors provided were evident in this section and throughout the dissertation. As we will see in the second part of chapter four, these supervisors acted differently when students faced challenges—regardless of whether they were program related or not—and their choices consequently influenced their students' performance and well-being.

Summary: Mentorship. A key finding in this dissertation is that supervisors' mentorship/leadership styles were influenced by how they were supervised and mentored when they were doctoral students. Being mindful of those experiences—whether positive or negative—helped the supervisors offer ethical and authentic mentoring, coaching, and facilitating experiences to their students.

In the authentic mentorship style, supervisors demonstrated that they had their students' best interests at heart, and the students felt this as well. Any negative aspect the students experienced under this style was manageable or addressed through communication. In contrast, below average/toxic mentorship had a substantial impact on students' well-being or performance, and some supervisors were even bullies. This style did not mean that these students' experiences were utterly free from any positive aspects,

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but these aspects did not add much to the students' well-being or performance. In the average mentorship style, students needed more attention, understanding, and support from their supervisors to progress and develop their well-being.

The Relational Leadership Core Competencies

Responding to Research Subquestion Two

In the first part of chapter four, I provided the findings of the four influential factors in the supervision relationship: AAPP, trust, efficacy, and mentorship. In the second part, I offer the findings on the RL core competencies, which are the main aspects that feed and nourish the four influential factors. When I connected the pieces, the results revealed how these four factors are intertwined with the ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social competencies and how they all work together as one system. This part responds to research subquestion two: To what extent do relational leadership ethical, cognitive, emotional and social competencies influence the doctoral supervisor–student relationship positively? and how they are demonstrated in the doctoral supervision context. Similar to the first part of chapter four, I present the findings from the supervisors' segment and follow them with those of their students.

Ethical Competencies

Ethical competencies, which concern the individual's ability to perform in an honorable manner successfully, were found to be the heart of the supervision relationship. Supervisors and students reflected on their understanding of ethics and ethical behaviors in the supervision context, and three main themes emerged: commitment to roles, responsibility, and accountability; research-related ethics; and nonresearch-related ethics. All these themes were mentioned in the previous sections, and I here select a few quotes to

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explain the importance of ethical competencies both for supervisors and students in this context.

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. Supervisors reflected on their understanding of ethics and ethical behaviors in the supervision context, and some used the same examples I highlighted earlier in this dissertation. Under the following three themes, supervisors were found to embrace ethics and ethical supervision and they translate them into intentional and unintentional practices that their students watch, observe, and get impacted by them.

Commitment to roles, responsibility, and accountability. Supervisors have an ethical obligation to be committed to their roles and the duties their departments expect them to fulfill, and they must accept responsibility and be held accountable when tasks are not accomplished. This part was highlighted clearly in the trust section. A supervisor reported, "I have a responsibility with everybody in my lab to ensure that they have the opportunity to be successful. That's my responsibility there. What happens next is up to them" (Lance), which indicated that one hand cannot clap; in other words, both individuals are responsible for reaching the completion stage.

Fulfilling the roles means that "the doctoral supervisor has a responsibility to be fair and kind and patient with the student, and the student has a responsibility to be fulfilled" (Nigel). Additionally, ensuring the students are successful was the ultimate aim of the supervisors, who were keen to "recognize that and deal with that in a way that is in their best interests ultimately, and also in mine" (Lance).

One of the fundamental activities that can ensure students are on the right track is to provide them with constructive and timely feedback. The proper feedback was highlighted

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in all the previous sections—AAPP, trust, efficacy, and mentorship. Supervisors acknowledged that it is their job to provide students with timely feedback that can inform their thinking (Richard). The following interview transcript highlights the challenges that some students who needed feedback had to deal with:

We have professors who won't be named who don't make it a priority to even read a thesis. It might take a whole term before they get around to reading a thesis. That, to me, is bordering on criminal because you're putting these students' lives on hold. (Reina)

While supervisors emphasized the importance of providing their students timely feedback, some also spoke about their other responsibilities and how they managed them while supervising students. The following transcript highlights the supervisors' perspective:

That's my job. I try to not to allow [other responsibilities to impact] . . . my supervision or my role as a supervisor with the students. Sure, there are times when that may be impacted, but I try to limit that actually as much as I possibly can. The needs of the people that I work with I will prioritize over the needs [of] myself, basically. (Robert)

This also implies that supervisors are sometimes not able to provide feedback as quickly as they would like. As such, mutual trust can moderate this delicate scene between an ethical supervisor and a considerate and understanding student.

Accountability—which explains how supervisors hold themselves accountable for their actions or inactions and encourage their students to do the same thing—is an important ethical competency. The supervisors talked about making mistakes in the

previous sections (e.g. trust) and how acknowledging mistakes and working to fix the consequences is what really matters. According to Dana, "Supervisors are not perfect. They can make mistakes. They can misjudge people. They can expect too much." Hence, this positive environment of accountability allowed supervisors not only to demonstrate to their students how they respected their obligations but also encouraged open dialogue to address any obstacle together, break it into small pieces, and fully understand and solve it.

When students make mistakes, Richard suggested, "You certainly don't ever think of mocking somebody because they make a mistake; we all make mistakes." Therefore, supervisors deal with the situation "in a positive way," and they "never try to make [students] feel small" (Nathan). Supervisors reported that fostering an environment of accountability facilitates their jobs, enhances mutual trust and respect, and helps find the root cause of the problems to solve them.

Research-related ethics. Ethics in research includes "avoiding coercion" with research involving humans, maintaining confidentiality, and avoiding "artificially manipulating environments to achieve the ends that they hope to" (Rachel), which means being honest about "interpreting the results" and monitoring "biases" (Nathan).

Unfortunately, both Reina and Noel had dreadful experiences in which their students breached research ethical standards when they worked on their data. Reina's student did not get his degree, and Noel's student was dismissed from the program. They both learned firsthand that breaching these standards is not only costly to students but also to their supervisors, who needed a substantial amount of time to be able to trust new students again.

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Supervisors also spoke about ethics in publishing and co-authoring as an immense ethical issue that could create conflicts. Researchers are supposed to be "saying what you did and only what you did and not taking credit for someone else's work" (Dana). Turner reported that "there [are] a lot of ethics in publishing [and] in giving credit to the right people," which "causes more fights than almost anything else." These situations are best handled when each supervisor is fully engaged to "figure out . . . who did contribute the most" because it is an ethical obligation and an "issue of fairness" to do so (Turner).

For Reina, her "rule of thumb" is that the "student will be the first author because in science, . . . that's the important author. . . . I know that's not true, necessarily, in the social sciences." She added that her job is "to facilitate success during that program," and "translating the science that [students] do in the lab to a publication" is part of the success that students pursue.

Ethics in research also requires supervisors to be ethical when spending money, as Dana reported: "What does it mean to take money to do research? It's an ethical thing. The taxpayers give money to the government. The government gives us money. It's not my money, right? I can't just spend it."

Nonresearch-related ethics. Being mindful that doctoral supervision is a "power scene" and conscious of authoritative leadership, which supervisors spoke about earlier, means that building a supportive and safe culture is essential. For Henry, "When it comes to supervision, [it] is the discussion around power in the relationship [that is required to address] . . . power imbalances in the relationship." Henry explained:

So, as a doctoral supervisor, doctoral supervisors have power over their graduate students because in some ways, the supervisor decides if that student's going to

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graduate, [and] they are directing the research, so the students do depend on the

supervisor, and there's this power imbalance there, so part of the ethics of

supervision is making sure that the boundaries of that power are well defined and

that they're not crossed over so that students aren't exploited. Describe it any way

you want . . . so that this power is not abused and . . . the students have a safe place

to work.

The importance of building a supportive and safe culture in which "power is not

abused" that is based on respect, treating others ethically (e.g., handling disagreement),

benevolence, nonmaleficence, honesty, justice (fairness/inclusiveness), autonomy, and

stewardship was evident in all the supervisors' quotes in the previous sections. The

following quotes shed further light on this concept

Respect and ethical treatment. Treating others properly and showing "respect for

each individual [and] recognition of their—their intellectual contributions and their

personal contributions to anything you're working on together" (Lawrence). That is

believed to be "a normal part of being a human and an individual, to be ethically treating

others" (Noel). Respect was demonstrated in different ways, such as following up with

students, and "if something happens, you're ill or whatever, you apologize to the student.

[You tell them] you could not do that and here's the reason why" (Reina). Another

example of respect that supervisors shared was encouraging different thoughts and

handling disagreement well. These supervisors reported how their students disagreed with

them sometimes, and they handled this by asking them to justify their thoughts and being

open to changing their minds.

Supervisors detailed how respect starts with the supervisor and how students reciprocate when they find themselves respected. The following interview transcript highlights the supervisors' perspectives:

I would say the leadership part, of course, rests more with the supervisor than with the student. The student is not going to be the leader of that role. So, the doctoral supervisor has to be the one [who places] the emphasis on what I just said to treat people fairly and respectfully, reliably, and so on. (Nigel)

Benevolence/beneficence and nonmaleficence. These were ethical competencies that were obvious in the supervisors' experiences. The following interview transcripts indicated benevolence/beneficence:

I'm fortunate enough in my lab that I can find extra money if they need it for a good reason. I can, [so] if they're having real issues at home, . . . for Christ's sake, go away for a month and sort it out. It's not going to stop; we're not going to stop paying you or anything stupid like that. Come back when you're ready. (Lance)

Henry shared how he assured his students that he is a "safe person to talk to" and that he respected confidentiality, which is an example of nonmaleficence. He added that what determines his actions is that he has nothing but their best interests at heart.

Another perceptive that demonstrates nonmaleficence was shared by Nathan. His view below brings to mind student Ronald's current conflict with his supervisor:

[My PhD supervisor] didn't try to exploit me, [which] I guess is the word I'm trying to say. And . . . I am aware of situations where supervisors, you know, . . . in a sense encourage students to stay longer. And . . . I'm not always convinced that it's in the best interest of the student, you know. . . . I've often explained that to my

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own students. I said, 'Look, you know, I started, and in a period of five years I had my PhD, and . . . I had finished one year of postdoc—a postdoctoral fellowship, and I was in my second postdoctoral fellowship, and I said, isn't that more valuable than having just a five-year-long PhD?'

These supervisors' promptness to help their students and their promptness not to cause them harm, were found to be daily practices that could be as simple as not saying a word that could make them feel bad, to more sophisticated situations, such as facilitating their graduation in a timely manner.

Justice (fairness, inclusiveness). Accepting students with all their differences and treating them with justice, fairness, and inclusiveness stemmed from the supervisors' strong beliefs and was translated into their effective behaviors. For example, they tended not to "single students out" (Thomas), and they talked to their students about fairness by—for example—asking them whether an action/inaction looked fair to them (Dana).

In the previous sections (trust, efficacy, and authentic mentorship), supervisors shared how they engaged all of their students, which characterized inclusiveness. Thomas and Reina shared that they tend to engage and include quiet or shy students as well. Thomas elaborated by saying that quiet students "may not get as much attention, and you have to draw them out." Reina provided an example of having a student who was shy talking in front of a crowd, so she encouraged them to give research talks every term so they would "get used to talking in front of an audience."

It was evident that inclusivity and acceptance are key in the supervision context, as highlighted in the following interview script.

It doesn't matter whether you're male or female or your color or your clothes. You have that interest in [research area], you have that in common, and that's what's driving you. And that's actually the magic formula, right? When everyone has holy Moses, it's very exciting, and the rest takes care of itself. (Richard)

These supervisors recognized ensuring justice, which includes fairness, inclusiveness and acceptance, as a serious responsibility that requires them to create learning opportunities for all of their students, rather than obstacles, and removing obstacles from their paths, rather than creating them. Many of them mentioned that they treat their students the way they like to be treated, in the sense that no one likes to be ignored, left aside or be disadvantaged.

Autonomy. It was highlighted in the previous sections how supervisors provided their students with different autonomy levels, as needed. Robert explained:

[My students] are autonomous enough. . . . If I see from the meetings that we have together that progress is not being made, or they are struggling with data analysis, or they're way off in a direction that I don't think will help them, then I will step in and guide them back onto the tracks, basically.

These supervisors recognized their students' need for autonomy, which required them to step back and allow their students to experiment. At the same time, they gradually offered autonomy, so that their students would not feel trapped or less competent, and they were ready to step in whenever necessary, and as their students demanded.

Stewardship. Stewardship comprises what some supervisors did to support their students that went above and beyond their roles and responsibilities. Supervisors provided different examples that showed their stewardship, but the highest level of stewardship

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came from Nathan. He shared that one of his early students was writing his PhD thesis while Nathan was in New Jersey on sabbatical. The student's thesis "wasn't going very well," so Nathan invited the student to live with him and his family for two weeks while they got his "thesis done together." Nathan explained that his student was very smart and capable but had a writing anxiety and needed to feel like he was supported to complete the dissertation.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. The results here are also organized under the same three main themes: commitment to roles, responsibility, and accountability; research-related ethics, and, nonresearch-related ethics.

Commitment to roles, responsibility, and accountability. Nelly shared that "commitment is definitely a big deal. . . . I think in any graduate program you've got to have students who are committed." Adam emphasized the significance of the supervisor having "very clear guidelines out from the outset—guidelines and expectations that are very clearly defined for both the student and the supervisor."

The students spoke earlier about feedback, which is one of the supervisors' main roles. Nicolas, Stephanie, Ronald, Reginald, and Lamar all did not receive proper feedback from their supervisors. Heather also did not receive the feedback she needed when she started her program, and she explained why this prompted her to switch supervisors:

> I was mindful enough to say, 'I need to have eyes, and the individual needs to have more feedback, more contact with my supervisor in order for me to grow as a student.' . . . I was very mindful of that first experience, in the sense that I wanted to ensure that I had the support required to finish.

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Tiffany highlighted accountability when she said how her supervisor admits mistakes: "She'll say, 'Yeah, I did wrong. I'm sorry.' Or she'll say, 'I don't know how to do this,' . . . so I think that's important as well. And I think that's very ethical in the sense that she's honest about it."

It was evident earlier that the students acknowledged their commitment to their roles and responsibilities as main ingredients in the supervisory relationship. They also knew that they had to follow through on their commitments and hold themselves accountable. These students needed to have clear expectations (from both sides) and clear feedback, which required clear conversations with their supervisors.

Research-related ethics. Tiffany, Randy, and Nancy all spoke about the importance of ethics in research and labs. When Tiffany was not sure about something, she asked her supervisor. Randy, who used mice in her lab, explained that ethics "is very important, especially in science" and that "it was very important that we always treated the animals well" and "we never committed plagiarism or data manipulation." She found that "ethical concerns were always very well addressed."

Nancy highlighted the role of the supervisor in enforcing ethics in research, especially when students do not get results in their experiments in the lab (negative data):

I think it's important with a supervisor to make sure that they indicate that it is fine . . . if the results again are negative data, and then to ensure that animal ethics are— are followed and adhered to.

Co-authoring was also emphasized when students spoke about ethics (Sara; Adam; Nelly; Randy). Among others, Sara shared an example of co-authoring that also indicated the importance of *fairness (justice)* in the supervision context: "There was one time where

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I requested . . . [my supervisor] . . . not [to] include someone on a publication." She explained that this student did not contribute to the article, so it did not seem fair to include him. She added, "It was basically me understanding that I had to stand up for what I thought was right. And then her saying, 'Yes, you're right.'"

Nonresearch-related ethics. Stephanie shared that she suffered from her supervisor misusing power and his egotism. Her worries and fear are clear in the following transcript:

I worried that he would give up on me, or I worried that . . . he would get mad at me. And then, like, I just would worry that if— if I ever got him mad that he would maybe not turn around my drafts, [or] he would not respond to my emails. Like, he didn't do that, but I would worry that would happen because that can happen to other people. . . . So, because I needed him— . . . because I need him to get through [and defend my dissertation on time]. I can't get through without him. So, there's like a—there's a dependence piece there, which is evident. Somebody's trying to assert their position over you in some instances that I could have lived without; I would have appreciated more of a collaborative approach.

Other ethical elements that students underlined include respect (treating people ethically and handling disagreement), benevolence/beneficence and nonmaleficence, honesty, fairness (justice), autonomy, and stewardship.

Respect and ethical treatment. Students spoke about mutual respect as a must-have element in the supervisory relationship. Nelly appreciated respect and explained, "Well, respect is a really big one. . . . [It's] the characteristic of a probably . . . successful relationship in any capacity." She said her supervisor "was always very respectful of me as a female student", which also indicated inclusiveness.

A few students felt comfortable enough to disagree with their supervisors (Nancy; Adam; Randy; Chris), which indicated that their supervisors provided them with the freedom to express themselves. Ronald said, "I don't think [my supervisor] is very used—used to being questioned, but he's very good at managing." He added that his supervisor has been "pretty respectful" when he talks to him.

Benevolence/beneficence and nonmaleficence. Heather spoke about how her supervisor cared about her, which made her feel comfortable sharing personal matters with her. Also, Chris shared that his supervisor "loses sleep about making sure that he funds and takes care of the students," which clearly shows his benevolence.

Sara, Nancy, and Ronald valued nonmaleficence. even though their experiences were different. While Nancy shared how harming others is "a good way to break trust," Sara explained:

> But beyond all these articles and whatever that you have to abide by, the most
> important things to me are, is nonmaleficence, so not actively trying to do bad. So,
> while benevolence, I think, is important as well, in trying to do good, I think that
> it's really important to not do wrong to people. . . . I just say this because I've seen
> it . . . try to go behind each other's backs or to do wrong or to, undermine
> someone. And that is something that I have seen in other doctoral supervisory
> relationships that has led to a lot of harm being done to the student: students being
> put behind because they can't finish because their supervisor isn't present or their
> supervisor stole their idea.

Ronald felt like his supervisor caused him harm, which supervisor Nathan also highlighted earlier under the same topic. Ronald elaborated:

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The supervisor, has incentives to hold you hostage until you publish enough papers, and you—it's not necessarily the best thing for you to publish so many [because] sometimes, you want to finish your PhD faster [rather than] try to publish papers.

Fairness (justice). Adam and Tiffany offered their perspectives on this topic. Adam—who shared earlier how his relationship's dynamic with his "angry" supervisor worked for him and how he benefited from it—raised an interesting point. For him:

As far as ethical leadership, I think it really comes down to making sure that everyone has the same opportunities [and] making sure that everyone has the same . . . opportunity to have the same interactions.

Tiffany highlighted one of the enormous supervisors' dilemmas that arises when their students are at different stages and each require different amounts of time and attention: "So I'm not going to say, 'Oh, you're giving, like, John more time than me right now. I think I need more time.'" Recall Laura, who rarely met with her supervisor because her supervisor provided more time and attention to other students. These two points do not contradict one another—they pinpoint how students' needs are different, but also how students should not be disadvantaged because of that. It is the supervisor's responsibility to balance this out.

Autonomy. Among other students, Leslie, Heather, and Adam treasured autonomy. Leslie explained, "It's all autonomy, . . . so I have a lot of independence." While Randy benefited from being autonomous when her supervisor sensed her needs and offered her the independence she required, Ronald had to speak up for himself and ask for a more hands-off approach. His supervisor provided this to him but without a positive attitude (he was hesitant), which created a discouraging work environment for Ronald.

Stewardship. Lamar mentioned earlier in the trust section that she trusts supervisors who are there "to provide guidance and stewardship as you go along the journey towards getting your PhD." Chris spoke about an ethical issue that he faced, and how his supervisor became a "champion" or steward to address a hidden issue. He "shared some technical skills, . . . math sums, and programming algorithms" with colleagues in a different faculty, and then they used them in a publication without his knowledge or acknowledgment. Chris said that when his advisor "became aware of this, . . . he became a champion." He did not ask Chris to solve this ethical issue alone but rather stepped up and went to those people and talked to them. Chris "ended up taking over the authorship of the manuscript." Chris explained that he could have never done this by himself, and he appreciated this ethical action from his supervisor, who made the issue a priority and followed up until it was solved.

Summary: Ethical competencies. It is unmistakable that exhibiting ethical competencies (ethical skills and abilities) is key to a positive supervisory relationship. This requires both supervisor and student to: (a) be committed to roles, responsibility, and accountability; (b) adhere to research ethics as outlined and communicated in each discipline; and (c) be ethical in nonresearch/social interaction events (e.g., respect and inclusiveness), especially because doctoral supervision is a power scene. Both supervisors and students reported the prominence of actions and inactions to be ethical.

