

# DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SUPERVISORS AND DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

Janelle McPhail & Ronel Erwee

## ABSTRACT

Theoretical models in the leadership, mentorship and relationship marketing domains study the relationship between partners. These models are integrated in this paper to propose a new approach to the dynamics of professional relationships between doctoral candidates and their supervisors. This foundation for building a professional relationship model integrates relationship variables and the relationship development process. The research issues that are raised in this paper should now be subjected to extensive investigation to assist the partners in the relationship to manage the relationship more effectively.

## INTRODUCTION

The increase in the proportion of academics with doctorates has generated an interest in the nature and quality of PhD training (Conrad, Perry & Zuber-Skerritt 1992). Most of the interest centres on the management of the process, content and length of the program (Anderson, Arthur & Stokes 1997; O'Kane 1997). The authors of this paper propose that the *development of a professional relationship between a supervisor and doctoral candidate*, based on key relationship variables such as trust and commitment, is an essential component in the successful completion of a doctoral program. The paper focuses on building a new model of such a relationship in addition to the program elements that form the basis of previous inquiry.

Theoretical models in different fields need to be used to provide lines of inquiry when exploring the experiences of supervisors and doctoral candidates in building such a professional relationship. This paper examines these models to study the dynamics of the relationship between doctoral candidates and their supervisors, and to propose an exploratory research methodology.

---

Janelle McPhail (e-mail: mcphail@usq.edu.au) is a senior lecturer in marketing at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research interests are in the areas of services, relationship marketing and hospitality management. Janelle has published in *International Journal of Advertising*, *Global Business Languages*, *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, *Australian Journal of Hospitality Management* and various international conference proceedings. She teaches research methodology and services marketing for managers in the postgraduate program, and services marketing at the undergraduate level; Ronel Erwee (e-mail: erwee@usq.edu.au) joined USQ from the Graduate School of Management, University of Pretoria, South Africa, where she was Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Leadership and International Management. She served on the Boards of Directors on the Small Business Development Corporation, Denel Informatics and the Women's Bureau. Her research and publications include the areas of international management, entrepreneurship, career development of adults, women in organisations/equal opportunity and organisational behaviour and leadership.

## **THE DYNAMICS OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Specifically, the paper concentrates on models that focus on the development of relationships in leadership, mentorship and buyer-seller relationships from the relationship marketing domain to determine whether they apply in a supervisor-doctorial candidate relationship.

### *Trust in Leadership Theories*

Bennis (1988) noted that one of the key competencies that successful leaders shared was the management of trust between them and their followers. A further premise of this contingency approach to leadership is that the correct leadership style to use is contingent on factors such as the leader-member relationship, the followers themselves, the organisational culture or climate and other environmental factors. Translated to the supervisor-doctorial candidate relationship, this contingency implies that each relationship will be different depending on the supervisor's style of guiding doctoral students, the characteristics of the doctoral student, the research climate and infrastructure in the institution, as well as exogenous factors such as the particular research design.

One avenue of inquiry into the development of trust relationships is the developmental approach formulated by Hersey and Blanchard (1982). They propose that leaders should adapt their leadership style based on the increasing maturity or developmental level of a subordinate. As the subordinate's willingness and ability to take responsibility increases, the achievement motivation level, relevant task knowledge and experience also increases. The leader moves from a directive, to a coaching, to a participative and, finally, to a delegating style. The leader or manager guides the maturation of the subordinate by adapting their leadership style to elicit specific responses from the employee. This progression in relationship development also is evident in the supervisor-doctoral relationships as the supervisor guides the candidate on the structure of the dissertation (directive behaviour), then coaches the candidate on writing style, participates with the candidate on presenting papers at conferences and finally delegates the completion of the dissertation to the candidate.