Cognitive Competencies

Problem-solving is a critical cognitive competency that supervisors need to facilitate their supervision process for themselves as well as their students. Three main challenges emerged in the participants' data: time constraint challenges, research/program-

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related challenges, and nonresearch/program-related challenges. These challenges were highlighted in the previous sections. In this part, I select some of these findings to highlight this cognitive competency in the doctoral supervision context. In both the supervisor and student segments, I combine research/program-related challenges and nonresearch/program-related challenges under "other challenges."

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. Supervisors spoke earlier about time constraints and how they managed their time to make themselves available and provide their students with timely feedback. They also talked about their methods of solving other issues. For example, Richard highlighted the difference between the terms "you" and "we" that supervisors use when problems occur, which reflects his positive attitude toward approaching problems:

> I'm meeting with these people all the time when I'm talking to them; you get a sense that something's not going well and you say, 'Well, okay, what's the matter? What can we do to fix it?' Right. Which is what *we* can do to fix it. It's not what *you* have to do to fix it.

Lance revealed his secret for not having to deal with big problems throughout his entire career: he simply deals "with them when they're little problems." He shared that "conflicts are, you know, when people are not prepared to deal with differences." He prides himself on never having had to deal with big problems during his career because he always nipped them in the bud. This reflected other supervisors' perspectives and demonstrates their cognitive skills and abilities regarding dealing with problems effectively. Two main themes are presented in this section: time constraint challenges and other challenges.

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Time constraint challenges. Regardless of whether time constraint challenges were related to supervisors or students, supervisors valued time management as a key element in their jobs. For example, Rachel managed her time by making sure she worked with her students across all four years, rather than waiting "till the last two years of a PhD program or the last half of the PhD program to get to know" her students and "actually work with them." Other supervisors managed their workload in a way that allowed them to be available, especially when needed. According to Turner, "I think that, you know, it's kind of sad to limit . . . a student who's doing research for you . . . for your convenience. So, I don't do that."

Henry—who planned his students' milestones with them—reported that "timing on the thesis is one of those issues that's not well understood by the student, and it's just something that's not talked about it." As such, Henry meets with his students and says, "Let's take a calendar and start counting the weeks backwards."

Other supervisors highlighted the importance of planning milestones and timelines ahead with their students by working on "backward timeline plan" (Henry; Samuel; Robert; Dana; Rachel). The "timeline for completion of their program" is an engaging process that includes "the entire supervisory committee" and is documented in the "annual progress reports" (Samuel), and it requires them to "pull out the regulations for the program" (Dana) and work out how long it will take to complete each step. All these examples indicate the supervisors' full awareness of the importance of students' timelines and their abilities to enforce time management skills, which are key for both supervisors and students.

Other challenges. Problems are "both a curse and a blessing in science and scholarship" and are "part of the learning" that sharpens doctoral students' skills (Noel). Research problems are about "figuring out the framing, figuring out the logic, figuring out the research design, [and] thinking of the appropriate math," and they have "no template" to follow, but required collaboration between the two parties (Lawrence). Moreover, supervisors are supposed to be cautious about the confusion that might take place when trying to identify a problem, regardless of whether it is the student's problem or a deficiency in the project:

> Sometimes, . . . there's the potential for supervisors to interpret the problem . . . [as one] with the student, not a problem with [the] project or whatever issue, [but] by exploring the problem with the student, you can start to understand that it's not their problem, it's our fault. It's something you're trying to deal with that's very important. (Thomas)

Supervisors unfolded the important role of the supervisory committee, describing this role as "another pair of eyes and ears looking in on the supervisory arrangement" (Turner). Unlike Turner—who did not run into a problem in a supervisory committee— Rachel invited a professor to a committee for one of her students. When a conflict later occurred with this committee member concerning the writing style (first person vs. third person) the student used in their paper, Rachel and the student decided to accept the committee member's suggestion even though they both were not convinced by it, just so he would not fail the student. Rachel thought that arguing over the writing style with this professor would complicate her student's situation, so she preferred to let it go. She also

revealed that she learned not to invite this professor to be a committee member for other students because she did not want to put them in similar situations.

While Nathan always "believes people act properly," he clarified that this does not mean ill-willed things do not happen and said he witnessed once that some students making the life of their peer difficult by bullying them. But he does not ignore any problem and instead acts to solve it or at least not let it "get any worse" to ensure no students are disadvantaged by social issues.

Although doctoral programs have selected and highly intelligent people who are supposed to work on research problems to discover novel ideas that can help society, these programs are not immune from misunderstanding, egotism, ignorance, competitiveness, and other social problems that need the supervisors' wisdom and intelligence to properly approach and clear from the working environment.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. Similar to the supervisors' section, the findings are presented below under the following two themes: time constraint challenges and other challenges. These challenges were highlighted in the previous sections. In this section, I select some findings to highlight this cognitive competency in the supervision context.

Time constraint challenges. Time is "very precious" for students (Daisy), and it seemed like the number one stressor that made the PhD program a challenging experience. The pressures of "delivering the timelines that come with it . . . are really the underlying stresses of [a] PhD [program], and that environment, of course, can—can get very heated" (Adam). Therefore, students tried to manage their time well. For example, Lamar stated, "Well, time management is always an issue. . . . One way I managed it was I used to go

away all by myself for a week at a time and just worked solidly [with] no family, no work, no nothing." For Randy, having all her milestones "very clearly mapped out" and talking "about them ahead of time" in committee meetings to make sure she graduated on time was a "big part of being a [student]." Her supervisor was "very organized, and there was a very clear path to follow," which was a major component of her successful experience.

Supervisors' time constraints could impact students negatively (Daisy). However, students reported some situations that protected them from this. For example, Chris—who specified that his supervisor was very busy—benefited from how his supervisor usually informed his students about his absences and provided them with a list of times when they "should and should not contact him." He prepared them in advance of his absences so there would be no surprises or confusion.

Additionally, Leslie's supervisor—who is so busy that he "never reads his emails"—had an assistant who mediated the process for her. Many supervisors did not have this luxury, which suggests that the system could help supervisors dedicate more time to their students by providing more assistants.

Other challenges. A few students provided examples of challenges they faced and how they collaborated and worked with their supervisors to solve them. For instance, Nancy realized her project "wasn't going to be feasible" and could not be completed within four years. She had to go back to her supervisor and discuss her concerns. She redesigned her research project, and he supported her decision. Leslie recounted how she sometimes needed to "push back" against her committee members and how her supervisor supported her as long as she was able to justify her viewpoint.

Summary: Cognitive competencies. From the perspectives of both supervisors and students, time constraints were very challenging requiring supervisors' awareness, acknowledgment, and active response to help students hit their milestones. Cognitively competent supervisors take the lead to collaborate with their students, explore different options together, and agree on a mutual solution. Other research/program problems and personal problems (social problems) that occurred during the programs necessitated supervisors' ability and skills to identify them clearly, intervene when required, and allow the students to take part in suggesting solutions (cognitive competency). While research problems were part of the process and could trigger more innovate ideas, social problems that occurred among committee members (possible related to research) or peers were not ignored because they could place unnecessary pressure on students and potentially impact their performance and well-being.

Emotional Competencies

In this section, I present the findings on emotional competencies. Emotionally competent people are those who are able to understand and manage their emotions successfully. Communicating or even sensing these emotional messages in others and responding to them—along with the other ethical and cognitive challenges—is a social skill I present under the social competencies section.

Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. I present two themes here; the first is emotional awareness and management, and the second is resilience and well-being. As leaders, supervisors' emotional awareness and management, as well as their resilience and well-being are very important to them, as well as to other people that count on them, such as their students.

Emotional awareness and management. Supervisors experience emotional states, just like their students do. One noted, "Oh, well, of course, because we're all human, right?" (Reina). Some supervisors had to deal with personal challenges, and some shared that they had emotional challenges related to their students.

Personal challenges. Reina advised that when she was going through something in her personal life, she would "come clean" to her students. Dana echoed Reina's perspective and provided an example of when she broke her leg at work, admitting that she did not like "being the center of the problem." As such, she tried to rest and recover, and she did some work arrangements with her students, to make sure her students would not be impacted.

When Turner experiences personal challenges that worry him, he tries to "compartmentalize them." He explained that while "you might have worries at home," you "cannot let them influence your work." According to Turner, it sometimes "may be better to stay home for a while" to deal with a difficult situation there.

Student-related challenges. Most of the supervisors talked about their emotions—whether excitement or frustration—that were related to their students. When emotions were positive, such as during a student's graduation, there was an opportunity to share these good feelings with students. When emotions were negative, the supervisors were aware of them and managed them in a way that did not make the situation worse. Henry shared how much he worries about his students' successes, and his way of managing these emotions is to remind himself that he still has "things to learn":

> Well, I have my own. Yeah. So, some of the things I worry about with my own
>
> students [are], 'Are they going to make it? Are they going to be successful?' I get

concerned around grants [and] grant season. . . . So, I get concerned about whether

I've made the right choice if the student is going to be successful.

Samuel worries when he feels that he was "too harsh" on his students. His way of

managing his worries is to reflect on what he said and how he said it and then apologize to

the student. Nigel gets overwhelmed when a lot of tasks are coming in at the same time.

His concern is, "Am I going to meet my requirements for the students?" Nigel elaborated:

"I know the student has his or her own timeline. . . . I can't move forward until I do

something. I can't do something until I do something else." He believed that "it's a sense

of duty, a sense of responsibility." When Turner is worried about his students' work, he is

"emotionally invested in the results," even though "things aren't going well" many times.

He reminds himself that "there'll be better days ahead," and he remains optimistic.

As mentioned earlier in the ethical section, Noel and Reina had unfortunate

experiences where their students breached the ethics standards. For Noel, it was his first

PhD student, "and it took me a while to recover from that. . . . That was very hurtful." For

Reina, it was a very difficult situation; she said, "I had many sleepless nights." Eventually,

both Noel and Reina got over these emotional challenges. It took them awhile, but they

learned a great deal about themselves and how to overcome difficult emotional situations.

Regardless of whether the emotional states supervisors verbalized were related to their

personal lives or their students' progress and performance, they were aware that showing

resilience and taking care of their overall health were imperative both to themselves and

others who counted on them such as family, friends, and students.

Resilience and well-being. All doctoral supervisors pronounced how much they

enjoy their jobs and how rewarding they are. One said, "I mean, I really—I really love this

job. It's a fantastic job. It's such an honor to do it and to be able to be a mentor in students' lives. It's—it's fantastic." (Henry) At the same time, it is a demanding job, and it can be emotionally and physically exhausting if supervisors do not embrace their feelings, be mindful of how workloads can get messy, and sense their limits.

Resilience is a key element in tough jobs such as doctoral supervision. This job requires supervisors to be the main players in helping shape the future of novice scholars; Henry defined it as "an honor," but it is also a heavy responsibility. From appreciating their limitations to learning from mistakes and trying again, supervisors learned that resilience is about mindfulness. Robert said, "Just be conscious that work isn't life: work is part of life, but not life." These supervisors learned how to handle stressors and how to be positive, optimists, and full of hope, and they developed different nourishing and coping strategies to remain healthy, happy, and resilient.

Most of them detailed having a social support system (e.g., family, friends, and colleagues) to be a valuable strategy that helped their well-being and resilience. Additionally, they treasured having a self-support system—which includes self-care, mindfulness, and reflection—and said this was the most effective strategy that assisted them.

Supervisors believed their strengths resided within their minds and their effectual habits of taking care of their health and taking control of their thoughts to ensure they remained positive. As such, compartmentalizing work from home life, taking vacations and holidays, and enjoying a spiritual life (praying) were vital. Moreover, staying healthy, maintaining fitness (exercising, running), and spending time with pets were all valuable strategies. Making time for hobbies was important. A supervisor shared that he maintains

his well-being by working on his research data; this is his hobby that makes him happy. Others shared how reading, writing, training, and singing made them happy.

Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. Students faced a lot of emotional challenges, and in many cases, they either knew how to manage them or found them too harsh and were accordingly left helpless and fatigued. While emotional competencies are vital to supervisors as leaders in this context, and managing their emotions is critical to the supervisory relationship, it seemed that being an emotionally competent student is not a condition to having a functional supervisory relationship. Students who were emotionally down learned how to develop resilience. Furthermore, they counted on their emotionally (socially) competent supervisors—the leaders in this context—to understand their emotional struggles and respect them, and I present the findings on this area in the social competencies section. Here, I present the findings under two main themes; the first is emotional challenges, and the second is resilience and well-being.

Emotional challenges. There is no doubt that doctoral programs are rewarding; but they are also demanding to these committed students, who heavily invested in these programs. They can test the students' strengths, limits, and patience. Sara offered a perspective on doctoral programs that reflected the other participants' views:

Grad school really has the ability to grind you down and test your limits of what you can handle, what kinds of stressors you are able to deal with and what kind of person you are. And that extends far beyond what kind of researcher you are or what kind of teacher you are, [to] what kind of person you are.

The findings suggest that two kinds of challenges impacted the students' well-being: program-related challenges and nonprogram-related challenges. Under each theme, different subthemes illuminate the students' difficulties that plagued them.

Program-related challenges. These kinds of challenges emotionally impacted students and included technical/process pressures, timeline pressures, and pressures arising from supervision styles. Students had experienced at least one of these challenges, and some unlucky students encountered them all, which turned their experiences into noxious ones that washed-out their motivations.

Technical/process pressures forced students to deal with different issues related to research and experiment-related activities and techniques, including their struggles and frustrations in the lab, and to scuffles surrounding publication. Other kinds of pressure were related to the process of completing program requirements, such as comprehensive exams. The process also included the students' needs to take breaks and deal with fluctuations in motivation.

Tiffany shared that things were stressful for her, "sometimes there's things going wrong in our lab. It might not be specific to my research." Adam and Nancy spoke about their difficult times and lab-related frustrations when their experiments did not work.

Chris and Randy both spoke about their frustrations when they submitted papers to journals that were rejected. Randy shared how aggravated she felt: "It seemed like nothing was going to be published." She even started to think, "Maybe I should do something else, finish the PhD, but then I should go into something else."

Leslie detailed how, when she was getting ready to take her comprehensive exams, "I started to panic, [to] actually have panic attacks for the first time in my life. So, I went to my doctor, and I went to a therapist."

When Reginald, who experienced average mentorship, decided to work with only a single supervisor, he decided to take a short break "to have a chance of beginning a new thing with any momentum."

Laura and Lamar, who had both experienced below average/toxic mentorship, spoke about how they felt like imposters. Laura shared, "I think in gearing up to write my comps, I felt kind of like an imposter . . . I think at some point everyone feels a bit of that imposter syndrome."

Lamar's resilience helped her deal with her imposter syndrome and her supervisor's negativity: "If you're not strong enough to realize that you can bounce back from this, it could send you into a downward spiral. I knew I could do it. It wasn't an easy process . . . and I did it."

Such technical/process pressures are part of any doctoral program, and the students did not expect these normal features to go away. Nevertheless, they all needed the kind of attentiveness, assurance, and positive attitudes that authentic mentors offer, which will be highlighted in the social competencies section.

Timeline pressures were found to be difficult, but meeting program milestones provided students with confidence and satisfaction and fueled their momentum. None of the participants described the doctoral path as an easy one; they all, even those who enjoyed authentic mentorship, acknowledged the ups and downs of their demanding "roller

coaster" programs. They all felt worried and emotionally strong at different points in their programs.

By contrast, being behind in the program or delayed and not graduating on time are severe sources of pressure that leave students anxious and worried. Daisy, who experienced average mentorship, had "never stopped [education] since high school," and this added a lot of stressors for her. She explained how "managing my emotions . . . has definitely taken a toll," especially because "the doctoral path is very isolating and it's very lonely."

Nicholas and Lamar, spoke about the ups and down in their programs. Nicholas said, "It is definitely a roller coaster. Emotions and anxiety about finishing, there's a lot of that." For Lamar, "It's a roller coaster. It has great highs when you achieve something . . . terrible lows where you think you can't do this anymore." She mentioned that people asked her why it was taking her so long to finish the program. This social pressure became another source of burden for her. No one knew that she lacked constructive feedback and clear direction, which caused her progress to be delayed. Under these circumstances, she felt "anger, self-doubt, [that] you're no good . . . I don't think I felt fear. I felt unsupported."

Ronald, explained how his main conflict with his supervisor—delaying his graduation—made him feel like he was "held hostage," which caused him stress:

Delaying my graduation . . . was putting a lot of stress in my life because of not being able to graduate at the time that I wanted, and I thought I have already completed . . . all the milestones. So why am I being held here? Held hostage?

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Even though students reported that they worked hard to manage their programs, they all shared that meeting deadlines and timeline pressures were challenging, especially when motivation was not that high. Numerous students who reported being behind in their programs or delayed because of lack of guidance and support, felt strained and exasperated.

There were also pressures arising from supervision style. Many students enjoyed an authentic mentorship style, which motivated them and influenced their well-being and performance in a positive way. Unfortunately for others, their supervisors and their styles were a source of stress. Easygoing supervisors who provided little guidance (complete autonomy) and controlling or demanding supervisors left students stressed and fatigued, and some developed depression. Among others, Sara's, Nicholas's, and Stephanie's stories illustrated the harmful consequences of below average/toxic mentorship on students' well-being and performance.

Sara detailed how she was worried about being behind, and how her supervisor was "easygoing" with her, which did not help her very much. She found herself unable to start writing her dissertation, and she developed depression: "I actually went on antidepressants at the end of January."

Being on the wrong track as a result of being completely autonomous and not getting feedback was a tough and embarrassing experience that affected Nicholas's well-being:

> I guess it was more personal—more thoughts of embarrassment, and like I wasn't doing good work. I went down the wrong path, and it was a waste of time, and I

could have been further [along], and I'm not progressing like I should. So, I guess it gave me a lot of uneasiness about my ability to perform in the program.

Stephanie, who also developed stress and depression and reached the point where she broke down in front of her "demanding" supervisor, stated how "ambiguity" was "a big frustration" that caused her "a lot of stress." One source of her struggles was that her supervisor "did not believe in giving positive feedback." She elaborated on both her frustration and her resilience: "I considered leaving the program because I was getting depressed and very frustrated. Did I ever *seriously* consider it? No, I'm not a quitter. I was going to finish no matter what." Stephanie's determination helped her complete the program, but unfortunately her well-being suffered heavily.

Out of the three kinds of program-related challenges that the data disclosed (technical/process pressures, timeline pressures, and pressures arising from supervision style), it is obvious how the pressures associated with the supervisor's style are very problematic issues to confront. Although these pressures are all tiring, the fact that students do not have and will never have control over their supervisors' styles suggests that this pressure is a serious one that leaves students not only helpless, but also hopeless that things could get better, which is a real issue for well-being.

Non-program-related challenges. These challenges include the students' lives outside campus, their personal circumstances. The participants shared two kinds of personal occurrences: exciting personal circumstances, and difficult personal circumstances.

Exciting personal circumstances, which are related to the dilemma of enjoying life with all its delightful events while studying in a demanding program is not always easy for

students. These events, although cheerful, can be overwhelming. Nelly underlined what other students reported "even though we're in the lab every day . . . life is still happening, [so] it's hard to leave the personal life at home sometimes." Nancy, Nelly, and Michael experienced positive personal events that left them dealing with strong emotions.

Nancy got married during the first year of her PhD program, while Nelly got married near the end of her degree. They both needed to make program arrangements to take time off for their new lives to fully enjoy the excitements of starting new families without worrying about their PhD programs. For Michael, becoming a father brought a lot of enjoyment to his life, but also caused blurriness about getting his PhD. He considered quitting the program to fully enjoy fatherhood, even though his child was born not long before his defense.

Difficult personal circumstances ranged from minor events (having a cold, not getting enough sleep) that required students to stay home to recover or rest, to more devastating events that did not have quick resolutions. These major events included financial struggles, losing loved ones, and other events that shocked students while they were busy in their doctoral programs.

Sara and Stephanie had financial strains during their programs. As Sara was approaching her fifth year with no funds left, little progress, and most importantly, little guidance and interest from her supervisor, she felt like she was stuck. Stephanie's husband "got laid off," so she had to take a job to support her family, and it was a tough time for her, and for her family.