Dhremmer and Grossmann (1988) used a critical incident methodology to investigate how a climate of mutual trust and respect is established between employees and managers. Their developmental paradigm of leadership proposes a series of nine stages that describes the developmental socialisation of the new employee from time of entry until personal commitment and loyalty between the manager and employee develops. The authors propose that all nine stages in the trust relationship can be applicable in the emerging professional relationship between supervisor and doctoral candidate. The stages are described as:

- Attention — the leader (supervisor) provides time and attention to helping the employee (doctoral candidate) to know how to perform the task;
- Support — the subordinate (doctoral candidate) can count on the leader (supervisor) to provide support for solving work-related problems;
- Feedback — information sharing wherein the worker (doctoral candidate) expects the manager (supervisor) to give appropriate feedback as to why something needs to be done,

and to give recognition and information about matters affecting the worker (doctoral candidate);

- Nurturing — involves the sharing of ideas and interpersonal feelings;
- Emerging autonomy — the employee (doctoral candidate) experiences high enthusiasm and motivation and begins to think and act independently;
- Setting limits — the leader (supervisor) sets limits or controls on appropriate organisational roles for the employee (doctoral candidate);
- Personal competency — the employees (doctoral candidate) are considered to be high achievers with good task skills and a willingness to take responsibility for results; and
- Loyalty and commitment — the employees (doctoral candidate) see themselves as part of a larger organisation with a responsibility for impacting on that environment in a personal way.

The focus is on the maturity or development of the relationship as well as on the perception of the employee. Banner and Blasingame (1988) note that the stages seemed sequential, showed little overlap and although deficiencies in one stage did not necessarily prevent going forward with the relationship development, they may slow the relationship development process.

Drehmer and Grossman (in Erwee 1994) designed a questionnaire to establish employees' perceptions of their relationship with their manager. Erwee (1994) tested the Drehmer and Grossman model by adapting their instrument for use by both managers and subordinates. A sample of MBA students and their managers completed the questionnaire and an analysis of the data confirmed that the model could be used to describe perceptions of the trust relationship. However, the respondents could not identify clear *stages* in the relationship, but described the *state* of the relationship at that particular time. Two separate profiles could be drawn — a manager's perception as well as an employee's perception of all nine facets of the relationship. There were cases where the profiles overlapped indicating consensus between manager and subordinate of the facets of the relationship. However, in most cases there were distinct differences indicating the contrasting perceptions of the facets of the relationship between managers and employees.

The above evaluation of the trust element of leadership theories presented here suggests two reasons why leadership models are insufficient to understand the complexities of the supervisor-doctoral candidate's trust relationship. First, they assume that the power in guiding the relationship is primarily vested in the leaders; and, second, the subordinate stays subservient in this hierarchical relationship. Based on the review of leadership models presented here, the authors propose that despite this deficiency there are certain relevant issues from these models that can be investigated to further our understanding in the trust relationship between a supervisor and a doctoral candidate. Nevertheless, leadership theories do not provide an adequate base for analysing the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship: the mentorship literature is explored next for further theories.

*Mentorship: Development of Proteges*

Mumford (1997) notes that the relationship between a manager and subordinate is different from that of a mentor and a learner — the mentor should have no direct managerial link to the learner. Most of the literature (for example, Blackburn, Chapman & Cameron 1981; Kram & Isabella 1985; Limerick, Haywood & Daws 1994) accepts the view that the mentor is not in a direct hierarchical relationship with the protege. However, this assumption is contradicted in the supervisor-doctorial candidate relationship especially if the doctoral candidate is a faculty member employed in the same department as the supervisor, who may be a chair or head of department. A related issue is that independent of the hierarchical relationship, there is usually a power dependency. That is, the mentor has more experience, knowledge and qualifications than the protege (Monaghan & Lunt 1992).

The impact that mentors have on the career development of their proteges is substantial. Mentors provide their proteges with career enhancing functions such as knowledge of the organisation or profession by explaining a) the politics of the organisation or profession; b) norms and standards of the organisation or profession; c) skills and competencies necessary for succession to the next step; d) paths to advancement; e) acceptable methods for gaining visibility and (f) stumbling blocks and failure patterns (Limerick et al. 1994). A further separate component of the relationship is the psychosocial functions of the mentor such as role modelling, counselling, confirmation and friendship to help the protege develop a sense of professional identity and competence (Kram & Isabella 1985). The assumption here is that not all supervisors will be equally competent or interested to provide all the career-enhancing or psychosocial functions. Doctoral candidates may also differ in the expectations they have of the functions of the supervisor.