Both Nora and Heather, like Michael, considered quitting their programs, though for different personal reasons. They both experienced depressing challenges when their

mothers passed away during the programs. Heather shared how having her mother pass away and defending her dissertation, in addition to several financial issues, challenged her and her family. Natasha was also confronted with a similar devastating challenge, "right before I was starting my PhD and my father passed away." She added, "So I reached out to [the] health and wellness center. I met with a psychologist."

Resilience and well-being. Doctoral students shared their satisfaction and frustration they lived throughout their programs. Their different feelings, emotions, and moods represented states of excitement, happiness, motivation, encouragement, enthusiasm, eagerness, self-confidence, determination, attentiveness, empowerment, joyous, enjoyment, trust, gratefulness, courage, fortune, relaxation, assurance, hope, optimism, comfort, belief, relief, pride, and much more. In contrast, they also experienced doubt, insecurity, worry, demotivation, embarrassment, exhaustion, hardship, fear, upset, annoyance, pain, panic, nervousness, helplessness, humiliation, anger, distress, mournfulness, mistrust, disbelief, anxiety, uncertainty, the blues, desperation, hesitation, uneasiness, depression, disappointment, and discouragement, to name a few.

Each student encountered both positive and negative feelings at different points in their programs, including those who enjoyed positive supervision experiences. For those who graduated, it was unmistakable that their dedication, determination, and resilience assisted them and allowed some who faced barriers to escape the bottleneck. Some who were either still in the program or had already graduated found helplessness, anxiety, and depression in their efforts to overcome their obstacles, which left them fatigued and impacted their well-being.

Students who had already graduated as well as those who were still in the program shared similar coping strategies that helped them improve their resilience and sustain their well-being. They valued the importance of being socially engaged and active, especially because doctoral programs were found to be isolating—sometimes physically, sometimes psychologically, and sometimes both. Therefore, most students reported different social strategies for coping and motivation, such as hanging out and talking to family and friends. Talking to fellow students, being engaged in graduate student support groups (e.g., writing groups), and having extracurricular lives on campus also helped.

Students reported that they believed self-care and reflection were the most helpful strategies for working on their program requirements while sustaining their well-being. However, a few students highlighted how believing in something and acting on those beliefs are different. They admitted that in different circumstances and under piles of finished and unfinished work, they lost the sense of meaning in what they were doing.

Students internalized, reflected on, and implemented self-care strategies in their day to day lives. Maintaining a work–life balance was ideal for most of them that was difficult to achieve, but they were able to arrange for short breaks from working, or even having little joyous moments (coffee breaks, cooking). Dedicating sometime to enjoy hobbies (e.g., music, art, camping, cooking, or playing ultimate Frisbee) and spending time with pets assisted them. Staying healthy spiritually (e.g., yoga), mentally (e.g., positive self-talk), emotionally (e.g., self-motivation), and physically (e.g., eating well, getting enough sleep, walking, running, exercising, or playing sports such as rowing and hockey) were all coping strategies that students implemented or tried to apply.

Summary: Emotional competencies. Regardless of whether the emotional states supervisors reported were related to their personal lives or their students' progress and performance, they were aware that managing these negative emotions was part of their roles as leaders. They learned over the years that resilience and taking care of their overall health were very important to them as well as to others who counted on them such as family, friends, and students.

Regarding students, it was evident that their programs generated a lot of burdens that impacted their emotional states. Their personal lives also needed attention, and this forced them to learn how to juggle their outside lives and their program responsibilities, which often left them tired and exhausted. In spite of these emotional challenges, students exhibited awareness of resilience, which helped many of them keep going. It was unfortunate that some had suffered and had their well-being impacted in their programs.

Social Competencies

In all the previous sections, the findings included aspects that were related to sending and receiving messages (communicating) between the supervisor and student, which characterizes social competencies. Feedback/advice was the most significant part of communication that indicated the level of AAPP. It influenced trust, efficacy, and mentorship and was mentioned as one of the supervisor's main roles in the ethical competencies section. Another area that triggers communication between the two parties is the students' concerns, whether program related or not. Communication was also highlighted in the cognitive competencies section as a critical element for solving problems. As usual, I start by presenting the findings from the supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives, followed by the students' lived experiences and perspectives.

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Supervisors' lived experiences and perspectives. Throughout the dissertation, I showed how supervisors have a lot of communication with their students throughout their programs. This was emphasized as "one of the key pillars of having a good relationship" (Henry). They communicate feedback and advice related to coursework, experiments, thesis writing, the PhD oral exam, and so on. Quite often, students face personal circumstances that require them to put their studies aside temporarily, which means they need to inform their supervisors about them.

Conversations with supervisors are often exciting, such as when students are getting ready to graduate, but other times they are charged with emotion, such as when an experiment does not work. Communication was highlighted throughout this dissertation as the main feature of this relational context. Here, I present selected examples of how supervisors communicate feedback/advice to their students.

Communicating feedback/advice. Timelines are very critical for students' progressions, and communicating these timelines is imperative, especially because supervisors have other responsibilities to handle. Supervisors made it clear that their students needed to keep them aware of their timelines for when they needed feedback on written pieces (e.g., a transcript for a journal) so they could proceed accordingly (e.g., Samuel). Supervisors respected their students' timelines. For example, Dana called herself "an email master" because she was very quick at sending feedback. She had what she called "real feedback," which means detailed feedback; she said she went "through every word and . . . [wrote] comments or suggestions or tracked changes." She made her students aware that detailed feedback is "not negative critique," and she softened her feedback by writing them "a little letter at the top." Robert also shared how he "turns things around as

quickly" as he could because the "document that they've written is still in recent memory." And his perspective indicated how feedback is a two-way process: "We have a discussion and—and if they can convince me otherwise then that's fine, and it's their work."

If students have anxiety/depression as a result of their supervisors' lack/negative feedback—which was the case with Stephanie and Lamar, who already graduated, and Ronald and Nicolas, who were still working hard to make it—supervisor Richard's advice was to switch supervisors: "I think [the student] should desperately get a different supervisor because I don't think his supervisor is much good at all." I previously highlighted the students' perspectives on the challenges of switching supervisors, which suggests that being helpless and unable to change supervisors is another source of pressure that impacts their well-being.

Supervisors believed that feedback is a two-way process; Robert said, "It's part of the dynamic of that student–supervisor relationship, and if it's just one way, then that's no good." Additionally, their beliefs that feedback "is never one way", because it is always their "suggestions", not their "requirements" (Lance) allowed their students to be critical of their own work and enjoy a participatory learning environment.

Communicating concerns. These concerns could be program related or not, such as concerns "related to life" (Dana). Supervisors suggested that every PhD student they ever worked with "through a long program of four plus years" (Noel) had ups and downs. They understood it was part of their job to "recognize what's happening and when it's happening" (Lance). For some, the conversation involves "constant checking in" to ensure no negative feelings are buried because students are only human; otherwise, the situation

"would just explode later on" (Henry). Others had no problem with their students texting them if something came up in their projects (Samuel).

When problems are "very emotionally charged," making sure "not to be cold" and to allow students to "see beyond the emotion" or uncover what their emotions are clouding is important (Henry). Supervisors emphasized integrity and respect when talking to students; for example, raising their voices "doesn't achieve anything" positive and could impact the mutual respect (Lance). They rather "act as an ear" (Lawrence) so they "can feel their pain" and consequently "help them" in their struggles (Dana). They try to be reasonable and "to respond as thoroughly as possible" (Nigel). It helps supervisors when their students are "patient" because sometimes the feedback students need is a group work which involves the committee members as well (Nigel), and recognizing that supervisors need time to do things is helpful. Occasionally, supervisors do not have an answer for their students, so they seek "those who can help" (Randal).

Excitement and positive emotions and moods are major feelings that supervisors communicate to their students. They make sure "to be excited about their research as much as [their] own research" (Thomas) to motivate their students. Additionally, as Rachel proposed, it is important not to "expect [students] to be enthusiastic and bubbly and cheerful all the time." However, she does expect that her students to be "committed to their projects." If they were having a day "when they [couldn't] even be excited about their own project," then she would encourage them to take the time to "get distance from it." These supervisors keep their positive language and attitude going until their students graduate, and they "congratulate them" when they do (Thomas). Supervisors noted that students

cannot always be enthusiastic—therefore they lead by example and find a way to maintain this attitude even when students cannot.

Communicating positive and optimistic words that generate hope and energy can "encourage [students] to move forward" (Henry). For example, regardless of the student's issue, such as being "depressed at the time of writing the thesis" (Turner), open dialogue that starts with "let's talk about it" (Henry) and is filled with genuine support and encouragement (Turner; Henry), in addition to assurance and motivation (e.g., "Once you have a good thesis, the PhD at defense is basically a foregone conclusion" (Nathan)), and followed by a clear plan (Dana) can solve these problems.

A few supervisors reported situations where their students experienced personal challenges, and they offered support to get through them. For example, Reina shared how a student communicated some personal problems to her, when her husband left her, and she helped her as much as she could. While supervisors are not supposed to be psychologists or counselors—Reina noted, "I have never taken a psychology course, and . . . I don't have the ability to counsel"—she explained that she was able to support and accommodate her student until she overcame the challenge.

Well-being and resilience were found to be key elements for students that supervisors communicated to them. For example, Henry encouraged his students to "look after themselves and their mental well-being." If a student failed a task, he encouraged them to learn from that and move on by saying, "Keep going because you know you can do this. We can do this." He discussed taking time off with his students every year because of his awareness that based on research, those who are "mentally acute" are "more productive," happier, and help generate a "happy environment" for everyone.

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Doctoral students' lived experiences and perspectives. Here, I present more in-depth findings on how *communicating feedback/advice* took place in the supervision context, based on the students' lived experiences and perspectives. I also explore how students *communicated concerns* with their supervisors, whether program related or not.

Communicating feedback/advice. Many students mentioned that their supervisors had quick feedback turnarounds, ranging from a day to a couple of weeks. For example, Stephanie explained that when she submitted a written piece, her supervisor was committed to a two-week turnaround per their "written agreement" that was initiated by the graduate school required them both to observe this deadline. Several students highlighted that what matters to them most is that the turnaround time be communicated to them, rather than leaving them "wondering" whether one exists (Nora).

Randy portrayed her supervisor's feedback as "always very constructive. Some criticism, of course, some—some ideas for improvement, but always very supportive and never negative in any way." On the other hand, Stephanie explained her problem with her supervisor's negative feedback: "He doesn't care about my feelings when he talks, and so that was not as positive. . . . [He communicates] an exceptionally threatening message . . . [which is] very direct." Among others*,* Nelly explained why she believed feedback is a two-way street in the supervision context: "I must also be allowed to either agree or disagree with some of the feedback that I'm given and to state why, . . . so that I can learn."

Chris explained how he was comfortable enough to stick to what he thought was right when he discussed his research with his supervisor: "In a lot of cases, I would use a specific word in a specific place because I wanted that word, and he would . . . changed it,

and I would change it back." By the end, his supervisor "grew to appreciate and laugh at the fact that I was particular in my—my word choices."

Communicating concerns. In this section, I mainly build on the findings in the emotional competencies section to explain how sending and receiving information and emotional stimuli in difficult times took place within my participants' experiences. These events are divided into communicating program-related concerns and communicating nonprogram related concerns.

Communicating program-related concerns. Sara, Adam, Nancy, Chris, Randy, Leslie, Tiffany, Daisy, Reginald, Stephanie, Nicolas, Lamar, Ronald, and Laura all spoke in the emotional competencies section about challenges they faced that were related to their programs. Here, I present the findings regarding how students communicated those challenges to their supervisors.

Sara explained earlier how she was worried about being behind, and she "went on antidepressants." She shared how she had several conversations with her supervisor, but having an "easygoing" supervisor who did not check in (almost absent) did not help her progress; she said, "I need someone to just say, 'Hey, . . . get your stuff together, you have to do this, no more wasting time, no more procrastinating.'" She needed her supervisor to "guide the process, set clear deadlines, and check in" with her. She just could not start writing her dissertation, and she developed depression as a result.

Adam and Nancy spoke earlier about their nervousness in the lab when they had trouble with their experiments. Adam explained that the conversation with his supervisor was positive because his supervisor understood that they were "doing chemistry that [has]

not been done before." Nancy explained that her supervisor noticed her struggles, and she "burst into tears" in front of him. She shared how he supported her:

> He was actually really good and helping with those emotions and just telling me that I don't have to do everything myself, and that we do have a team so that other people can be managing that kind of stuff [that I struggled with].

> Chris and Randy—who both pointed out their anxiety when they submitted papers to journals and got rejected—described the kind of communication that took place with their supervisors. Chris explained, "I guess . . . I don't think I ever explicitly said I was frustrated. I think body language wise, . . . I would've appeared frustrated." His supervisor was able to read the signals and respond accordingly. Chris explained how he was frustrated, but his supervisor responded, "'This is a good review.' I think those would probably be the first words that came out, and then we [went] through [it]." He added how he and his supervisor went over the paper, and he received "coaching through the process."

> Randy shared how frustrated she felt and how having an open and effective communication with her supervisor helped her:

> [He] was still very supportive. . . . He would always be very positive. . . . He was never demanding [and] never [said], 'You must be in the lab until 10:00 p.m. every day and on weekends.' So, the balance was quite good, and I never felt overwhelmed. So that certainly made things easier to manage.

She emphasized how "those papers were eventually published, and things worked out, and, here I am today," and she gave credit to her supervisor.

> Leslie shared earlier that she was getting ready to do her comprehensive exams when she got "panic attacks" and had to see a doctor and a therapist. The therapist

encouraged her to talk to her supervisor about it. She did, and her supervisor was "just very supportive and reassuring that it is going to be fine" and told her, "You can do this." Tiffany, who shared things that stressed her out in the lab noted how her supervisor was "really understanding" and always there communicating a positive attitude to solve problems. Daisy explained earlier that she had many stressors. She is an introvert and appreciated how her supervisor helped her navigate the system when she started the program. However, she reported that she needed more time and attention from her supervisor to encourage her to communicate her concerns and receive guidance through the candidacy process.

Reginald wanted to take a short break after he decided to work with one supervisor only. He was confident he needed this break. However, his supervisor did not sense his needs and even did not encourage him to take a break. Reginald took the break anyway and traveled because he thought it would be better for his well-being. He is in academia now and appreciates how students should be encouraged to take breaks.

Stephanie, who developed depression and suffered from ambiguity; Ronald, who had a supervisor delaying his graduation; and Laura, who spoke earlier about how she felt like an imposter gearing up to write her comps—all had poor communications with their supervisors. Nicolas and Lamar—who both referred earlier about their programs as "a roller-coaster"—did not have a conversation with their supervisors about their challenges and their supervisors never noticed their struggles. Nicolas said, "I don't think [my supervisor] noticed." Lamar added, "I don't think I ever talked to [my supervisor] about [my emotional struggles]." It seems that Nicolas is an introvert, and that—coupled with a socially incompetent supervisor—is a real challenge. Lamar shared earlier how she

explained her needs for some guidance from her supervisor, but her supervisor failed to respond to them, which might suggest social incompetency as well.

Communicating nonprogram-related concerns. Many students talked earlier (in the emotional competencies section) about personal circumstances that left them dealing with strong emotions. Recall Nancy and Nelly, who got married during their programs and needed to make program arrangements to take time off for their new lives, and they both found their supervisors supportive. Nelly saw her supervisor as "great" and "wonderful. . . . She was like that second parent." Their supervisors' understanding allowed them to fully enjoy the excitement of starting new families without worrying about their PhD program.

For Michael, who was happy about becoming a father but decided to quit the program to give more time to his child, started "filling out the forms to drop out of the program" without telling his supervisor, because he knew that she would not be happy about it. He stopped the quitting process when he realized that he needed "the signature of the chair, and that year she was serving as the department chair," so he "couldn't drop out." He realized that his excitement had prevented him from making good decisions. Knowing that his supervisor had invested in him and wanted him to graduate was a major turning point in his life; he summarized it: "I got lucky."

As mentioned earlier, Nora and Heather also considered quitting the program when their mothers passed away. The conversation and open dialogue they had with their supervisors made them stay and complete the programs successfully. Nora explained that her supervisor had effective communication with her during this time: "Yeah, [she was] just 100 percent supportive, and although she may not have had, you know, the exact answer at the time, she was willing to do anything to support me through that difficult

time." Her supervisor's support played a dynamic role in her staying in the program and graduating. Heather emphasized how her supervisor assisted her during these times and encouraged her not to quit by "supporting, trying to find pathways for me and encouraging me to continue on . . . very empathetic and very understanding and very considerate."

Natasha shared earlier how having her father pass away at the beginning of her program was difficult for her. She reported that her supervisor did not know about it because, as she said, "I'll be honest in that I rarely see my supervisor . . . I think it's okay because I understand whom else I can reach out to." She added, "So I reached out to [the] health and wellness center. I met with a psychologist." Natasha's supervisor, who was mostly absent, was different from Nora's and Heather's supervisors. Although Natasha faced her devastating situation with resilience, it would have made her feel better if her supervisor had known about it and perhaps, at least, sent her a letter of condolence to make her feel supported.

Both Sara and Stephanie had financial difficulties that doubled their challenges. While Sara did not know what to do or how to communicate her struggles to her supervisor, preferred to keep her situation to herself and did not have the courage to take the first step to attract her supervisor's attention, Stephanie reported how she expressed herself clearly to her advisor, but he did not understand her struggle. When her husband "got laid off," and she had to take a job to support her family, she noted that her supervisor was "not super sympathetic." He discouraged her from getting a job, and even tried to force her to publish articles instead. Regardless of her *apathetic* supervisor's council, Stephanie got the job and managed to graduate in a timely manner. Sara's and Stephanie's

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situations offer evidence that being expressive or inexpressive could lead to the same results if supervisors were socially incompetent.

All students who had supervisors with the abilities and skills to communicate all kinds of messages effectively were satisfied and progressing in their programs. But students who had supervisors who were absent, disengaged, or present but failed to properly read or sense the different messages from their students (e.g., who were socially incompetent) had to suffer, and their performance and well-being were impacted negatively.

Summary: Social competencies. From both supervisors' and students' perspectives, it is apparent that socially competent supervisors who can communicate feedback/advice and ethical, cognitive, and emotional messages clearly can make a difference in their students' learning journeys, regardless of whether their students are socially competent themselves.

Social competencies are demonstrated through active interaction when supervisors are present (physically or virtually as well as psychologically). Based on the findings in this research, social competencies in the doctoral supervision context do not necessarily mean that the supervisor is expected to be outgoing, or extroverted; they simply mean that the supervisor is psychologically present (AAPP) and has the ability to send and receive information and emotional stimuli as intended by the students. In addition to AAPP, all the previously presented sections—trust, efficacy, mentorship, ethical competencies, cognitive competencies, and emotional competencies—require social competencies to activate them. The inner dialogue that takes place when a supervisor receives information or emotional stimuli from a student, or when the supervisor sends information or emotional stimuli to a

student, requires them to be able to communicate their thoughts clearly and follow up to clarify any misunderstandings that could occur.

Supervisors used different tools to communicate with their students, but whether their conversations were in person or virtual was largely unimportant. What really matters is that the message is received as intended. Honest back and forth dialogue between the two parties gives meaning to the conversation. This kind of effective dialogue suggests that supervisors are socially competent, regardless of whether they are extroverted or introverted.

Socially competent supervisors are present enough to know their students well. They know how much critique their students can handle at one time. Their feedback is constructive, clear, and impersonal. They know how to frame their feedback and comments in a way that their students will accept and welcome. They do not make their students feel bad, and they do not look down on them. Whether they communicate feedback, advice, timelines, or any kind of concern (program related or personal), they are respectful, value their students' integrity, and demonstrate a high level of empathy.

Conversely, socially incompetent supervisors cannot create a positive dialogue with their students or are mostly absent and do not allow social interaction to take place so they can get to know them. They do not know how much critique their students can take because of this ignorance. Their feedback—if they send any—is vague, unhelpful, and filled with demotivating messages (e.g., mean, threatening, negative)

As shown in the following figure, the participants' data throughout this dissertation revealed four types of social competence scenarios that took place in the doctoral supervision context.

	Introvert/Silent	Extrovert/ Speaks up
High/Present	Hard work for the supervisor. But the supervisor can still make it a positive dialogue	Positive dialogue
Low/Absent	No dialogue or disastrous dialogue	Hard work for the student

Supervisor' Social Competencies

Introvert/Silent   **Extrovert/ Speaks up**

Student as Extrovert/ Introvert

Figure 2. The Supervisor–Doctoral Student Social Competencies Model

The first social scenario is when the supervisor is socially competent (present, and brings positive energy to the supervisory relationship), and the student is expressive or extroverted. In this case, the dialogue is positive, like Heather's was.

The second social scenario is with the same socially competent supervisor but a student who does not express themselves for any reason—possibly because they are introverted. In this case, the supervisor, who knows their students well and is present, can still make the dialogue positive. One example of this scenario is Chris, who did not need to tell his supervisor he was frustrated about having his paper submitted to the journal rejected. Instead, his supervisor noticed his disturbance and provided him with assurance and a step by step procedure so he could benefit from the reviewers' comments. Chris was comfortable enough to disagree with his supervisor (as mentioned in the communicating feedback/advice section), and this implies that students can act differently in different

situations, sometimes they speak up, and sometimes they do not, which means socially competent supervisors can detect this issue and deal with it.

The third social scenario is when the supervisor is socially incompetent (hurting others' feelings or absent), and the student is an extrovert such as Stephanie, who had a toxic and bullying supervisor and needed to figure out how to deal with her challenging situation. Here, the dialogue is in the hands of the student, which leaves them feeling exhausted—especially if they need feedback to move forward and they have timelines to meet.

The last social scenario is when the supervisor is socially incompetent (easygoing, does not read the signals or absent), and the student is silent—possibly because they are introverted or does not have enough energy to express their frustration. In this case, the dialogue is lost, and the student's situation is unfortunate—like Sara, who was left confused, disappointed, and even delayed in her program.

These findings suggest that the three types of core competencies—ethical, cognitive, and emotional—cannot be demonstrated if the supervisor is socially incompetent. A socially incompetent supervisor is mostly absent (physically/virtually or psychologically), present and engaged but toxic, or unable to read the messages from the student or send and receive positive messages. A socially competent supervisor is emotionally competent, present in good times and bad with a positive attitude, engaged, able to send and receive messages as intended, and able to create a positive dialogue.

Relational Leadership in the Doctoral Supervision Context

Responding to the Main Research Question

Putting together all the findings that respond to research subquestion one, which related to the influential factors in the supervision context, as well as research subquestion two, which sought to explore the leadership core competencies in the doctoral supervision context, permits a response to the main research question: What is the nature of relational leadership that exists in the doctoral supervisor–student context? The findings suggested that relational leadership is a positive approach that can be seen a spectrum that ranges from highly relational/positive leaders on one end to nonrelational/toxic leaders on the other, as explained in the following model, which I called the relational/positive leadership model (RPL).
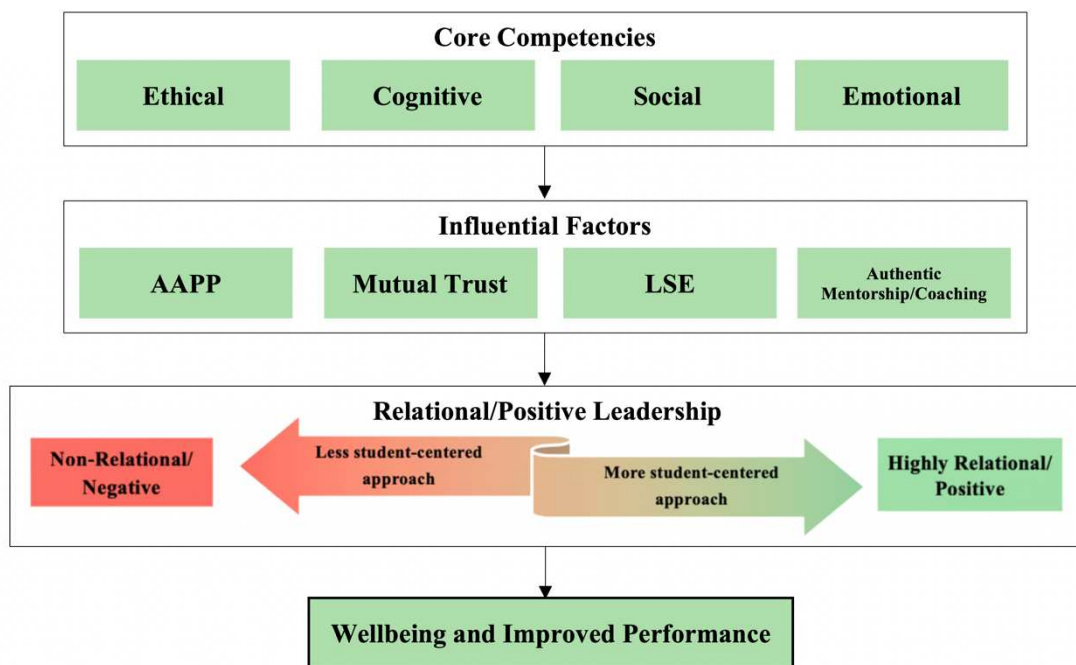
Figure 3. The Relational/Positive Leadership (RPL) Model.

The spectrum proposes that the more student-centered the supervisors are, the more the approach they demonstrate is relational/positive, and the happier and more satisfied the

students are. The opposite is also true: the less student centered the supervisors are, the less the approach they demonstrate is relational/positive approach, and the less happy or satisfied the students are. This suggests that applying a relational/positive leadership style in the doctoral supervision context can help enhance students' well-being and performance.

The relational/positive area—which is closer to the highly relational/positive side—is the optimistic side of the spectrum, where supervisors are optimists but realistic enough to know that a doctoral program is complex and demanding and this program needs their knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. This area has relational/positive supervisors who are people-oriented and present, and who exhibit selfless behaviors. They create a positive experience for their students; this experience still might have some negative aspects (as is normal in any social relationship), but they are few and manageable—in other words, the positives outweigh the negatives. This means that relational/positive leadership (the nature of relational leadership) is an area that is closer to the highly relational/ positive side of the spectrum. Students do not need their supervisors to be at the extreme end of the highly relational/ positive. Being somewhere in that area is reasonable and satisfies students' needs to achieve their objectives while maintaining their well-being; especially since supervisors are not flawless or "angels"; they are human beings with limits and weaknesses.

In contrast, nonrelational supervisors are less people-oriented; they value their self-interest over their students' interests, or they are absent. They create a negative or even toxic experience for their students, though it still might have some positive aspects. These positive elements are few and might add no real value, so the negatives outweigh the positives on this side of spectrum.

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The findings seem to point out that the supervisor's AAPP is the main ingredient for positive social interaction with students, and the degree to which it is present in relationships either helps or hinders relational/positive leadership in this context. AAPP are three elements that go hand in hand. When supervisors are accessible to their students—physically or virtually—approachable, and psychologically present when they interact with them, they create a positive culture that is based on reciprocal trust.

Trust is largely influenced by both individuals demonstrating their commitments to roles, responsibility, and accountability. When students believe their supervisors have their best interests at heart, and when supervisors demonstrate their interest in their students' work and growth, the rest takes care of itself. These relational/positive supervisors work on their LSE in terms of their roles as doctoral supervisors, and they enhance or build on their students' sense of SE and RSE.

Relational/positive leaders or supervisors provide their students with authentic mentorship opportunities that are engaging and uplifting. Doctoral students who had authentic mentorship experiences were more likely to be motivated and satisfied and to look up to their supervisors as role models. On the other hand, doctoral students who experienced below average/toxic mentorship were more likely to be stressed and depressed. A few students had average mentorship experiences in which they enjoyed some guidance and support but hoped for more. It is evident that some students can complete their doctoral programs successfully and graduate even in the face of toxic mentorship. However, the negative impact of toxic supervisors on student well-being can do real harm from which the student will recover only with time and effort. Permitting the process of developing relational/positive leadership requires both the supervisor and the

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student to exhibit their ethical competencies. These ethical competencies can allow or prevent the existence of the other three types of competencies—cognitive, emotional, and social—and the four influential factors, which are AAPP, trust, efficacy, and mentorship.

The dominant ethical competency both individuals need to display is their commitments to roles, responsibility, and accountability, which is also the primary condition to building a trustworthy supervisory relationship. Supervisors get paid to do their jobs and provide guidance, support, and constructive and timely feedback to their doctoral students, to enable them to defend their dissertations and graduate. In terms of doctoral students, securing a spot in such a competitive program (doctoral programs) means that other applicants—who were also good candidates—lost this opportunity. This means that doctoral students are expected to respect this opportunity and be committed to their roles. Moreover, most doctoral students in Canada are funded by the government and taxpayers, who have a right to benefit from the new knowledge, findings, and emerging scholars that higher education produces. All these facts imply that students' and supervisors' commitment to their roles, responsibility, and accountability is a serious ethical obligation.

Additionally, behaving ethically when conducting research (e.g., presenting accurate data in experiments in the labs, even when they're negative) and in all other aspects of the supervision relationship (e.g., nonmaleficence) feeds the four influential factors as well as the other competencies, and it can help make the relationship work. Relational/positive supervisors also demonstrate their cognitive (solving problems collectively) and emotional (understanding and managing of emotions) competencies. When they are present and allow social interactions to take place, and when they are able

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to send and receive information and emotional stimuli as intended (which suggests they are socially competent), positive dialogue naturally emerges. This positive dialogue leads to positive change, which is the essence of relational leadership, and it facilitates the process of developing empathy. As a result, support, guidance, and constructive and timely feedback (which is an ethical obligation) pave the path for students to freely express themselves, excel in their programs, and achieve their goals.

The doctoral supervision relationship needs both the supervisor and student to be involved and contribute, and they both have roles to play. However, the fact that the doctoral supervision context is a "power scene" that has a heavily invested party—the student—suggests that the supervisor has a bigger responsibility to make it a positive experience. Relational/positive supervisors are people oriented, and they apply a student-centered approach. Making their students' growth and success a priority indicates one of the core characteristics of the servant leadership style, which is the core element of the relational/positive leadership style in the doctoral supervision context.

Accordingly, relational/positive leadership (RPL) in doctoral supervision is an ethical and student-centered approach that can create positive change. The supervisor's AAPP is at its heart, which allows mutual trust, efficacy, and authentic mentorship/coaching to develop. Relational/positive leaders or supervisors are cognitively, emotionally, and socially competent, and they constantly demonstrate that they have their students' best interests at heart.

Chapter 5

Discussions and Conclusion

Doctoral programs, which are usually the final stage of the formal academic study path, offer an exciting journey for students who join them. These students enter their programs with a mission to complete them and create a positive change personally and/or professionally. As such, they invest in these programs and put themselves out to juggle between their studies and life outside campus.

Canada offers more than 1300 doctoral programs at 49 universities in its ten provinces: Ontario, British Colombia, Alberta, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. In the five years between 2011 and 2015, full-time enrolments increased by 3,066— a 6% increase—and 7,407 doctoral degrees were granted in 2015, compared to 3,125 in 1992 (Locker, 2018).

There are fifteen universities that are research-intensive, called U15. According to the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities (http://u15.ca/about-us), the U15 universities conduct about $8.5 B worth of research annually and hold 81% of Canadian university patents. Most of these programs are competitive and funded by the government and other funding agencies, such as SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR. The expected time to finish the program is four years, and submitting a dissertation is the final stage of most of these full-time programs.

Doctoral supervisors who help facilitate the process for students to achieve their mission are a core feature of doctoral programs in Canada and elsewhere. This role is mainly relational because it requires both parties to communicate and work together toward completion. The program is cognitively and emotionally demanding for students who have no defined breaks, time for reflection, or even the luxury of slowing down. The dilemma is that doctoral supervision is a demanding job for supervisors as well, who have a lot of other responsibilities that leave some overwhelmed or working hard to fulfill their roles.

This tough environment leaves both parties under pressure to master the game of juggling to make it work and reach the completion stage. In this short-term work relationship—from four to six years—doctoral students may find themselves less motivated or burned-out, which indicates the positive roles supervisors can play in their students' experiences.

Whether doctoral students joined the program to make a difference, as Salmon (1992) identified in her research examining 10 students' experiences, or to obtain the "three magic letters" (PhD) as Nettles and Millett (2006) highlighted, it is not arguable students desire to receive a supportive supervision approach. It is evident in this research that some students can complete their doctoral programs successfully and graduate regardless of whether they have supportive or unsupportive supervisors, which confirms earlier findings (McAlpine, Paulson, Gonsalves, & Jazvac-Martek, 2012). However, toxic supervisors can negatively impact student's well-being causing real harm, which can only be recovered from with time and considerable efforts by the student.

The purpose of this research was to explore the nature of relational leadership and the leadership competencies that influence the doctoral supervisor–student relationship within the Canadian university context. In this chapter, I discuss the findings from chapter four across the two segments: supervisors and doctoral students. I start by discussing the findings of the four influential factors—AAPP, trust, efficacy, and mentorship—which responds to research subquestion one. I then discuss the findings of the four core competencies—ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social—to respond to research subquestion two. Putting all the findings in chapter four together allowed me to develop a Relational/Positive Leadership (RPL) model at the end of chapter four, and by explaining it, I responded to the main research question. Here, I aim to situate my RPL model within the current literature.

The Four Influential Factors: Responding to Research Subquestion One

In this section, I present my discussion on the effects of AAPP, trust, efficacy, and mentorship to respond to research subquestion one: What are the perceived influential factors that contribute to the doctoral supervisory relationship?

AAPP

This dissertation showed how doctoral supervisors must deal with tremendous demands and limits. Time constraints tangled with competing demands such as teaching, publishing, and attending conferences as well as pressing deadlines, student assignments, papers, and emails that in many cases come in at the same time make it tempting for supervisors to pause and ask a valid question: "Am I going to meet my requirements for the students?" (supervisor Nigel).

The accessibility of supervisors' time is a real challenge, but what doubles this challenge in this context is, as Nigel explained, that "students can't move forward until I do something. I can't do something until I do something else." The cruel reality of doctoral programs is this dependence piece, which causes a lot of tension around students' timelines—especially for significant milestones such as the candidacy exam or final defense. Scholar David Crockett, who conducted a study on students' expectations in 1978, found that accessibility to supervisors was a major issue (Crockett, 1978). Revealing in my research that accessibility to supervisors is still an issue after almost four decades should ring a bell about this ongoing challenge, which disadvantages doctoral students greatly. Several studies emphasized how supervisors have to be available to assist their students (e.g., Brabazon, 2013), and Platow (2012) reported that doctoral students who received support from their supervisors took "fewer months . . .to complete their PhD study" (p. 112).

Being an accessible supervisor does not only mean that the supervisor is available physically or virtually but also psychologically, which was found to be a crucial element for students to progress in their programs. When supervisors are psychologically absent, they can drain their students' precious time and energy and impact their performance negatively. Similarly, McAlpine et al. (2012) raised the same issue of what they called an "intellectually absent" supervisor who does not provide helpful or timely guidance (p. 516). They found that students seek help from "informal supervisors" (p. 517), which was also evident in my findings.

These students, who had absentee supervisors, had to rely mostly on other professors to guide them through, which confirms what Parker-Jenkins (2018) reported.

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The scholar, who reflected on her experience in three countries (Canada, the United Kingdom, and Ireland) in which she supervised over 20 doctorates to completion, reported that she has found herself "acting as informal supervisor to a number of colleagues who were being given poor supervision in the Faculty but who hesitated to challenge this adequacy" (p. 62). Although having an *informal supervisor* implies the absence of the actual supervisor and a lack of commitment on their part, I argue that there might be potential in recognizing *informal supervisors* in the formal supervision arrangement because they emerge to support students. There might be challenges arising from this arrangement, but if *informal supervisors* are a norm within doctoral programs, then this trend needs some investigation.

Effective supervisors are engaged, interested in their students' success, and as enthusiastic about their students' research as their own. They tend to be mentally present when they meet with their students, and they listen to what students have to say "as opposed to being the talker in the conversation" (supervisor Nigel). Being mentally present is critical not only in meetings but throughout the entire program, which means these supervisors checked in regularly, were vigilant, and noticed when one of their students was not engaged. As such, they offered support, direction, or redirection—whatever was needed—to keep students' momentum going. It is evident that accessibility (or an open-door policy) and psychological presence aspects are key elements in the doctoral supervision context, but they are only beneficial to students when they are intertwined with approachability. Leaders who are approachable are more effective, better informed (Amy, 2008; Lemer, 2003), and moreover are seen as humble and people-oriented rather than "self-oriented, pompous, arrogant, and over-confident" (Warrick, 2011, p. 15).

Both supervisors and students detailed how supervisors should also be active and check in with their students to see how they are doing. Checking in is a critical piece because some students might be shy or introverted (recall student Daisy). They also might be not progressing well and thus avoid their supervisors (recall student Sara). Other studies also found that students avoid their supervisors when they have problems progressing in their studies (Manathunga, 2005; McAlpine et al., 2012). In this case, if the supervisor is passive and does not take the initiative to check in to see how their students are doing, then the benefits of having a doctoral supervisor to guide them are lost. A supervisor who does not check in, coupled with a student who does not raise their voice (maybe shy, or afraid), is a disastrous situation that can lead to anxiety, depression, and delay in their programs.

Students who enjoyed working with supervisors who were available, approachable, and psychologically present appreciated how their supervisors cared about them, their timelines, and their futures. A supervisor who "would put the growth of the students and the people around him ahead of his own growth" (student Chris) is what the students treasured. This people-oriented approach is related to transformational leadership (e.g., Bass & Riggio, 2006) and indicates one of the main servant leaders' characteristics (Northouse, 2015), and it is clear in this research that is the main feature of relational/positive leadership.

Supervisors clearly stated that doctoral supervision is about the student—it has never been about the supervisor. That does not mean supervisors do not benefit from this interaction; they benefit because each student brings with them different backgrounds, skills, knowledge, and perspectives that enrich the supervisor's expertise. Moreover, the collective thinking in each research topic, paper, experiment, problem, excitement, or even

frustration creates new knowledge and a learning opportunity that is valuable for both parties.

The two-way learning process is a win–win situation comprising "the key recognition that it's not about me, it's about them, and their success means my success." (supervisor Henry). Students who were lucky enough to work with these supervisors that were student-centred described their supervisors as very positive, very optimistic, very supportive, respectful, patient, honest, inspiring, and always available, just to name a few.

In contrast, some students—including those who had already graduated as well as those who were still in the program—had different issues regarding AAPP with their supervisors, which impacted them in different ways. Regardless of the AAPP issue students face with their supervisors, it is always the student—the one in a tougher spot—who pays the bill. These students were behind in their programs, held hostage, unsatisfied, worried, stressed, and even depressed. Wisker and Robinson (2013, p. 302) referred to this situation as "stuckness," in which students lose security and well-being, and it can potentially delay their completion and even cause attrition.

While absentee leadership is a critical element highlighted in toxic leadership and ineffective leadership research (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2010), and this issue has been an ongoing concern for decades, it is surprising how only a few empirical studies have thoroughly explored it (e.g., Wisker & Robinson, 2013). Benmore (2016) proposed how absentee supervisors "can hamper progress, their frequent hiding being problematic. Worse still are catatonic supervisors who do nothing unless asked, are reactive and unemotional" (p. 1261), which is evident in the lived experiences of participants in my research.

There is no doubt that research on doctoral supervision discussed accessibility and a lack of communication as some of the key challenges that students faced, which indicates absentee leadership. Both supervisors and students in different sections of this dissertation pointed my attention to absentee leadership challenges, more so than micromanagement. The reason there are only a few studies in this area could be because of the autonomy feature that characterizes higher education. Nevertheless, there are thousands of doctoral students out there who are on the line. Ignoring absentee supervision in empirical studies disadvantages them greatly and limits their potential to become independent researchers who can contribute to advance their societies. Kezar and Eckel (2004) summarized the complexities of demands, fund constraints, and expectations that are placed on higher education. Higher education is expected to:

> engage the community, business, and industry; to solve social problems and improve the schools; to generate cutting edge research and innovations to fuel the economy; to develop a more just and equal society by preparing a diverse student body, while having fewer funds, more demands from students, and an increasingly complex legal environment. (p. 371)

I believe that "preparing a diverse student body" that can "develop a more just and equal society," as the scholar suggested above, necessitates research on absentee leadership in higher education. Scott Gregory (2018) defined "absentee leaders"—a concept applicable to doctoral supervision—as "people in leadership roles who are psychologically absent from them. They were promoted into management, and enjoy the privileges and rewards of a leadership role, but avoid meaningful involvement with their teams" (n. p.).