Within the academic environment, mentorship most often occurs in the informal sponsorship that a graduate student receives from a supervisor during graduate studies (Blackburn et al., 1981). A mentor becomes a role model, providing academic advice and even assistance in gaining access to the profession. Blackburn et al. (1981, p. 315) surveyed mentor professors and found that mentors overwhelmingly nominated as their most successful proteges those whose careers were essentially identical to their own—that is, their ‘clones’. These authors describe the mentor-protege relationship as a symbiotic partnership. In contrast, Limerick et al. (1994) discuss the reciprocity model of mentoring relationships as one in which the exchange of benefits is not a quid pro quo arrangement, but rather one in which both partners invest resources with the expectation that the exchange will balance over time.

Most of the mentoring literature describes the stages of the mentoring relationship as having selection or initiation phases, cultivation or process phases, outcome phases and eventual separation and redefinition phases. Complementarity of need solidifies a mentor relationship during the selection phase (Kram et al. 1985). During the cultivation phase, a range of career enhancing and psychosocial functions are in operation that expands the relationship to its maximum. If the protege shows increasing confidence and independence, or if a sense of competition between the mentor and protege emerges, the relationship may enter into a separation phase.

Problems experienced by doctoral candidates during phases of the relationship most often are due to high or mismatched expectations. Moses (1992) provides a 'Role Perception Rating Scale' to clarify expectations between supervisors and students about the topic, amount of contact, involvement, and process and content of the thesis. The expectations about the topic could range from the supervisor directing the student in the appropriate program of research, to the supervisor acting mainly as a sounding board for the student's ideas. Expectations could be that the relationships are purely professional and personal matters should not intrude, or that close personal relationships are essential for successful supervision.

*Mentorship and networking.* This paper has focussed on the supervisor-doctoral candidate dyadic relationship. However, the doctoral candidate also builds other relationships during the candidature. Therefore, the dyadic relationship needs to be viewed in the context of other relationships and networks of both partners. The role of networking is a recurrent theme in mentorship. Blackburn et al. (1981) cite studies documenting the stratification of higher education, namely, that faculties of highly rated research universities are drawn almost exclusively from graduates of their own and peer institutions. These faculty members then serve on external review panels for grants, or lead professional associations that again create stratified formal and informal networks. From the mentor's point of view, placement of proteges at research universities is a necessary condition for maintaining a network of influence at those institutions.

Conrad et al. (1992) and Green (1997) note that a single supervisor may not be able to fulfil all the complex tasks in the PhD process. The doctoral candidate may gain support from attending postgraduate seminars, joining research groups, seeking out a critical friend and joining a mentor program. Both Jackson (1993) and Mumford (1997) use the term 'helpers' within networks to describe those who create learning opportunities to assist young professionals. Some formal programs (Wilson & Elman 1990; Caldwell & Carter 1993) pair participants together who are of similar age and status. For example, newly enrolled doctoral candidates are introduced to final year candidates. Kram and Isabella (1985) argue that mentoring and peer relationships have several common attributes. Both provide career-enhancing and psychosocial functions and have the potential to support development at successive career stages. The most important difference is that peer relationships have a two-way exchange in contrast to the one-way dynamic of mentorship.

These peer relationships of doctoral candidates vary on a continuum from information peers, to collegial peers, to special peers. Information peer relationships are characterised by low levels of self-disclosure and trust and merely information exchange about the organisation. Collegial peer relationships have a moderate level of trust and self-disclosure and are characterised by increasing levels of emotional support, job-related feedback and friendship. Special peers are more rare as the relationship tolerates revelations about personal dilemmas, greater self-disclosure and emotional support (Kram & Isabella 1985).

From the review provided here, the authors believe that the literatures on leadership and mentorship show convergence. Both acknowledge that trust relationships are reciprocal, have a number of different stages, phases or states and fulfil both task or career enhancing functions as well as psychosocial or relationship functions. However, this segment of the management literature does not provide a comprehensive overview needed to explore the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship. Significant research on dyadic relationships and networks has

---

emerged in the marketing domain and, therefore, the focus will now move to relationship marketing research to investigate principles applicable to the supervisor-doctoral relationship.

### *Professional Relationships in Relationship Marketing*

The theory of relationship marketing (RM) is relevant to professional services such as postgraduate research in tertiary education because there is a tendency for providers and customers of professional services to form long term relationships (Palmer & Maani 1995). While there is no one single definition of RM, Berry (1983, p. 25) provides a generally accepted view that focuses on the consumer-seller dyad when he defines RM as ‘... attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships’. Gronroos (1990, p. 5) extends this definition by adding ‘... that the objectives of the parties involved are met. Mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises do this’. Berry (1995) has argued that keeping promises is the key to maintaining and enhancing relationships. Furthermore, for an exchange relationship to exist, it has to be mutually perceived and mutually beneficial (Barnes 1994). The supervisor-doctoral candidate (dyad) engages in a professional relationship that is built one encounter at a time (Bitner 1995) by phone, mail, e-mail or in person, through a process of relationship formation, maintenance, and evolution (Dabholkar, Johnston & Cathey 1994).

Experiencing a series of very positive encounters provides a stronger base for a relationship than does a series of negative events. Through a series of positive encounters, a sense of trust evolves together with growing relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt 1994). The professional relationship between the supervisor and the doctoral student evolves through ongoing encounters in which each party affects and is affected by the other. These interactions need to be examined as an adaptation process, where in order to exist over time, both partners must work continually at building and maintaining trust and at understanding each other’s professional needs (Hallen, Johanson & Seyed-Mohamed 1991). To enhance our understanding of the relationship development process in the encounter between the supervisor-doctoral candidate, there is a need to identify the relationship variables that are active and/or latent during this process (Wilson 1995).

Relationship studies in the marketing literature have focused on buyer-seller relationships and channel relationships. Based on these studies, Wilson (1995) has extracted a set of relationship variables that proved to have both theoretical and empirical support for predicting relationships in the buyer-seller and channel context. The authors of this paper believe that the buyer-seller relationship is not unlike the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship. Although based on slight contextual changes and situational factors, most of the relationship variables cited by Wilson (1995) and displayed in figure 1, can be used to model the supervisor-doctoral relationship.

Drawing on the work of Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987) and Borys and Jemison (1989), Wilson (1995, p. 340) proposes the following stages in the model of the dyadic relationship development process between the buyer and seller: partner search and selection; defining purpose; setting relationship boundaries; creating relationship value; and relationship maintenance. Figure 1 displays the merging of the relationship variables with the relationship process. The variables have an active phase when they are critical to the relationship process, and a latent phase where they still remain important, but are not under active consideration in the relationship interaction unless changes in the relationship may reactivate a variable

(Wilson, 1995). The model developed by Wilson, that integrates key relationship variables with the concept of a developmental process is a comprehensive basis to build on by adding concepts from the management literature.

**Figure 1: Integrating the Relationship Variables and the Relationship Development Process**

Variable	Partner Selection	Defining Purpose	Setting Relationship Boundaries	Creating Relationship Value	Relationship Maintenance
Reputation	██████████				
Performance Satisfaction	████████████████████				
Trust	██████████				
Social Bonds	████████████████████				
Comparison Level of Alternatives (C <sub>alt</sub> )	██████████				
Mutual Goals	████████████████████				
Power/Dependence	████████████████████				
Technology	████████████████████				
Nonretrievable Investments		████████████████████			
Adaptations		████████████████████			
Structural Bonds			████████████████████		
Cooperation			████████████████████		
Commitment			████████████████████		

(Source: Wilson, D.T. 1995, 'An integrated model of buyer-seller relationships', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23 (4), 340.)

The objective of the final section of this paper is to build a foundation for an integrated model that blends the empirical knowledge about successful relationship variables with the conceptual process model, leadership theories and mentorship in the context of the supervisor-doctoral professional relationship.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR A SUPERVISOR—DOCTORAL PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP MODEL

### *Mutual Search and Selection*

The authors propose that in both the mentorship and PhD selection process, the search can either be initiated by the protege and PhD student or the supervisor or mentor, whereas in leadership the selection process is more of an organisationally managed process. In both the PhD and mentoring process, there is a *mutuality* implicit in the selection process, most often determined by the reputation for performance of both parties. Both the doctoral candidate and the supervisor have the freedom to choose to work with each other. This is also evident to some degree in the buyer-seller relationship.