Whether physically, virtually, or psychologically absent, an absentee supervisor will create worse consequences for students than a micromanager will, though both are cruel.

Skogstad et al. (2015) conducted a two-year study on the effects of constructive, laissez-faire, and tyrannical leadership behaviors on followers' job satisfaction. They found that the negative impact of having a laissez-faire, easygoing leader on employees' job satisfaction (recall student Sara, who was in her fifth year and was still struggling to write her dissertation, and went on antidepressants) was much higher than having an oppressive leader (recall student Stephanie, who was depressed but managed to graduate in four years). The findings of Skogstad et al. support the importance of having an accessible and approachable supervisor, which was evident in this research. It is worth mentioning that although both supervision types negatively impact students—especially if the supervisor is easygoing or laissez-faire and paired with a student who lacks motivation and does not know how to get back on track (recall student Sara), toxic supervisors are a serious problem too (recall student Stephanie). The consequences of absentee leadership, or the "silent organization killers," according to Gregory (2018), are massive:

> Absentee leadership creates employee stress, which can lead to poor employee health outcomes and talent drain, which then impact an organization's bottom line. Because absentee leaders don't actively make trouble, their negative impact on organizations can be difficult to detect, and when it is detected, it often is considered a low-priority problem. Thus, absentee leaders are often silent organization killers. Left unchecked, absentee leaders clog an organization's succession arteries, blocking potentially more effective people from moving into important roles while adding little to productivity. Absentee leaders rarely engage

in unforgivable bouts of bad behavior, and are rarely the subject of ethics

investigations resulting from employee hotline calls. As a result, their negative

effect on organizations accumulates over time, largely unchecked. (n. p.)

The consequences of having an absentee leader might be even worse in the doctoral

supervision context, especially if they are coupled with what I call a "silent organization

survivor"—the student who chooses to keep silent or may be shy or introverted. This

supervisor depletes students' time, funds, energy, motivation, and momentum and leaves

them stressed, exhausted, fatigued and potentially quit the program.

In organizations, employees (to some extent) have the option to quit their jobs and

find other ones if they are impacted by their leaders. In doctoral supervision, switching

supervisors is found to be as an immense challenge. McAlpine et al. (2012) reported that

"what is striking is the belief that undertaking a change in supervisor is so abnormal that

there are no policies, practices or support systems available" (p. 516). I argue that even if

there were written policies dealing with switching supervisors, the unwritten policies

imbedded in a negative culture that views switching supervisors to be an offense to

supervisors could force students to suffer in silence, so that to avoid undesirable

consequences.

Moreover, the other reason I argue the consequences of "silent organization killers"

might be even worse in the doctoral supervision context is that quitting the program

because of an absentee supervisor could impact the students' prospective careers. These

circumstances force many students to bear the pain or even suppress it so that they can

graduate—recall student Stephanie. Eventually, the anxiety and depression catch up to

them, even after they graduate, and they pay the price in terms of their health and well-being.

The bottom line is that supervisors need to get to know their students, and students need to get to know their supervisors. Without knowing each other—which would allow supervisors to adjust their styles—a dysfunctional supervision relationship is the logical outcome. In terms of creating time for students and practicing AAPP, I do not believe there is one specific way that works for all supervisors. This research provided rich and valuable responses from both sides, where both supervisors and doctoral students offered some useful clues about best practices.

Supervisors respected their active roles in making their students comfortable enough to approach them. Whether they arranged a weekly meeting, meetings as needed and requested, almost daily interactions, or check-ins, their core value was to make their students feel they had their best interests at heart. Their supervision philosophies were crafted around the student, and their different ways of being accessible, approachable, and psychologically present were explained throughout the dissertation.

Trust

Leadership—and in this context, doctoral supervision—is "persuasion, not domination" (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994, p. 3), which explains why trust was found to be the core element that distinguished between functional and dysfunctional doctoral supervision. This finding was not surprising because a great body of research demonstrated trust as a dominant factor that highly differentiates effective from ineffective leadership (e.g., Bass,1990; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Fleishman & Harris, 1998; Gordon, 2017; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman,1995; Schein & Schein, 2018), and it was also found in the doctoral

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supervision literature to be the factor that influenced the students' doctoral experiences

(e.g., Manathunga, 2005) in that supervisors need to "secure the student's trust" (Benmore,

2016, p. 1263).

Supervisors and students were found to be on the same page when they reflected on

trust, and two main phases of trust appeared in this context: (a) the pending trust phase and

(b) the building trust phase. These two phases show that both individuals' perspectives of

trust are related to their expectations that the other party is competent, as well as

committed to roles and responsibilities, which aligned well with Barber's (1983) definition

of trust.

They enter the supervision setting with some level of expectation, or what I call

pending trust, that the other party has good intentions, has the competencies required to do

the job, and is committed to their identified roles and responsibilities. Reina and Reina

(2006) called this stage "contractual trust" (p. 15), which sets the tone for engagement and

direction. This phase has a "provisional nature", and can be called "conditional trust",

which is fragile (Panteli & Sockalingam, 2005, p. 601). Through interaction, *pending trust*

can be approved, because it has the potential to be developed and transformed "into the

more enduring unconditional trust" when "relationships mature and familiarity increases"

(Panteli & Sockalingam, 2005, p. 601), and it could also be disapproved when "the

congruence between expectations of the trusted person and actual behaviours" is failed

(Hupcey, Penrod, Morse, & Mitcham, 2001, p. 290).

The pending trust phase urges the need to discuss expectations, roles, and

responsibilities as early as possible. One student had these "roles and responsibilities"

conversations formally by signing an agreement, but it was clear that these formal

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agreements did not guarantee trust to develop or a functional relationship to progress (Sharkie, 2009). Other students had them informally, and for some (not all), those early conversations helped or enforced trust and mindfulness regarding the direction of the supervisory relationship.

While Parker-Jenkins (2018) suggested agreements should be "both verbally and in written form . . . to safeguard the interests of all parties and to help facilitate successful completion rates" (p. 68), Molm, Schaefer, and Collett (2009) found in their study on fragile and resilient trust that reciprocal exchanges (without formal agreement) develop trust that is more resilient and affect based than negotiated exchanges are. I argue that neither verbally nor written agreements help if doctoral supervision is characterized by ignorance (Stephanie's supervisor) or self-interest (Ronald's supervisor). However, regardless of this finding, detailing roles and expectations to make sure both parties understand the dynamics of their work is required (Green 2005; Reidy & Green, 2005), and I recommend having these agreements formally and informally. But clarifying roles and expectations is only half the trust journey—living up to those expectations is what develops a trustworthy supervisory relationship, which is done in the second phase.

The building trust phase starts as soon the supervisor sets the tone for engagement and direction. Some supervisors and students suggested allowing a few months to a maximum of six months to establish trust, which requires supervisors to practice AAPP to allow that trust to develop. Supervisor Richard summed up when he said, "If you don't even know who they are, how can you possibly trust them?" Burns, Lamm, and Lewis (1999), who pinpointed the importance of having early conversations on roles and expectations, argued that the supervisory relationship may need to be reassessed

throughout the program. This was evident in this research because "the mentee will outgrow the mentor." (student Michael).

The supervisors' AAPP is a condition that allowed them to foster trust via the different roles and activities they performed, which is evident throughout this dissertation in all the other sections. The AAPP allows regular communication, which according to Lewicki and Bunker (1996) "puts a party in constant contact with the other, exchanging information about wants, preferences, and approaches to problems", and without this regular communication "one can 'lose touch' with the other—not only emotionally but in the ability to think alike and predict the reactions of the other" (p. 121).

The AAPP condition means that trust starts with the supervisor, who practices AAPP and who is capable of forming positive and trusting supervisory relationships. This finding speaks to other research that suggests the leader is responsible for setting the foundation on which trust can be built (e.g., Gordon, 2017; Molinaro, 2017). Supervisors suggested that doing so includes providing sincere guidance and constructive feedback to their students, which is the main purpose of doctoral supervision and contributes to high performance and student well-being (e.g., Platow, 2012; Pyhältö, Stubb, & Tuomainen, 2011), and it indicates the importance of AAPP. AAPP suggests that both the supervisor and student learn the whole process together, which helps them to get to know each other (Edmondson, 2012), will best serve their efforts to reach their goals, and will eventually allow trust to develop.

Throughout the dissertation, students valued their supervisors' guidance, consistency and feedback as a source of trust that influenced their well-being and performance. Feedback was found to be an essential element for students' performance in

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terms of reaching their full potential, motivation, and well-being. Feedback enforced trust in supervisors when they offered it or distrust when they provided negative feedback or did not offer it at all. The importance of feedback for performance and motivation has long been accepted in the literature (e.g., Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979). Some scholars argued that individuals use and implement feedback when they accept it and trust it to be truthful (Kinicki, Prussia, Wu, & McKee-Ryan, 2004), which means that having a trustworthy supervisory relationship enforces using feedback, and offering students feedback develops trust. As a result, this student–supervisor relationship directly impacts students' performance (Armstrong, Allinson, & Hayes, 2004).

Some students suggested that receiving guidance through empowerment—which means they were enabled to set directions, define goals, and make choices—enforced their trust in their supervisors. These empowered students highlighted how they were motivated and excited about their work, which is consistent with other leadership research that proposed how empowering leadership contributes to followers' motivation (Kirkman & Rosen, 1997, 1999; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). However, empowerment needs conditions in place so students can benefit from this leadership attribute. For example, leaving students alone without proper guidance or feedback (e.g., student Reginald) does not indicate empowerment—it reflects carless behaviors or nonbenevolence that undermines the students' abilities (disabling instead of enabling them) to move forward and jeopardized their trust in their supervisors.

Lee (2008, p. 277) highlighted the strain between the "dependence" and "independence" of students on their supervisors, and as Petre and Rugg (2010) explained, "doing a PhD requires a balance between independence and guidance" (p. 222). The

participants throughout this dissertation reflected on students' needs and observed that they sometimes had to be dependent and other times independent (hands-on and hands-off). It was evident that it is the supervisor's responsibility to balance "dependence" and "independence" (Benmore, 2016, p. 1261) and be "adaptable" (Pearson & Brew, 2002, 143) to offer empowerment as needed, based on the students' readiness and after implementing the essential empowerment conditions. These empowerment conditions include showing trust in the students' capabilities (e.g., student Nancy; supervisor Richard). Moreover, they include facilitating the process for students, such as by removing obstructions to performance, which did not happen in the case of student Nicolas. These empowerment condition findings confirm what other studies suggested (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005; Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Kirkman & Rosen, 1997, 1999).

Trust is not one sided but rather is mutual (e.g., Serva, Fuller, & Mayer, 2005; Reina & Reina, 2006), and supervisors and students shared how they viewed or lived trust to be a reciprocal feeling that united them around their mutual goals. Reciprocating trust was a powerful and necessary element, especially when they were confronted with challenges. This result is consistent with Willetts, Mitchell, Abeysuriya, and Fam's (2012) perspectives, who proposed that "to a large extent, mutual trust . . . carries both student and supervisor through the many tensions and challenges" (p. 139). Furthermore, the data analysis disclosed mutual trust to be one of the factors that distinguished the lived experiences of students who were satisfied and maintained their well-being from those who suffered. This conclusion confirms what Sinclair (2004) highlighted about the importance of reciprocity, which Rowarth and Cornforth (2005) further expanded by explaining how a "successful PhD program starts when the student and supervisor develop mutual trust and

respect" (p. 161). It was explicit that students who enjoyed mutual trust were able to express their thoughts even when they were different from their supervisors' (as presented in the ethical competencies results section), which confirms how "[b]uilding mutual trust also made it possible . . . to agree to disagree" (Carter, 2000, p. 44).

One of the focal elements of building trust was related to supervisors demonstrating they had their students' best interests at heart. When students believed that their supervisors had their students' best interests at heart, they were more likely to accept their feedback (even when their written work was marked in red pen, which does not seem that students prefer) and their insights and decisions (as shown in the *communicating feedback/advice* section). This finding confirms what Halse and Malfroy (2010, p. 87) reported: students "are more open to receiving critical feedback about their work in a way that they know that it's coming from a person that has their best interests at heart."

The caring behavior that leaders display and how it promotes trust is well established in the literature (e.g., Dixon & Janks, 2010; Guerin, Kerr, & Green, 2015; Spears, 2010), and having their students' best interests at heart represents benevolence, which is a vital component of trust (e.g., Cook & Wall, 1980; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Mishra, 1996), as discussed further in the ethical competencies section.

From both perspectives—those of supervisors and students—it was noticeable that this people-oriented approach was key in building a supportive and a no-blame culture for trust to be nurtured and students to thrive. I argue that this positive culture is like a shelter that protects trust and helps it grow, especially in this power scene context which "resides with the supervisor(s)" (Parker-Jenkins, 2018, p. 63) Supervisors who managed to build this positive culture minimized this power scene by adding more power to trust. One of the

methods that supervisors used to build this supportive culture was that they held themselves accountable when they made mistakes.

Accountability is a practice that is important to effective leadership (e.g., Dive, 2008) and Parker-Jenkins (2018) recommended developing a policy that includes mutual responsibilities and accountability in the doctoral supervisory relationship. Scholars also suggested that ignoring accountability and pointing fingers leads to the "blame game, and nothing good ever comes from that" (Dealy & Thomas, 2007, p. 9). When supervisors accept their roles as doctoral supervisors in which their responsibility defines their specific roles, job descriptions, and processes to guide their students to achieve their goals, accountability arises from this commitment. Their actions, inactions, and decisions that they make to do their job as leaders produce results that require them to have the courage to take ownership over the results (e.g., Cottrell & Harvey, 2004).

Molinaro (2017) concluded that there was a connection between high performance and strong leadership accountability. This means that accountability not only enforces trust but also leads to better performance. Supervisors shared how when it was their fault, they had the courage to tell their students "I screwed up. . . . I'm sorry" (supervisor Lance). Part of this accountability involves leaders showing their vulnerabilities. Both supervisors and students shared how supervisors showing their vulnerabilities enforces trust in them, and this confirms research on how vulnerability is a fundamental requirement for trust (e.g., Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002; Mayer et al. 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Students are vulnerable, and only those who trusted their supervisors were comfortable enough to show their vulnerability. The students' vulnerability meant they

needed to fully trust their supervisors to be capable of living up to their leadership role, which confirms what Brabazon (2013) advised students: "You will need to lean on them. You must have the belief that they can help you" (n. p.), especially when facing challenges and being vulnerable.

Trustworthy characters and behaviors breed more trust and allow both parties to negotiate deliverables and outcomes in a way that soothes any tension and enriches their overall experiences. When a mutual trustworthy supervisory relationship is developed, a double win is accomplished: students can have more courage to go out of their comfort zone, which is key in becoming more innovative, and supervisors can benefit from discovering new ways of doing things, which contributes to their personal and professional growth.

Efficacy

"If you are passionate enough about a dream, you will know how to make it true." (My

Father)

"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't—you're right." (Henry Ford)

The first statement I wrote above Henry Ford's famous quote is what my father taught me, and what I taught my children; my father still repeats it all the time. These two quotes together summarize the efficacy section I present here. Examining how supervisors and doctoral students think and feel about themselves and their abilities (self-efficacy) is a major area in my research because their beliefs about themselves in terms of whether they can or cannot succeed were found to be a big influential factor in the supervisory relationship. These findings approve what I presented in the literature review section. I first

discuss the findings from the supervisors' section, followed by the findings from the students' section.

Supervisors' LSE. Supervisors reported enjoying a high sense of LSE in the three main areas of setting directions, gaining students' commitments, and overcoming obstacles to change (Paglis & Green, 2002).The supervisors' beliefs about their abilities as leaders and the impact of their beliefs on their performances are consistent with a growing body of literature that examined LSE as an antecedent of leadership effectiveness, leadership behaviors, change leadership, and motivation to lead (Chemers, Watson, May 2000; Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008; Hoyt, 2005; Kane, Zaccaro, Tremble, & Masuda, 2002; Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang, & Avolio, 2011; Murphy, 1992; Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008; Paglis & Green, 2002).

The supervisors' LSE was translated into effective leadership behaviors and practices as well as positive language, which allowed CE to emerge naturally and helped both parties (supervisors and students) put in sincere effort and earnest commitment to achieve goals and complete the programs successfully while maintaining their well-being.

Their LSE included their beliefs in their abilities: (a) to make themselves accessible (regardless of their workloads), approachable (in spite of their different personalities), and psychologically present (irrespective of their other responsibilities); (b) to create trustworthy supervisory relationships and smoothly move the relationship from the pending trust phase to the building mutual trust phase; (c) to mentor, coach, sponsor, and enable their students rather than disable them, and to be facilitators rather than complicators.

Their LSE also included their beliefs of their abilities in mastering and demonstrating the four core competencies that are essential to relational/positive leadership

as follows: (a) ethical competencies: setting directions—supervisors believed in their abilities to be committed to their roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities and enforce both research-related and nonresearch-releated ethics; (b) cognitive competencies: overcoming obstacles to change—supervisors believed in their abilities to deal with time constraint challenges and other challenges with hope, optimism, and resilience; (c) emotional competencies: overcoming obstacles to change—supervisors believed in their abilities to understand and manage their different emotional states—whether they were personal or related to their students' challenges—while remaining hopeful, optimistic, and resilient and taking care of their well-being; and (d) social competencies: gaining students' commitments—supervisors believed in their abilities in initiating open dialogues to communicate with their students' feedback/advice and concerns in a motivational way that brought their students on board. They knew how to create positive environments for their students that would allow their performance and well-being to flourish.

Their beliefs that they were capable of performing AAPP, developing trust, offering authentic mentorship, and performing the four competencies clearly shaped their effective behaviors and practices, which were evident in their reflections throughout this dissertation.

Exploring the supervisor's sense of efficacy was a straightforward process because they were expressing their own beliefs and practices, and they were sharing examples of how their LSE influenced their students' well-being and performance. It was the same with the students when they reported their sense of efficacy—their perspectives were clear and exemplified how their beliefs influenced their performance and well-being. On the other hand, when students reflected on the roles that their supervisors played in enhancing or

declining their sense of efficacy, their reflections were insufficient to suggest their supervisors had a high or low sense of LSE. Reporting their supervisors' effective behaviors in enhancing their own sense of efficacy might indicate that their supervisors also had a high sense of LSE, but it also might not. For example, newly hired supervisors (recall student Adam and his new supervisor) might have less belief in their abilities to guide students (we do not know their beliefs), but they may be inclined to make the extra effort to help students succeed (which is the right thing to do), and this means that these effective practices may not be sufficient to suggest that they had a high sense of LSE.

Research suggested that "managers who had less belief in their ability to engage and involve others [low Involve LSE], tended to invest more physical and mental energy on the job." (Anderson, Krajewski, & Jackson, 2008, p. 605) This means that observing a supervisor investing in engaging activities does not necessarily mean they have high *involve* LSE unless they express their high *involve* LSE explicitly. However, their sincere efforts in trying to invest time and energy in engaging activities indicates their willingness and openness to learn and make it work. It is evident in my dissertation that *growth mindset*, *dedication*, *momentum, resilience*, and *work ethic* are key ingredients to develop efficacy in any area.

The same idea is applicable to students who reported their supervisors' negative behaviors; I cannot propose that these supervisors had a low level of LSE. Maybe some of these supervisors knew how to guide and lead their students and had strong beliefs that they could facilitate the process for their students to succeed, but for whatever reason, they chose not to do so. Recall student Laura, whose supervisor provided more time and attention to other more needy students, as well as the other students whose supervisors did

not check in with them. I cannot confidently suggest that these supervisors had low level of LSE (because I did not hear from them, and I do not know their beliefs about their capabilities)—I can simply interpret these situations as more of a *work ethic* issue.