**Table 1: Examples of Supervisory Behaviour to Establish a Relationship of Trust**

<b>Developmental stage</b>	<b>Supervisory behaviour</b>
Knowledge transfer	Provides basic knowledge about appropriate methodology; discusses chapter structure of the PhD.; directs me to theoretical sources and fills my knowledge gaps; discusses style and sets timeframes
Feedback and Information sharing	Gives feedback on chapters written; allows me to hand in text that could only be 60% right; refines my thoughts, aims, hypotheses and methodology; gives me information about the research goals of the faculty; helps with research proposal for faculty funds
Nurturing	Realises the complexity of my life goals and pressures; has a personalised approach for different students; gives coffee when needed
Emerging autonomy	Gives relative freedom to structure chapters; acknowledges my views; allows me to make mistakes
Setting limits	Sets deadlines to suit the phase of the study; cuts short; my going off on tangents discusses procedures for presentations; critiques my reports
Personal competency	Allows me to do a research colloquium on preliminary results
Personal and professional growth	Acts as co-author on articles and conference presentations; grooms me for presentations; introduces me to faculty in the field of research.
Loyalty and commitment	Acts as referee for my job applications; encourages me to apply for specific posts; uses my skills in ongoing research

(Source: Erwee and USQ Doctoral Club, 1997)

The authors disagree that social bonding would be an active variable at this stage since most of the focus is on *performance verification* in the PhD process. The authors explored examples of supervisory behaviours during stages in developing a relationship with doctoral candidates (Table 1). The theme of performance verification emerged even in stages that are supposed to reflect a high social bonding content. This could be related to the fact that most of

the doctoral candidates in the discussion session were at the beginning of their candidature. The doctoral candidates also described discussions about topic selection and thesis requirements, rather than considering social issues (see Table 2). This suggests that the supervisor is directing the development of the relationship that affects the power dynamics.

**Table 2: Doctoral Students’ Expectations of Supervisors on Moses Role Perception Rating Scale**

Internal students	External students
<p><b>Topic and course of study</b> Some candidates value autonomy and would first select a topic and then choose a supervisor as a content specialist. Other candidates choose a supervisor who could direct them in the choice of a topic.</p>	<p>Cuts in government funding drives companies to request practical research that solves business problems in a short time. A supervisor with extensive experience can assist the student until student has developed ideas</p>
<p><b>Contact and involvement</b> Relationships could vary between a more personal to a more professional relationship depending on the conventions within the discipline area.</p>	<p>Relationship is dependent on the personalities of the partners. Supervisor must keep track of progress, but must allow autonomy</p>
<p><b>The Thesis</b> Candidates rely on the supervisor to set the standards for the thesis. Student has the primary role in the content and supervisor in the process.</p>	<p>Encourage student to finish the thesis in the shortest period of time. Supervisor should review drafts of each section</p>

(Source: Erwee and USQ Doctoral Club, 1997)

In terms of the power relationship, power is mainly with the mentor or supervisor, who makes the decision to accept the student or protege, whereas in leadership, the power resides with the leader. The authors believe, in support of the relationship marketing literature, there should be recognition at this stage that the power imbalance that exists initially, will move to one of increased interdependency within the next two stages. A subtle bilateral testing and probing (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh 1987) takes place, which leads to a positive evaluation and allows for the emergence of a perception of trustworthiness.

In the authors’ experience, the student would be aware of alternative supervisors. However, if there are no alternative supervisors available or suitable, the doctoral candidate is constrained in not being able to leave the relationship. The supervisor may view one doctoral candidate as more of a high quality performer than another and show a preference for the former. Assuming that the mutual selection has taken place, the clarification of mutual goals starts to receive attention.

*Defining the Purpose of the Relationship*

In the mentorship process, the purpose of the relationship may be open to interpretation, whereas in the leadership, supervisor-doctoral candidate and buyer-seller relationship (Figure 1), the purpose of the relationship is clearly defined. The authors believe that defining the

purpose of the relationship as the production of a high quality dissertation will help the supervisor and doctoral candidate establish mutual goals. This process can be aided by using the Role Perception Rating Scale (Moses 1992). In the absence of a common research culture, the clarification of mutual goals tends to be more complex.

Adding to this complexity is the quality of the communication that takes place between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor. The focus needs to be both on the discussion of paradigms and theoretical constructs as well as relationship issues. Wilson (1995; Figure 1) indicates that communication is a necessary process throughout all stages of a relationship, but the content of the communication activity changes as the stage in the process changes.

The authors agree with Wilson (1995; Figure 1) that clarifying the breadth of purpose of the relationship as well as the scope of the PhD is critical at this stage. Failing to do this may result in insufficient detail to make decisions about the relationship. The ideal outcomes at this stage involve setting mutual goals and objectives, the emergence of social bonding, and the development of the trust relationship. If these outcomes are not achieved, it leads to a fragile relationship, since both parties have limited commitment and can terminate the relationship at this stage.

#### *Setting Relationship Boundaries*

Mentor-protégé, buyer-seller relationships (Figure 1) as well as supervisor-doctorial candidate relationships seldom have legal structures that define the boundaries of the relationship. In the absence of a legal structure, the definition of the boundaries becomes more diffuse. In the case of a doctoral candidate that is accepted into the university as a research fellow, the candidate is bound to the position description, departmental needs and doctoral candidate guidelines. In the case of a colleague who starts a PhD, contractual requirements could be an impediment.

Not unlike the buyer-seller relationship where appropriate resources are committed to complete the task, the supervisor-doctorial candidate relationship also requires resources. Internal doctoral candidates and their supervisors share the same university resources, whereas external candidates are less dependent on one resource pool. Collaborative industry research grants or scholarships expand the resource pool for the candidate and supervisor. The stipulation of the grant usually specifies the performance levels and times, and that assists in defining the boundaries of the relationship. Strong mutual goals, trust and social bonding between the supervisor and candidate assist in the acquisition of resources.

The boundary definition process is facilitated by using tools such as a model of how the PhD should be structured (Perry 1994). The criteria for judging the PhD could provide further guidelines to adapt the behaviour of the candidate to conform to performance standards. If the supervisor is too rigid in implementing these techniques, a power imbalance detrimental to the relationship can occur. These tools should be the basis for the adaptive process to accommodate the perspectives of the candidate and the supervisor to ensure mutual investment in the relationship and the dissertation.

During the first phase of the process, both parties are focused on the tangible dimensions of the relationship such as discussion about the topic, resources and mutual goals. The authors propose that the early awareness of a power imbalance leads to an appreciation of the

intangible dimensions to the relationship. Therefore, the trust variable becomes latent and focus on the commitment variable becomes stronger. This supports Wilson's model (1995; Figure 1).

### *Creating Relationship Value*

In relationship building, both parties accept the notion that they have achieved a level of commitment that confirms the importance of the relationship and that the relationship will bring future value or benefits to the parties. The synergistic effect of both parties working together creates value that is required for the relationship to flourish.

Value can be derived from the candidates' point of view by developing research skills and by learning to write a dissertation. From the supervisor's point of view, expanding one's repertoire of supervisory skills and having research assistance on major research projects creates value. Wilson (1995) cautions that a partner with power may be able to extract value-sharing concessions, but it may be at the expense of trust and cooperation. The authors believe that value in the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship can be measured objectively by doctoral colloquiums, joint authorship of papers, presentations at research colloquia and conferences. The subjective evaluation of the interpersonal dimensions of the relationship is more complex.

The mentorship literature refers to a reciprocal or symbiotic relationship. The authors of this paper argue that at the stage of creating relationship value, a collegiate relationship should be developing to ensure a balance of power. The concept of collegiality goes beyond cooperation, as described by Wilson (1995). Collegiality here is defined as an attitude of mutual responsibility between the parties, a degree of equality and the insistence of a shallow hierarchical structure. This will lead supervisors to assert that doctoral candidates are working with, and not for them, and it is more generally characterised by a belief that they are engaged in a joint endeavour (Elton & Pope, 1992). This approach supports the notion of the increasing maturity of a relationship (Hersey & Blanchard 1982; Banner & Blasingame 1988), as noted above.

Non-retrievable investments, such as time, equipment and financial resources are made by both parties to increase value and build stronger structural bonds. These structural bonds again create impediments to the termination of the relationship.

### *Relationship Maintenance*

In the management and marketing literature, relationship maintenance may include integration of operations and strategies, but this is not relevant to the mentorship or supervisory relationship. In the developmental model of leadership (Banner & Blasingame 1988), the personal competency and loyalty and commitment stages can be compared to the relationship maintenance phase.