Anderson et al. (2008) built on Paglis and Green's (2002) work and their definition of LSE, and they conducted the first empirical research that examined the relationship between LSE and leadership effectiveness. They found that leaders' self-efficacy (managers' self-evaluations of perceived competence) were

> highly related to raters' descriptions of their effectiveness in a variety of areas— providing support to the hypothesis that one's beliefs about leadership ability is related to one's leadership effectiveness, as judged by others. (p. 604)

Moreover, research has suggested that leaders with a high sense of LSE could be specifically identified when confronted with challenges, or when their followers face complex situations. These leaders are effective, remain calm under pressure, and manage to solve problems (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Bandura & Wood, 1989). These findings propose that the students' perspectives they reported about their supervisors' effectiveness is related to their supervisors' LSE. I was cautious in interpreting the students' datasets in light of these suggestions (especially because this is not a quantitative research project), which means that when students reported effective behaviors their supervisors displayed, I refrained from suggesting that these supervisors had a high sense of LSE and vice versa. As such, I only discuss LSE based on the supervisors' dataset.

Consistent with other studies, Anderson and colleagues (2008) concluded that leaders with higher LSE are more effective than those lower with self-efficacy (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Paglis & Green, 2002). Additionally, they offered a well-defined,

comprehensive taxonomy of LSE, which I used to discuss the supervisors' results in light

of this framework. They identified 18 dimensions for leadership self-efficacy: change,

drive, solve, build, act, involve, self-discipline (self-control), relate, oversee, project

credibility, challenge, guide, communicate, mentor, motivate, serve, convince, and know.

All these dimensions were evident in the datasets when supervisors talked about their

beliefs, practices, and behaviors.

Supervisors with higher LSE were found to be confident in their abilities to

understand and envision the *changes* needed for their students to succeed. These self-

efficacious supervisors demonstrated their abilities to *drive* or lead the process while

solving different kinds of problems (program and nonprogram related) by utilizing their

experiences, skills, attention to detail, and wisdom. They were aware of the individual

differences within their students and the resources available, and they demonstrated their

capabilities in *building* emerging scholars and applying hands-on and hands-off approaches

as needed. They exhibited unique skills in *acting* to make the right choices (e.g., offering

contingency plans in labs and redirecting or redesigning the project as needed) while

involving their students in respectful and participative manners.

These *self-disciplined*, self-efficacious supervisors reported their strong abilities in

understanding and managing their emotions and their resilience. The *relate* self-efficacy

component was evident when they reported how they act as a positive force fostering

positive working relationships with their students in a friendly atmosphere. The *oversee*

LSE involves the supervisors' belief in their ability to examine and regulate the work by

holding individuals responsible for actions and outcomes, and this dimension was evident

in the ethical competencies' section. *Project credibility* LSE is related to supervisors who

believed in their ability to be fair, display ethical behaviors and practices, and appear honest and believable to their students.

Finally, the supervisors' beliefs about their abilities to *challenge* students in a positive way, *guide* them in the right direction, *communicate* with them (feedback/advice, program-related concerns, and other concerns), *mentor* them authentically (coaching, sponsoring, and facilitating), *motivate* them (by supporting, encouraging, and assuring), *serve* them (by having the students' best interests at heart, admitting errors, and setting aside ego), *convince* them with sound reason, and demonstrate to them the *know* aspect (knowing the tools, process, policies, and procedures, etc.) were all clear in the supervisors' section.

Bringing what they learned as former doctoral students—their past experience (Bandura, 1995)—into practice was valuable to the supervisors' LSE. Whether their supervisor was "kind of a bad role model" (supervisor Dana) or an effective leader who demonstrated "how to treat people" (supervisor Nathan), it is apparent that being mindful about those experiences made a difference to their behaviors and LSE. This confirms what other studies proposed on how supervisors' styles are influenced by the way they themselves were supervised (and this will be discussed further under the mentorship section).

Generally, these findings suggest the importance of the leaders' beliefs about their abilities to reflect on, and be mindful of their past workplace experiences before they were promoted into their leadership roles (*reflect/mindful* LSE). More specifically, in effective doctoral supervision, several studies proposed that supervisors can develop themselves through reflection (Emilsson & Johnsson, 2007; Guerin et al., 2015; Pearson & Brew,

2002; Turner, 2015). Therefore, examining the *reflect/mindful* LSE dimension empirically is necessary, especially in the doctoral supervision context.

The fact that LSE can influence the students' performance and well-being is a serious matter; it can put them on the right track, drift them away and waste their precious and costly time, or leave them working hard to deal with it on their own. As a result, the students' challenge to perform to their full potential, coupled with their frustration from being misguided, can impact their well-being. Not all students know how to cope or be resilient, so it is dangerous to have a system or culture that considers supervisors' leadership role to be a "sink or swim" approach.

We may need to bear in mind that many newly hired supervisors are effective, while some experienced ones are not. Therefore, the quality of supervision cannot be measured by the number of years professors spent in supervising doctoral students. Having said that, I still argue that in Canadian universities (and in other countries that may have the same issues) professors need to be mentored and gradually move into their doctoral supervision roles (as supervisor Randal suggested), and they need to be equipped with leadership programs or trainings to build their LSE—especially the newly hired ones. It is imperative to include psychological topics in these programs so supervisors can support their students better—recall supervisor Reina, who mentioned she had never taken a course in psychology. Although Reina managed to help her student through empathy and understanding, the doctoral supervisor job is an intense human service that needs to be approached from a psychological background. This is not only for the students' benefit but also the supervisors—recall supervisor Nathan, who reported how failing to get grants can be "psychologically very difficult" for supervisors. I highlighted positive psychology and

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positive leadership and their tight connectedness to relational leadership in the literature review (Komives et al., 2013), and my findings not only confirm Komives's proposal but also suggest the importance of equipping both supervisors and students with positive psychology courses and programs.

I also argue that preparing supervisors in Canadian universities (and in similar contexts) does not start when professors are hired; rather, it should start while they are still doctoral students. Therefore, offering optional supervision courses to all doctoral students—even those who do not plan on pursuing academic career—would help doctoral students while still in the program, as well as those of them who would eventually enter professorship.

Wright et al. (2007) reported how some universities conduct "supervisor training and accreditation courses" to improve their competencies (p. 459). Moreover, Halse and Malfroy (2010) shared that "one of the five themes for doctoral training in Europe was identified as 'improving the supervision of PhD candidates, particularly through better training and monitoring of supervisors (p. 80).'" In fact, some countries offer courses in supervision and make supervision training mandatory in universities. For example, according to Emilsson and Johnsson (2007):

> courses in research supervision for supervisors have been given at more and more universities in Sweden and the government has proposed that 'institutions of higher education with postgraduate programmes must offer training in supervision'. . . , A newly published report, A new doctoral education . . . also states that at least one of a doctoral student's supervisors must have attended the special course required. (p. 106)

My findings suggest that only a few supervisors received some kind of mentorship to support them before they started their jobs—if this is common in Canada, then following the Swedish approach could be a valuable option to consider.

It seemed that to build and enhance LSE, supervisors also benefited from what I call their *experiments* on their first students. This is not necessarily a bad thing because people learn from their mistakes, but this only works well when ethical leadership is present, mistakes are acknowledged, and consequences are eased. Halse (2011) reported that supervisors need to confront their mistakes and failures, because "no matter how painstaking or industrious [supervisors] were, [they] made errors of judgement, provided faulty advice or directions, and misjudged the impact of their instructions and feedback on students" (p. 565).

What Halse (2011) reported above was evident in my research. Many supervisors acknowledged that regardless of their good intentions and being vigilant, mistakes and misjudgment happen all the time—it is part of being human. They said things such as, "I'm not an angel" (supervisor Henry); "Mistakes can happen to anyone. I make enough mistakes myself" (supervisor Reina); and "Supervisors are not perfect: they can make mistakes, they can misjudge people, they can expect too much" (supervisor Dana). What distinguished these supervisors was not only their willingness to admit mistakes but also their ability to approach problems in respectful manners and ease the consequences of mistakes while maintaining the integrity of their students (*solving* LSE).

It is clear that the sense of LSE in Canadian universities (and potentially in other countries) is influenced by several obstacles that could prevent doctoral supervisors from developing their sense of LSE and helping their students' development. From a lack of

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mentorship opportunities and leadership trainings to getting grants and/or spending money on research projects without running out, there are many serious sources of pressure. Another barrier is a cultural one when supervisors are considered experts who should not ask for help. All these poor departmental systems and cultural issues which contribute to the supervisors' LSE and thus the whole doctoral supervisory relationship suggest that supervisors need more help, understanding, and support in their roles.

Students' sense of efficacy. Students' sense of efficacy (SE) has to do with student roles such as completing coursework and doing candidacy exams. The other type, RSE, is mainly related to the whole purpose of doctoral programs—their research—and how they are supposed to conduct their studies. It was evident that RSE was important to students because when they had research anxiety (recall student Sara), it negatively impacted their academic performance (Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and eventually impacted their well-being (Bandura, 1995).

It seemed that their perceived SE and RSE changed throughout their doctoral programs. Several students experienced imposter syndrome, which is normal and part of the process (Hay & Samra-Fredericks, 2016; Juniper, Walsh, Richardson, & Morley, 2012). Nevertheless, the students highlighted how their supervisors influenced their imposter syndrome and their sense of SE , sometimes positively and other times negatively. For those who had supervisors who positively influenced their sense of efficacy in a positive way, their CE emerged.

On the other hand, those who had supervisors who displayed negative behaviors and practices and created tense environments for them were confused, and their situations were characterized by ambiguity, low trust, and anxiety. These toxic working

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environments impacted their well-being profoundly. Regardless of these barriers, their dedication, momentum, and resilience allowed a few students to graduate, but this happened at the expense of their well-being. Furthermore, their performance could have been better. Recall what student Stephanie reported: "I feel like I could have flourished more if his coaching . . . [had] been better." These findings provide evidence that supervisors can influence their students' sense of SE and eventually their students' well-being and performance.

I also found that *work ethic* is a main ingredient for developing efficacy in any area. For example, students were serious about developing RSE, and their *work ethic* was evident in their sincere efforts: searching, reading, writing, asking, trying, falling but brushing it off, dedicating enough time, learning how to juggle life with work, and continuing. As I stated at the beginning of this section, these students were *passionate about their dreams, so they knew how to make them true.*

Mentorship

The findings of this study speak to what previous studies have reported, as highlighted in the literature review. It is evident that the quality of mentorship doctoral students received from supervisors can impact their well-being and performance. Additionally, as mentioned in the previous section, one of the most important findings in this research is how supervisors' supervision styles were influenced by how they were supervised when they were still doctoral students themselves. They either learned what to do or what not to do. They experienced firsthand the true meaning of being supported or unsupported.

Mentoring—also called coaching, sponsoring, facilitating, or apprenticing—is an approach that is embedded in the role of the doctoral supervisor. At the same time, doctoral supervision is an authoritative context in which supervisors have power over their students. They are the main decision-makers in the process, which could be an advantage when the relationship is a positive or a disadvantage when they misuse that power. Therefore, I argue that in authoritative contexts such as doctoral supervision, mentorship could be toxic.

Based on the level of authenticity of support that students got from their supervisors who met their needs as well as their satisfaction with that support, the data revealed three different quality levels of mentorship: authentic, average, and below average/toxic. These three quality levels were also evident in the supervisors' data when they reflected on their previous supervision experiences as former doctoral students. Regardless of whether the supervisors experienced positive or negative mentorship, these past experiences influenced their own mentorship styles to some extent.

From the supervisors' perspectives, mentorship in doctoral supervision is a "co-journey" (supervisor Henry) that aims to deliver autonomous, innovative, and critically thinking emerging scholars who are different from their supervisors and able to identify their research identities. This co-journey is a continuous supporting/guiding process that is encouraging, empowering, inclusive, and most importantly, customized based on the students' previous knowledge and skills, their progress in the program, their level of motivation, and their current and future objectives and plans. In other words, no one size fits all, and supervisors are expected to be able to use "a brake and an accelerator" and "to use the right pedals to the right amount" in guiding their students (supervisor Turner). This approach acknowledges and respects doctoral students as *heavily invested parties* in the

program and recognizes that their time is *precious*, which require supervisors to demonstrate their understanding and empathy and to model their different competencies as effective leaders.

Wright et al. (2007, p. 471) conducted an empirical study and concluded that supervisors understand their roles as doctoral supervisors based on their priorities and motives. They explained that supervisors are driven by their own conceptualizations of doctoral supervision, so they might function as one or more of five main concepts: (a) quality assurers, (b) supportive guides, (c) researcher trainers, (d) mentors, and (e) knowledge enthusiasts. While the data in my study disclosed how supervisors understand their role as a comprehensive one that encapsulates all five concepts, the data also revealed that supervisors are driven by their students' progress, and motivation level, which determine which of the five concepts is valued at any one time.

Although supervisors' approach was mainly student driven, they acknowledged how they enjoyed learning and advancing their knowledge and expertise along with those of their students, which echoed the findings from another study where supervisors reported that "the principal joy of doctoral supervision was the opportunity to advance their own scholarly expertise" (Halse & Malfroy, 2010, p. 86).

When supervisors reflected on how they were supervised when they were doctoral students and how those experiences shaped their current mentorship styles, it was evident that they were mindful and self-reflective. While those who experienced authentic mentorship now try to mimic their supervisors' practices and still count on them as lifelong mentors, those who received average mentorship know exactly how to transform that type of experience and level it up to meet the hopes and expectations of their mentees.

Supervisors who experienced toxic mentorship reported disturbing stories that impacted their performance and well-being. They lacked feedback and guidance, which led them to struggle to develop in their programs. Barriers against moving forward were frustrating and clearly caused stress to their well-being, which is consistent with other studies (Deem & Brehony, 2000; Devos et al., 2017; El-Ghoroury, Galper, Sawaqdeh, & Bufka, 2012; Juniper et al., 2012; McAlpine et al., 2012).

For example, Rachel, who had to switch supervisors because she was unsupported and shifted to another faculty to do it all over again, said this was quite expensive to her well-being in terms of time, money, efforts, and cognitive and emotional struggles. Reina, who had a toxic supervisor who kept making her life very difficult, and even "bet a case of beer with another graduate student" that she "would fail that exam," was a disturbing story indeed. In fact, Reina's supervisor exhibited bullying in doctoral supervision (Morris, 2011). This workplace bullying is a negative behavior at work towards an individual that could also be called mobbing, harassment, workplace harassment, emotional abuse, systematic mistreatment (Lewis, 2004, p. 282). Wozniak (2019) identified bullying as

> physical acts or verbal remarks that 'mentally' hurt or isolate an individual in the workforce. This behaviour is often repeated and aimed at degrading, intimidating, humiliating or offending. Bullying can also take the form of demonstrating power through aggression. (n. p.)

These bullying behaviors are hazards, and it is ironic how universities that offer educational programs for teachers to reform our schools and produce valuable research on bullying in schools and workplaces have people who suffer from bullying in their own buildings. Maybe it is time to invite both supervisors and doctoral students to think of new

and innovative ways to confront these negative behaviors and encourage workplaces that are free from bullying.

From the students' perspectives, who either joined the program as professionals with life experience and expertise in their fields or as young students who came straight through from high school on, the variety of the student body in terms of their different backgrounds suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all mentorship style. In addition, what works for one student might not work for another. The individual differences and the different needs of students were evident in the supervisors' as well as the students' perspectives, showing that mentorship is a tailoring process that is designed and redesigned based on students' needs, motivation, and progress in the program.

Designing and redesigning the supervisors' approach in supporting their students, which is a skill they need to master, confirms what other studies reported (e.g., Hamilton & Carson, 2015; Halse, 2011). Additionally, the different age/stage needs characterizing doctoral programs, which I reported in this research are consistent with other studies (Morley, 2005; Pearson, Cumming, Evans, Macauley, & Ryland, 2011; Ryan, 2012).

Students who had authentic mentorship experiences were more likely to feel motivated and satisfied; their supervisors were more likely to play active roles in enhancing their well-being and performance. Such students found their supervisors to be positive and uplifting, enforcing their confidence, hope, and resilience regardless of whether the challenges they experienced were program or nonprogram related. These students valued, enjoyed, and benefited from the positive environments their supervisors created, which confirms what Luthans et al. (2015) proposed about the advantageous of creating a "positive climate and culture that is supportive of well-being" (p. 62). These

scholars explained that such leadership, positivity, and authenticity "can reduce injury rates, stress, burnout, turnover, absenteeism, and disengagement" (p. 62).

These supervisors were present throughout the entire learning journey. They were friendly and engaged, and they knew their students well enough to adjust their mentorship styles as needed. They cared about their students' well-being and about their success and future plans, just like a family member would. They provided genuine guidance both academically and professionally. Young students, for example, who needed advice on life matters found their supervisors generous enough to help them out. In other words, these supervisors cared about what their students needed them to care about. They exhibited genuine interest in their students' performance and well-being, which aligned well with the findings of a number of studies (Engebretson et al., 2008**;** Hockey, 1995**;** Pearson & Brew, 2002**;** Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004).

The supervisors were confident yet mindful of their own limits. Not only that, as former doctoral students themselves, they were keen to motivate their students by letting them remember that they had been in the same position, so they shared experiences to offer insight and wisdom. This did not mean they wanted to mold their students into versions of themselves or to relive their own experiences—quite the opposite. They wanted to develop their students' research identities while remaining aware of the doctoral environment. Both Tiffany (who had an authentic mentorship) and Stephanie (who had a toxic mentorship) reported that their supervisors had negative supervision experiences when they were doctoral students themselves. It seemed that Tiffany's supervisor learned what not to do as a supervisor, whereas Stephanie's supervisor transferred his negative experience to her by telling her that "his own challenges" when he was a doctoral student were worse than what

she faced. Such behavior is problematic and confirms that supervisors' styles are influenced by their supervision experiences when they were doctoral students themselves (Delamont et al., 2000; Fillery-Travis et al., 2017; Lee, 2008).

Authentic mentors allowed their students to contribute to the process of supervision, and it was evident that students who functioned with the perfect balance of support and autonomy were motivated and satisfied. The importance of autonomy to student motivation is coherent with the findings of Mason (2012), who uncovered a positive correlation between students' feelings of autonomy and their motivation to complete their programs. Their supervisors were keen to motivate them and keep them going while identifying their individual differences that allowed them to facilitate the process for and with their students. They were humble and made sure they placed themselves beside their students by keeping their egos in check. Demonstrating genuineness is a fundamental requirement for authentic mentorship (Marie Taylor & Neimeyer, 2009), and the participants explained the true meaning of this concept in doctoral supervision.

The two doctoral students, Daisy and Reginald, who had average mentorship experiences did not get the kind of attention or support they needed. One student's supervisor was mostly absent, and the other's supervisor did not sense when his student needed to disconnect and take a break. Although the supervisors in this average mentorship context were not negative or toxic in the sense of actively harming their students' well-being, leaving students alone in the process or failing to sense their needs does not foster an encouraging environment.

Doctoral students who had below average/toxic mentorship were more likely to be stressed and depressed. Their supervisors were either absent—physically/virtually or psychologically—or over-authoritarian, providing a lot of mentoring without taking into consideration the students' learning needs and styles. These below average/toxic supervisors exhibited negative attitudes, and their students consequently lacked support, direction, and constructive feedback. Moreover, students tended to hide their negative feelings such as frustration and embarrassment, because they did not think they would get a good reaction.

These negative supervisors valued their own self-interests over those of their students, hurting their students' well-being and performance. Their toxic mentorship styles did not encourage progress or learning, and their students were less motivated and engaged than their peers were, which corresponds to Vinales's (2015) findings. These students experienced delays in their progress, and their supervisors did not demonstrate that they understood the importance of ensuring their students reached their milestones and completed their degrees on time. McWilliam (2004) emphasized that a good supervisor is "attentive to the changing needs of the students as they progress through the programme. S/he understands the importance of timely completion and the special needs of each milestone" (p. 12). These qualities were clearly absent from this toxic mentorship.

Furthermore, the students who received excessive negative feedback considered quitting the program, which is consistent with the findings of other studies (Burgess, Pole, & Hockey, 1994; Grant & Graham, 1994; Hockey, 1994; McMichael, 1992; Phillips & Pugh, 2010); personal determination and resiliency helped these students persevere.

It is evident from both segments that determined and resilient students managed to

complete their doctoral programs successfully and graduate, even in the face of toxic mentorship. However, toxic supervisors can have a negative impact on student well-being, and it can be difficult for students to return to their normal state . Washington and Cox (2016) found that toxicity and negative outcomes may result from the mentor's *own motives* or lack of emotional intelligence. Therefore, this research proposes that remaining ethical, gaining emotional competencies and being mindful of individual's limits and weaknesses could help avoid these negative outcomes. Additionally, being mindful of one's own experiences as a former doctoral student is critical to effective mentorship for a supervisor.

Doctoral students need authentic mentorship that is customized to meet their needs, based on their individual characteristics and their progress in the program. To this end, helping students complete their doctoral programs successfully while enhancing their well-being is achievable when supervisors offer authentic mentorship. This high-quality mentorship requires supervisors (a) to be present (physically/virtually and psychologically) and approachable, especially when needed; (b) to exhibit sympathetic behaviors; (c) to be confident and mindful of their own limits as well as their experiences as former doctoral students; (d) to provide their students with enough space for growth; and (e) to exhibit and nurture positivity.

The Relational Leadership Core Competencies: Responding to Research Subquestion Two

In this part, my discussion responds to research subquestion two: To what extent do relational leadership ethical, cognitive, emotional and social competencies influence the

doctoral supervisor–student relationship positively? and how they are demonstrated in the doctoral supervision context.

Ethical Competencies

The findings confirm that leaders who are ethically competent are "ethical role models [who] are well known by their daily conduct and interactions—the way they behave and the way they treat other people" (Weaver, Treviño, & Agle, 2005, p. 12), and they oblige ethical behaviors (Liu & Loi, 2012). They are people-centred because they "care about people, respect people, develop their people, and treat people right" (Treviño et al., 2003, p. 14), and they influence their people's performance, satisfaction, and "willingness to report problems" to them (Brown et al., p. 117).

The findings showed how both supervisor and student are expected to exhibit their ethical competencies, which are the cornerstone of any workplace relationship. They are *both* committed to their roles (e.g., supervisors know the required tools to equip students with; students do the required readings) and responsibilities (e.g., providing timely and constructive feedback, which students act on), and they hold themselves accountable for their actions or inactions (e.g., admitting mistakes when they occur and correcting them). Both parties were expected to professionally deal with research-related ethics such as presenting accurate data and handling co-authoring issues as well as nonresearch-related ethics, which means displaying personal characteristics such as honesty, respect, benevolence, and nonmaleficence.

Supervisors exhibited both the *moral person* and *moral manager* dimensions of ethical leadership, as shown in other studies (Treviño et al., 2000; Treviño et al., 2003). According to Treviño et al. (2000), an ethical leader is a moral person who demonstrates

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personal moral characteristics and traits. Additionally, an ethical leader needs to display

moral manager behaviors to influence followers, such as making decisions that are fair and

just. The *moral person* dimension (personal characteristics) was evident, for instance,

when supervisors displaced honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness, and the *moral manager*

dimension was obvious when they took the lead in exhibiting ethical behaviours (e.g.,

benevolence and nonmaleficence), role modeling them and making them priorities.

Providing constructive and honest feedback and valuable advice that offered

guidance for students, which is the essence of supervision, exhibited both dimensions—the

moral person and moral manager. In other cases, feedback and guidance were unethical.

Recall student Stephanie, who received negative feedback; her supervisor's feedback was

nasty, which did not show the *moral person* dimension of supervisors who are expected to

be considerate, and his egotistical behaviors did not show the *moral manager* dimension of

supervisors who are expected to be role models. Student Stephanie reported how she did

not see her supervisor as a role model, and this kind of negative feedback impacted her and

other students, which echoed several studies that showed the role of negative feedback on

students' performance and well-being (Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Caffarella & Barnett,

2000), and my research confirmed these findings.

Because this leadership context is authoritative—or a power scene—there are more

ethical expectations on the supervisors' side. For example, supervisors have the power to

decide if and when students graduate, which puts students in a tough spot—if this power is

misused (recall students Stephanie and Ronald), then ethical lines are crossed, unethical

leadership takes over, and undesirable consequences follow. The participants' supervisors

were mindful of this imbalanced relationship and suggested it is their role rather than the

students' role to make it work. These supervisors adjusted their roles to match their students' needs (Malfoy & Webb, 2000) and built a positive and safe culture for their students to express themselves, and they welcomed disagreements and handled them with respect.

Using the leadership lens in my research to examine the supervision context showed how a relational/positive supervisor (RPL) is flexible and can match their styles to their students. This research confirms that applying a single supervision style is ineffective and no longer tolerable (Boehe, 2016; Pearson & Brew, 2002), which means it is the supervisor's responsibility to accommodate the student's learning style (e.g., hands on or hands off) and adjust as students grow and develop in their programs.

It is evident in this research that fostering ethical leadership and ethical competencies as the foundation of doctoral supervision can render the supervision effective and enhance students' performance and well-being. This finding is consistent with the findings of Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog, and Folger (2010), who proposed that "leaders with strong ethical commitments who regularly demonstrate ethically normative behavior" influence employees' motivation and performance (p. 259).

Students who experienced misused power and egotism suffered in their efforts to move forward, and more importantly, they developed anxiety and depression. The supervisors' negative behaviors, egotism, abusive, toxic, and controlling style as well as their leadership absenteeism were all ethical issues that demotivated students, impacted their performance, and depleted their energies. This research confirms what a great body of research reported about how unethical leadership can impact people negatively (Ashforth,

1994; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2010; Tepper, 2000, 2007; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002).

All universities have policies and procedures that confront unethical behaviors. However, these policies apply only when students report them, and this research showed how many students prefer to suffer in silence to avoid complicating their situations even more—especially when they do not have tangible evidence (recall student Ronald). Additionally, absenteeism was found to be as a real ethical issue that left students in all cases alone to deal with. Even if universities have policies that address absenteeism, nothing will be solved if students do not step up and draw attention to their struggles. As such, addressing these issues at the organizational level means offering ethical context and culture that supports ethics-related attitudes and behaviors and rejects unethical behaviors (Treviño, 1990; Treviño, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998; Victor & Cullen, 1988). Schein (1996) defined culture as a "set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments" (p. 236). I argue that polices are important, but they are less effective without a positive organizational culture, or "a social force that is invisible yet very powerful" (Schein, 1996, p. 231), especially because students tend not to report when they are bullied.

Cognitive Competencies

Supervisors' ability to identify problems and solve them collectively with their students was evident in this research as a central cognitive competency for relational/positive supervisors to create a positive supervisory relationship. Effective leaders or supervisors embrace their roles as leaders to solve problems (ethical

competence), stay calm under pressure and do not panic when confronted with different challenges (emotional competence), and tend to step back or zoom out to see the big picture and all angles of the problem that occurred (cognitive competence).

Regardless of whether the problem was a research/program-related challenge (e.g., the feasibility of the study) or nonresearch/program-related challenge (e.g., an issue within the committee members), students needed their supervisors to demonstrate their ethical, cognitive, emotional, and social competencies to deal with it effectively.

Identifying the problem properly is evidently what helps solve it collectively. One example came from a supervisor's suggestion that "there's the potential for supervisors to interpret the problem with being a problem with the student, not a problem with project or whatever issue" (supervisor Thomas), which proposes that the first step in solving a problem is to identify it and have an openminded attitude to detect it. This first step, which requires taking the time to understand the problem, has been shown in several studies to be an effective procedure that can lead to finding higher quality solutions (Redmond, Mumford, & Teach, 1993; Reiter-Palmon, Mumford, O'Connor Boes, & Runco, 1997).

Problems can range on a spectrum from well to ill defined, and they differ in having known or unknown goals and known or unknown ways/methods to reach correct answers and acceptable solutions (Dillon, 1982). Well-defined problems included the students' needs to take a break, for example (recall student Reginald). These kinds of problem only required supervisors to demonstrate their understanding and encourage students to take care of their well-being. In contrast, ill-defined problem included experiments in the labs, which could be resolved in many ways. Losing loved ones was another example of an ill-defined problem that students faced, and it required supervisors

to show their empathy. These supervisors did not have solutions but were willing to support and accommodate their students and their studies as much as needed. Scholarly conflicts within the supervision committee members could also be a real challenge, regardless of the issue was well-defined or ill defined, which was also pointed out by a study Peters (1997) conducted. The kinds of scholarly issues test not only the cognitive abilities of supervisors but also the social dimension of having everyone on board.

Time constraint challenges were found to be the most powerful issues that troubled doctoral students. Exploring problem-solving as a cognitive competency showed two approaches that were important (from both perspectives): (a) dealing with the problem before it gets too big, viewing it in a positive light, and even predicting it before it occurs (Roberto, 2009); and (b) demonstrating the collaborative and collective thinking approach—"what WE can do to fix it. It's not what YOU have to do to fix it" (supervisor Richard). Weiss, Kolbe, Grote, Spahn, and Grande (2018) suggested that when employees speak up with "alternative ideas or voice problems," they can enhance performance and develop effectiveness (p. 389). To do so, the scholars argued that the language leaders use when they say, "We can do it," (p. 389) is vital because inclusive language promotes active and positive behaviors among employees. It was evident in this research that supervisors were aware of using inclusive language to bring their students on board to solve problems.

These supervisors exhibited the importance of managing their scarce time in a way that did not disadvantage their students. They tended to work with their students as soon as they started the program, and they worked on a backward timeline plan to map out the students' milestones. Time management is a cognitive leadership competency that allowed

supervisors to handle their workload and plan, re-plan, prioritize, and execute their tasks as well as maximize their productivity.

Claessens, Van Eerde, Rutte, and Roe (2007) summarized empirical findings on time management and suggested that the use of time is not an aim in itself because the focus is on some goal-directed activity, which should be done in a way that implies utilizing time effectively. They argued that because a large number of past studies on time management used student samples, whether those student findings are applicable to employees is questionable. They explained that the processes involved are not comparable because students can postpone activities by deciding not to study for an exam, "while employees have less possibility to do so and may face more negative outcomes of not doing certain things in time" (p. 270). It is clear that the situation in doctoral programs is different, where doctoral students face more negative outcomes if they decide to postpone their milestones (e.g., delays, stress, financial issues, and social pressure) than their supervisors (the employees in their universities) do when they decide to postpone offering feedback to them.

Both individuals—students as well as supervisors, when they reflected on their experiences as former doctoral students—reported how their supervisors ignored their needs to receive feedback, which implies that there were no consequences for supervisors when they choose not to offer feedback or offered it too late. Additionally, it was evident how students who were not progressing in their writing, for example, were struggling and needed some guidance to unblock the writing process for them. All these findings suggest that time management in this specific context starts with the supervisor, who is responsible for managing their own workload, mapping out their students' milestones early in the

program, following up to identify any barriers, and helping them manage their time and program.

Offering feedback—which is the essence of supervisor's job—is an ethical obligation that requires ethical competencies. For example, both supervisors and students believed that feedback is a two-way process and that the feedback comprises suggestions rather than requirements. As such, supervisors tended to reduce the power they had and increase the value they added by softening their feedback so that students did not perceive it to be an obligation. Crossouard and Pryor (2009) argued that providing feedback in this authoritative context makes doctoral students perceive feedback to be an obligation rather than a suggestion. Although the purpose of feedback is to improve the students' work, viewing feedback as an obligation is problematic when students have different thoughts on their work. This means that providing constructive feedback requires supervisors not only to be cognitively, emotionally, and socially competent, but also ethically competent to reduce the power that is inherit in this context.

Proposing clear (not vague) feedback is an essential cognitive competency. This activity should not be spoon-fed; it should challenge students to be critical and think differently, but at the same time, it should not drift them off their paths. Crafting feedback should be done in a way that is clear enough to allow students to implement or reject it and open-ended enough to allow them to think about it and figure things out on their own. Balancing this activity pinpoints the cognitive competencies as a supervision ability that helps students progress in their programs.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) explained that effective feedback should answer three major questions: "Where am I going? (What are the goals?), How am I going? (What

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progress is being made toward the goal?), and Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?)" (p. 86). The authors further reported that these questions relate to notions of feed up, feedback, and feed forward. These three notions were evident when supervisors reported their feedback and advice to their students, and they were clear when students explained what they needed from their supervisors. They appreciated clear feedback on their work that was positive and encouraging, which speaks to what Eyres, Hatch, Turner, and West (2001) reported in their research. It was evident that the ability to feed up, back, and forward—which is the core value of doctoral supervision—is a cognitive competency that cannot be isolated from the ethical, emotional, and social competencies. This ability required AAPP, and when it was done properly, trustworthy relationship was developed, students' sense of efficacy was enhanced, and authentic mentorship was demonstrated.

Emotional Competencies

Emotional awareness and management are two attached intrapersonal skills that were found to be important for both supervisors and students in maintaining their well-being. These intrapersonal capabilities were also vital for performance—when recognized and managed well, supervisors and students were more productive and delivered better results. Emotions in the workplace—whether related to work or personal life—have a "ripple effect" on individuals (Barsade, 2002, p. 644), and managing them is critical to well-being and performance (Elfenbein, 2007).

It was clear that doctoral programs and the doctoral supervision context are fused with a lot of up-and-down feelings caused by either the programs/supervision themselves or personal lives. Throughout the entire dissertation, participants' different feelings and

emotions—from pride and happiness to embarrassment and disappointment—were reported directly and indirectly, which means that emotional competencies are essential to understanding the dynamics of supervisory relationships. Although there is a great body of research that pointed out how doctoral programs are emotionally charged contexts for students (e.g., Fagen & Suedkamp Wells, 2004; Gardner, 2007), it looks like emotional competencies within doctoral supervision are under-investigated. While I distinguished between self-awareness and management (intrapersonal skills) and social awareness and management (interpersonal skills), O'Meara, Knudsen, and Jones (2013) examined both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in faculty–doctoral student relationships and combined them under emotional competencies by using a framework called 'Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations, 1998'. The authors concluded that emotional competencies are part of daily interactions and are critical in doctoral education, both for faculty and students. While my research confirms what they suggested, I argue that emotional competencies are more important for supervisors than students.

My argument stems from the fact that as leaders who have people counting on them, supervisors' emotional competencies serve their own well-being and productivity at work, and they will eventually be in a better state to serve their students well. It is similar to a famous analogy that has been used a lot recently in the workplace about putting on your own oxygen mask in an airplane before helping your child with theirs. Although supervisors reported how they put their students first, and students reported how they appreciated supervisors who looked out for them, these findings did not contradict the supervisors' basic needs to take care of their own well-being first to enable them to help their students.

Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) surveyed more than 800 business professionals to examine the scuffles that professionals face in their daily conflict and find ways to enjoy life and work. They concluded that the more time working mothers invested in taking care of themselves, the healthier their children were, both emotionally and physically. Moreover, several studies argued that leaders' self-awareness and self-regulation must include emotional skills (e.g., Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004; Riggio & Reichard, 2008; Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, & Cole, 2003; Rubin, Munz, & Bommer, 2005; Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002; Wong, & Law, 2002). Consequently, supervisors' abilities to face emotional challenges (personal and student-related challenges) by acknowledging these negative emotions, conducting self-reflection, and being optimistic were all found to be effective strategies.

Another reason I argue emotional competencies are more important for supervisors than students is that supervisors have the capacity to influence their students' well-being and performance. Although this idea is related to the social competencies section, it is important to clarify that having emotionally competent supervisors who can realize their different emotions, what causes them, and how to manage them is essential. This finding is consistent with Wisker, Robinson, Trafford, Warnes, & Creighton (2003) who proposed that emotional intelligence is vital in working with students and leading them to completion. Additionally, the role of emotionally competent or emotionally intelligent leaders is well established in the literature (e.g., Leavitt & Bahrami, 1988; Reichard & Riggio, 2008). For example, Rafaeli and Worline, (2001) argued that "management's job has become the management of emotion" (p. 107). This is not to suggest that students' emotional competencies are less important—they still need to be aware of their emotions

and regulate them accordingly, especially because research has shown that regulating and managing emotions is possible and beneficial (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Larsen, 2000; Mayer, 2006; Tice & Bratslavsky, 2000; Williams, 2007). The point is that supervisors' leadership abilities to handle emotionally incompetent students is much more achievable than students' abilities to deal with emotionally incompetent supervisors (in this power scene), so emotional competencies are *must have skills* for supervisors and *recommended skills* for students to acquire and strengthen as they move through their programs.

From the students' perspectives, program-related challenges such as being behind in the program, experiments not working in the lab, being rejected by journals, getting ready for comprehensive exams, changing the supervision arrangement, being confronted with ambiguity and unclear direction, having a harsh supervisor, thinking about when to finish the program, going in the wrong direction, being asked why it is taking them too long to finish the program, and being delayed from graduating by a supervisor for no valid reason left them frustrated, disappointed, stressed, and in some cases, depressed.

On top of these program-related challenges that doctoral students experienced, life outside campus was still happening and added more nonprogram-related challenges to their lives. Whether their personal circumstances were positive; such as marriage or becoming a parent, or devastating, such as losing loved ones, students' well-being and performance were clearly impacted.

Both supervisors and students developed their own ways to maintain their resilience and well-being. These coping strategies include having an external support system such as family, friends, colleagues, and pets. They also include having an internal motivational and

healthy system, physically (e.g., sports and hobbies), mentally (e.g., holidays, vacations, and short breaks), and spiritually (e.g., spiritual life, yoga, self-reflection, and determination).

Social Competencies

Social competencies are demonstrated through active interaction when supervisors are present (physically or virtually and psychologically) and approachable. As such, based on the findings in this research, social competencies in the doctoral supervision context do not necessarily mean that the supervisor is expected to be "outgoing," as I suggested in the literature review (Northouse, 2013). In fact, professors—introverts and extroverts—are expected to take on doctoral students regardless of their personality traits, which implies that they are expected to do well in their supervision roles regardless of their own proclivities.

Whether great leaders are expected to be extroverts is a debatable topic that has started to attract attention (Cain, 2012, 2013; Walsh, 2012). Grant, Gino, and Hofmann (2011) revisited the notion of the extraverted leadership advantage and examined the performance of extroverted and introverted leaders. They reported that introverted leaders performed best with proactive employees. These employees were the ones who had the courage to voice concerns without being asked, and they were comfortable enough to express themselves and their ideas to solve problems. But one might ask whether introverted supervisors can have introverted students, which might mean the supervisory relationship could fail. This is a valid question, and the answer is that personality traits are only one aspect of the social competencies pillar in relational/positive leadership model that I developed in this research.

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Social competencies in this research simply refer to supervisors (introverts or extroverts) who are *positive* leaders and can generate a work environment for their students that is full of energy, hope, optimism, empathy, understanding, and resilience. They practice AAPP as an ethical obligation with *each and every* student they have (including introverts or extroverts, who speaks up or is silent, who seems needy or confident, and who shows up or hides), and these supervisors have (or actively learn) the ability to send and receive clear *information* and *emotional stimuli* as intended (program related or nonprogram related), while fulfilling perspective taking (taking the role of the student by involving mind, which means thinking) and empathy (taking the role of the student by involving heart, which means feeling). Their intrapersonal skills (inner dialogue) and interpersonal skills (outer dialogue) allow them to communicate ethical, cognitive, and emotional information and stimuli to foster trust, promote efficacy, offer authentic mentorship, and follow up to enforce understanding or clarify any misunderstandings that might occur in the dialogue.

Relational/Positive Leadership Model (RPL): Responding to the Main Research Question

This last section builds upon the previous two parts to answer the primary research question of this dissertation: What is the nature of relational leadership that exists in the doctoral supervisor–student context? As seen in chapter 4, I developed the relational/positive leadership model (RPL) to explain the nature of relational leadership.

One of the major findings in this research that can explain the nature of relational leadership is that relational leadership is connected to positive psychology and positive leadership, which confirms what Komives et al. (2013) proposed. That is why I decided to

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name the model RPL model. It was evident how relational leaders (supervisors) demonstrated their positive leadership abilities to create and enable a positive and engaging working environment (Cameron, 2013). They maintained positive relationships with their followers (students), which influenced their followers' well-being (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2013). These leaders displayed their *resonance* and *spiritual* leadership through mindfulness, confidence, optimism, hope, compassion, and resilience (Boyatzis, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2005; Fry & Matherly, 2006). They were empowering and strength-focused (Edwards, 2012), and also applied appreciative inquiry to create a positive change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

This study takes what Komives et al. (2013) proposed even further and suggests that relational leadership and positive leadership are most probably two sides of the same coin. My proposal is based on the findings that revealed positivity as a main characteristic of relational supervisors, which means that relationships and positivity in leadership contexts can be examined through the lenses of both relational leadership and positive leadership.

The RPL model presents four influential factors and four core competencies that are exhibited consistently in the doctoral supervision context, which is why I describe this model as a 4x4 consistency model. The findings suggest that relational/positive leadership is an effective approach that can maintain students' well-being and enhance their performances. This approach is a spectrum that goes from highly relational/ positive on one side to nonrelational/toxic leaders on the other, as described in the last section of chapter four. Similar to other social relationships, desirable and undesirable features exist in both sides of the spectrum. The difference is that while the undesirable features (e.g.,

misunderstanding) are few and handled well under the relational/ positive leadership style, these undesirable features are critical, major and can harm students' well-being and performances under the nonrelational/toxic supervision approach.

As I explained in the last section of chapter four, this leadership spectrum is people-oriented and suggests that the more student-centered the supervisors are, the more of a relational/positive approach they demonstrate, and the happier and more satisfied their students are. The less student centered the supervisors are, the less of a relational/positive approach they demonstrate, and the less happy or less satisfied their students are.

In essence, relational/positive leadership model in doctoral supervision is an ethical, student-centred approach that can enhance students' well-being and performance. It places the supervisors' awareness of the importance of their own well-being as a condition that enables them to guide their students who count on them. This leadership style values AAPP as its heart, because it can permit mutual trust, efficacy, and authentic mentorship to develop. These relational/positive supervisors are cognitively, emotionally, and socially competent, and they constantly demonstrate their ethical competencies.

Conclusion

Doctoral students deserve relational/positive leadership styles that are student-centred, in which supervisors have their students' best interests at heart and can customize an authentic mentorship approach based on the individual differences that characterize their students. The students' desire to complete their doctoral programs on time successfully while maintaining their well-being is no different than their supervisors' desire was when they were students themselves. To that end, exhibiting and promoting relational/positive leadership styles within doctoral supervision contexts is beneficial for

students' well-being and performance, and can be reflected at the individual level, group level, and departmental/institutional level.

At the individual level, supervisors should be encouraged to take care of their well-being so that they can help themselves (personally and professionally) and help their students who count on them. They should also be reminded to allocate some reflection time to energize themselves, evaluate their mentorship styles, and improve their supervision performances. Reflection time is also useful for doctoral students to assess and reassess their goals, what they have achieved, what they still need to accomplish, and what is needed from them and their supervisors to hit their targets. Students should also be encouraged to reach out for support at their departments, speak up, and draw attention to their struggles. Additionally, taking care of their well-being should be at the top of their priorities, so taking quality breaks and disconnecting from their programs for some time is a necessity they should ask for. This could include asking their departments to grant them annual paid vacations, and they could choose when to take them.

At the group level, relational/positive supervisors should take the lead in creating a positive initiative; this includes spreading their positivity, encouraging their colleagues to demonstrate genuine behaviors, mentoring new supervisors, and advocating for students who are left alone dealing with below average/toxic mentorship. Advocating for low-voice students (shy, introverted, or do not have enough energy to speak up) might be challenging, especially because most students prefer to suffer in silence and fear undesirable consequences if they choose to stand up for themselves. However, creating an understanding and empathetic culture in each department and a positive space for all

students to express their situations will ease the pain and assure students that things can get better and that they should not suffer or gamble their well-being.

At the departmental/institutional level, providing counselors in each department and introducing this supportive service in a way that is not specifically geared toward students who are stuck or who face barriers might avoid the stigma of seeking a counselor, and encourage students who struggle to reach out for help and foster a supportive and safe culture. To ensure autonomy and confidentiality and to protect students who reach out, it might be better if these counselors do not report to anyone in the same department.

Regarding reflection time and quality breaks, it might help to make them mandatory for all supervisors and doctoral students. This off time could be granted with incentives, which would help build awareness for mental health in universities. There should also be more recognition for authentic mentors, followed by interactive workshops to discuss how authentic mentorship makes a difference. Furthermore, when hiring new professors—novice or experienced—it is beneficial to invite them to share what they have learned as former doctoral students and talk about their supervision philosophies and their plans to support graduate students and contribute to their success. Finally, and most importantly, there is a need to support supervisors—especially newly appointed ones— with leadership programs that include psychology topics (e.g., positive psychology) that are beneficial to them and their students. Additionally, student Leslie mentioned in this dissertation that her supervisor has an assistant, so one way of supporting supervisors in their roles is to reduce their workloads by providing them with assistants so they can offer more time and attention to their doctoral students. Apart from what I suggested, there should be other ways that can support supervisors in their roles and students in their

supervisory relationships, so creating an online platform and conducting workshops that include both supervisors and doctoral students to promote open and positive dialogue as well as perspective taking and empathy is much needed.

Limitations

Although the rich data in this research allowed for a deep understanding of doctoral supervision—which has been troubled for decades—because it consists of qualitative research, the limitation is the small sample I interviewed. This did allow me to deeply explore the lived experiences of the participants, but this sample is not representative of the larger population demographic in Canada. As such, my second step is to follow up with a larger quantitative sample, in which I design a survey to test my RPL model across Canada. Another limitation is that this research did not include students who quit their programs because of their supervision experiences, which suggests that there are still unexplored areas that need more investigation.

Additionally, I aimed to have supervisors and students that are not paired, because I did not want to exclude students who had dysfunctional supervisory relationship. However, each story has another version that I might have missed by seeking this route, which is another limitation. The next step would be to conduct another study that includes dyads of supervisors and their students.

Furthermore, the approach I took entailed a deductive analysis followed by an indictive analysis, which offered a confirmation for my conceptual framework. Conversely, if I have started with inductive analysis instead, the outcome might have been different and may have yielded different themes. Future research projects may involve re-analyzing this study's datasets starting with the inductive approach.

Finally, I believe using the relational leadership lens offered great insights to understand the phenomenon of doctoral supervising, but it also limited the scope of my study. Using other lenses, such as Adaptive Mentorship (Ralph & Walker, 2010) or situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988), could have potentially produced different findings. Therefore, for future research, doctoral supervisor-student relationships could be analyzed through different lenses.

Implications for Practice, Policy, Theory, and Research

For practice, to my knowledge, this research is one of the few empirical studies (at least in Canada) to investigate both sides of the doctoral supervision context—supervisors and doctoral students—at the same time, and asking them the same questions makes this research valuable because it can inform both the practice and decision-makers. In addition to what I listed above on how promoting relational/positive supervision styles within the doctoral supervision context can be reflected at the individual, group, and departmental/institutional levels, there are other implications of the study for the practice and decision-makers.

Universities in Canada (and in other countries that have similar issues) can benefit from the RPL model to develop new programs, guides and manuals for preparing and equipping new professors to take on their doctoral supervision jobs. At the same time, the current supervisory policies can be reviewed in light of this paper's findings. Additionally, administrations and faculties can benefit from the findings in their hiring processes, building a safe culture in different departments (e.g., switching supervisors without causing harm to any party), and their efforts to support supervisors and doctoral students.

Moreover, doctoral students and supervisors can use this research to reflect on their beliefs and evaluate their practices to enhance their performances and well-being.

For theory, this research is one of the first empirical studies (at least in Canada) to explore the *relational leadership* style in the doctoral supervision context. The new relational/positive leadership model adds to the relational leadership theory, which is still a developing area. This research demonstrated how positive leadership is connected to relational leadership, how ethical leadership is the core of relational leadership, and how the people-oriented approach—which is one of the key servant leadership characteristics— is a key element of relational leadership.

For research, because doctoral supervision challenges and relational leadership are universal—despite all the cultural differences—this study was built on the previous research on doctoral supervision in different countries. As such, this study is an important contribution to the higher education literature not only in Canada but in other countries as well.

Implications Beyond the Doctoral Supervision Context

This research explored the nature of relational leadership and its impact on well-being and performance specifically in the doctoral supervision context, which is an authoritative environment that may be similar to other organizational and workplace settings. Hence, the proposed relational/positive leadership model is applicable to many workplaces, and these findings can inform policy and practice in private and public organizations alike.

Future Research

This study is the first stage in a program enquiry research that I decided to conduct. As such, my following step is to design a tool to examine the RPL model across Canada. This model could also be examined in other countries that face the same doctoral supervision challenges, such as the US, Australia, and UK.

A Canadian professor who participated in this study informed me how she was surprized to see how *doctoral supervision* was mentioned the last point in her *roles and responsibilities'* document and even this role was described in a few lines, which gives the impression that it is the last thing supervisors are expected to worry about. As such, I argue that there is a need to conduct an analysis of the Canadian universities' documents such as performance reports, supervisors' job descriptions, manuals, guides, annual progress reports, student–supervisor contracts, and how these documents support or do not support doctoral supervision. This document analysis could be done as a comparative study with the other similar jurisdictions (USA, UK, Australia) for example, and can inform research, policy and practice in multiple countries.

Also, it was evident in my dissertation that some doctoral students in Canada experienced anxiety and depression and even took anti-depressants. The difficulties they faced in their doctoral supervision, coupled with their program challenges and their personal lives' demands, did not allow them to enjoy their doctoral experiences and turned these experiences into unpleasant adventures. Therefore, replicating Levecque's et al. (2017) study on mental health in doctoral students' in Canada is necessary.

Finally, this research emphasized different areas that are missing in the literature: (a) absentee leadership in the doctoral supervision context and its impact on students' well-

being; (b) the lived experiences of the first doctoral students for a supervisor. It is important to explore how they either made it or did not; (c) the experiences of the supervisors with the first few students; discovering their struggles and what helped them in these challenges is necessary; (d) the hiring process for professors in Canada and its missing pieces, such as the supervision philosophy, the financial skills that are needed to run projects, and what they learned from their experiences when they were doctoral students; (e) the existence of the "unofficial supervisors" in Canada and elsewhere and their roles in helping doctoral students succeed; (f) the system and culture of switching supervisors in different universities/departments in Canada and other countries, and the impact of this on supervisors and students; and (g) the experiences of doctoral students who quit the program.

Final Thoughts

There is a need to offer supervisors more support in their roles. Expecting supervisors to shape the future of emerging scholars that our societies need while bearing significant responsibilities with less resources and a lack of support does not help, and the consequences on students' well-being and performance are very expensive—psychologically, physically, financially, and socially. Supervisors who are able to manage all of the challenges identified in this research and excel in their roles are true champions and maybe it is time to appreciate, acknowledge and recognize them with special awards, not only in their universities, but across Canada.

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Appendix A: Combined Letter of Information/Consent Form

Combined Letter of Information and Consent Form to Supervisor/Student Participant

Study Title: Relational Leadership in Higher Education: *Exploring the Supervisor–Doctoral Student Context*
Name of Student Researcher: Maha Al Makhamreh, Faculty of Education, Queen's University

I am Maha Al Makhamreh, a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University, Canada. Thank you for your interest in my study. I intend to ask you to reflect upon your supervisory experience and what has worked and/or what has not worked for you. I aim to explore the nature of leadership in doctoral supervision in Canada.

All participants will be doctoral supervisors and doctoral students in public universities in Canada and whose predominant programs/disciplines' funding agencies are: (1) The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); (2) The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); and, (3) the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). I will stop taking new participants once I have reached 10 participants in each of these categories of funding.

Students and supervisors will be independently recruited and no efforts will be made to link responses. The doctoral students can be at any stage of their program, and the doctoral supervisors can be at any stage of their career (i.e., assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, or even retired). I will interview you for one hour or less at a neutral location either during working hours, or after working hours based on your convenience. I can also conduct this interview via Skype, or telephone based on your location.

The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. I will only be recording audios, and will delete the audios after transcription. You are encouraged to send me an email after the interview, in case you have missed to mention something in the interview and still would like to share with me, or if you would like to elaborate more on anything else.

There are no known physical, economic, or social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation) associated with this study. No deception will be involved. However, some of the questions regarding your supervisory relationship experience may cause you anxiety. If you are experiencing distress during or after the interview, please contact community mental health services in your local area- you can use the government's websites to find these services. You can also contact the mental health services that are provided by your University, for example**,** if you are a Queen's student, please contact Mental Health at sharpel@queensu.ca or (613) 533-6000 ext. 75154

There will be some possible benefits for participating in this research. Through involvement in this research, students and supervisors will be given the opportunity to express their opinions and experiences about their doctorate supervision. Participation in studies is often experienced as a rich form of professional development. It also allows participants to reflect and examine their beliefs and practices in relation to effective supervision styles. Furthermore, the study results will help inform higher education to explore effective methods that enhance the supervisory relationship and help students thrive.

There is no obligation for you to say yes to take part in this study. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. You can stop participating at any time. You don't have to email me after the interview, if you don't want to. You may withdraw from the study up until three weeks from the interview by contacting me at 12mam17@queensu.ca . If you choose to withdraw, and elect to have your data removed, it will be destroyed: paper data will be shredded, and digital data and emails will be deleted.

I will keep your data securely for at least five years. Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible by replacing your name with a pseudonym for all data and in all publications. The code list linking real names with pseudonyms will be stored separately and securely from the data. I will hire a professional to transcribe my interviews, and I will ask him/her to sign the Confidentiality Agreement and return it back to me before I send him/her the audio recordings.

I hope to publish the results of this study in my doctoral dissertation and academic journals and present them at conferences. I will include only quotes from some of the interviews with you when presenting my findings. Although your identity may be able to be deduced, I will never include your name and your university name with any quotes, and I will protect your identity to the extent possible by not including information that could indirectly identify you. During the interview, please let me know if you say anything you do not want me to quote.

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.
If you have any questions about the research, please contact me, Maha Al Makhamreh at 12mam17@queensu.ca and my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba at ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca.

This Letter of Information and Consent form provide you with the details to help you make an informed choice. All your questions should be answered to your satisfaction before you decide whether or not to participate in this research study. Keep one copy of the Letter of Information and Consent form for your records and return one copy to the student researcher, Maha Al Makhamreh. By signing below, I am verifying that: I have read the Letter of Information and Consent form and all of my questions have been answered.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Doctoral Supervisors

Q1: It has been suggested that there are some influential factors in the supervisory relationship. I will list them and ask how you understand each influential factor and how you perceive each influential factor exists in the doctoral supervisor – student context

      Trust: could you please describe what trust means for you, and how trust exists between you and your students? Tell me a story of a situation that can illustrate your thinking.

      Efficacy: efficacy is your beliefs about your capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that could lead you to success in your role as a doctoral supervisor.

-How would you describe your efficacy, that is, your beliefs about your capabilities as a supervisor that can lead your students to success?
-Is it important for your students to trust that you have self-efficacy? Why?
-Please tell me how important self- efficacy is for doctoral students (their beliefs about their capabilities to succeed). Why?
-Is there a role that you play as a supervisor in enhancing your students' beliefs about their capabilities? Please tell me about this role.

      Mentorship: what does mentorship mean for you in the doctoral supervision-student context, and how does it exist in this context? Tell me a story of a situation that can illustrate your thinking.

Q2: Supervisor's actions/inactions and their decisions are very important, as these actions/ inactions and decisions can impact their student's well-being, social health, and success in their roles.

> ➢ Describe what you understand ethics to be, and how ethical leadership is present in the doctoral supervisor-student relationship.
> ➢ Can you tell me of a time when ethics became an important discussion or consideration for you?

Q3: Individuals (supervisors and students) are expected to be mentally aware of their past supervision experiences (whether positive or negative), and how these experiences might impact their current supervisory relationships

> ➢ Please tell me about the importance for you, to be thoughtful/mindful of the impact of your past supervision experiences on your current supervision relationships:

a) tell me about your past supervision experience when you were a doctoral student.
b) tell me about your earlier experiences as a doctoral supervisor, when you started supervising PhD student.

Q4: Problems or issues could occur for different reasons, just like in any other social relationship. For example, competing demands (or lack of time) can create a tense environment.

> ➢ Please tell me about the importance of thinking and problem solving in the supervisory relationship, and a story of a situation that can illustrate your thinking.

Q5: Doctoral students can experience different moments in their program in which they feel strong emotions.

> ➢ Can you think of a particular story where a student experienced strong emotion? How did you see your role as the supervisor in this situation? Tell me about how you responded during these times.
> ➢ It is possible you also experience different emotional states throughout your work with doctoral students. If yes, please describe some of them and how you managed your own emotional state.

Q6: Communication between the supervisor and the student is an important aspect of the work performed in the supervisor-student context.

> Can you give me some examples of the kinds of communication that exists between you and your student, and how you manage them? For example:
>
> > o Verbal communication
> > o Body language communication
> > o Written communication

Q7: A doctoral program can sometimes be challenging, for many reasons, and we have heard stories of students who have and have not completed their doctorate.

> ➢ Have any of your students considered quitting the doctoral program at any point? If yes, what can you tell me about it?
> ➢ Have you considered leaving your job because of a supervisory relationship issue? If yes, what can you tell me about the situation?

Q8: As you think of supervisors who have just started supervising doctoral students, what advice from your own experience might you offer them as they consider working with doctoral students of their own? For example:

> ➢ developing positive relationships with their students;
> ➢ developing skills/competencies as doctoral supervisors;
> ➢ developing resilience and well-being.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Doctoral Students

Q1: It has been suggested that there are some influential factors in the supervisory relationship. I will list them and ask how you understand each influential factor and how you perceive each influential factor exists in the doctoral supervisor – student context

    Trust: could you please describe what trust means for you, and how trust exists between you and your supervisor? Tell me a story of a situation that can illustrate your thinking.

    Efficacy: efficacy is your beliefs about your capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that could lead you to success.
        -How would you describe your efficacy, that is, your beliefs about your capabilities as a doctoral student?
        -In what ways do you see a role for your supervisor in enhancing your beliefs about your capabilities?

    Mentorship: what does mentorship mean in the doctoral supervisor – student relationship, and how does it exist in this context? Tell me a story of a situation that can illustrate your thinking.

Q2: Supervisor's actions/ inactions and their decisions are very important, as these actions/ inactions and decisions can impact their student's well-being, social health, and success in their roles.

> ➢ Describe what you understand ethics to be, and how ethics is present in the doctoral supervisor-student relationship.
> ➢ Can you tell me of a time when ethics became an important discussion or consideration with your supervisor?

Q3: Individuals (supervisors and students) are expected to be mentally aware of their past supervision experiences (whether positive or negative), and how these experiences might impact their current supervisory relationships

> ➢ Please tell me about the importance for you, to be thoughtful/mindful of the impact of your past supervision experiences on your relationships, whether a new relationship or a well-established one.

Q4: Problems or issues could occur for different reasons, just like in any other social relationship. For example, competing demands (or lack of time) can create a tense environment.

> ➢ Please tell me about the importance of thinking and problem solving in the supervisory relationship, and a story of a situation that can illustrate your thinking.

Q5: As a doctoral student, you might have experienced different emotional states throughout your program.

> ➤ Is there a significant story or are there particular moments in your program in which you felt strong emotions? How did you manage your emotions?
> ➤ How did your supervisor respond during these times?

Q6: Communication between the supervisor and the student is an important aspect of the work performed in the supervisor-student context.

> ➤ Can you give me some examples of the kinds of communication that exists between you and your supervisor? for example:
>
>> ○ Verbal communication
>> ○ Body language communication
>> ○ Written communication

Q7: A doctoral program can sometimes be challenging, for many reasons, and we have heard stories of people who have and have not completed their doctorate.

> ➤ Have you, at any point, considered leaving the program, or thought that the program was not your right path?
> ➤ If yes, can you tell me some details of the situation and how you negotiated this thinking at that time?

Q8: As you think of those who are just entering the doctoral programs, what advice from your own experience might you offer them? For example:

> ➤ developing positive relationships with their supervisors;
> ➤ developing skills/competencies as PhD students;
> ➤ developing resilience and well-being.

Appendix D: General Research Ethics Board Approval

May 23, 2018

Mrs. Maha Al Makhamreh
Ph.D. Candidate
Faculty of Education
Queen's University
Duncan McArthur Hall
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7

GREB Ref #: GEDUC-895-18; TRAQ # 6023576
Title: "GEDUC-895-18 Relational Leadership in Higher Education: Exploring the Supervisor-Doctoral Student Context"

Dear Mrs. Al Makhamreh:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled **"GEDUC-895-18 Relational Leadership in Higher Education: Exploring the Supervisor-Doctoral Student Context"** for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2014)) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html/; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html/; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies". Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Ms. Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

Dean Tripp, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board