The authors believe that as both parties have made major investments in the relationship, the pressure is to adjust, rather than dissolve, the relationship. There is recognition of increased commitment and mutual benefits and specific conflict resolution processes are used to

maintain the relationship. In turn, the parties show self-control to obtain long-term rewards based on mutual trust.

### *Dissolution*

Wilson (1995) did not include a dissolution phase in his original model. However, the mentorship literature (Limerick et al. 1994) recognises that there may be separation and redefinition phases in relationships. Little is known about disengagement and more research is needed on this dimension.

There could be two outcomes if a decision to separate is made, namely the continuation of a positive relationship that could either be professional or personal, or there could be a negative and acrimonious separation. If the termination is based on mutual interest and cost benefit analysis of continuing the relationship, it is usually positive. In the PhD process, regulations usually stipulate a minimum of three years to complete the dissertation and a natural positive separation could occur at this stage.

A continuation of the positive relationship could be based on the opportunity for further joint collaboration on major research projects. The supervisor may also be accepted as a career or life mentor at this stage. If a collegiate relationship between the supervisor and doctoral candidate has developed, the redefinition of the relationship as a mentoring relationship will have a different genesis than if the base was originally a symbiotic or reciprocity model of mentorship. The dissolution of the supervisor and doctoral candidate relationship may further evolve into a network of peer relationships.

The termination of relationships may result in a significant source of psychological, emotional and physical stress. The source of a negative termination may lie, for example, in stylistic differences between men and women in their expectations of relationships based on differently socialised views of the world that may emerge in cross-gender relationships (Limerick et al., 1994).

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

### *Concept Level*

Theoretical concepts have been drawn from discipline areas namely leadership, mentorship and relationship marketing. Although concepts such as trust are generic to all three disciplines, the definitions differ between the discipline areas. This again leads to difficulties in capturing the complexities of the concept and operationalising it in the context of the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship. As we progress in studying the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship, the key relationship variables as depicted in Figure 1 and discussed in this article, should be clarified through further research.

### *Model Level*

The conceptual model proposed by Wilson (1995) was adapted in this article to analyse critical relationship variables and their integration into the development process of professional relationships over time. The model (Wilson 1995) was extended by adding the

dissolution phase to the developmental process. The application context is the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship within a university setting.

References were made to situational variables such as resources available in a university system, with an opportunity to explore at a future time the impact of such situational variables. Contextual factors and situational variables may further interact to influence the development of the relationship process.

A further extension of the model would be to investigate whether the supervisor and doctoral candidate could identify clear phases in the relationship or whether they, in describing the state of the relationship, comment on all of the relationship variables at a particular phase.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The authors propose an exploratory research approach be used in future research to encourage unpredicted aspects of the relationship to emerge. Research questions guiding future research should be 'What are the critical relationship variables and phases of the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship?' 'How and why is the professional relationship developed and maintained over time?' and 'How and why do situational variables influence the development of the relationship?'

The methodology needs to provide a rich descriptive account of personal experience from both the supervisor and the doctoral candidate. Convergent interviewing can be used to test the perceptions of both partners. If doctoral candidates and supervisors in science and business faculties are interviewed, the impact of different situational variables, such as resources, can be investigated. Other initiatives within a university system such as doctoral clubs or supervisors' forums that form a supportive research climate are part of the situational variables requiring further investigation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many of the existing models on managing relationships from different discipline areas were used to understand the dynamics of the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship. The theory of relationship marketing and the relationship development process provided a strong foundation upon which to build the foundations for a model for the professional relationship between supervisor-doctoral candidate. Leadership theories were found to be insufficient to understand the complexities of the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship, however, a selection of issues from these leadership models contributed to the foundation. A further contribution was gained from the mentorship literature including aspects of networking. This foundation of a proposed professional relationship model can now be subjected to extensive comment, investigation and expansion to assist the partners in the relationship to manage the relationship more effectively.

## **REFERENCES**

- Anderson, D., Arthur, B. & Stokes, T. 1997, 'Qualifications of Australian Academics', DEETYA report, in B. Juddery, 'Uni Hiring Policy Inbred: Study Queries Value of 'Rampant' PhDs', *Campus Review*, September 24-30, 3.
-

- Banner, D.K. & Blasingame, J.W. 1988, 'Towards A Developmental Paradigm of Leadership', *Leadership and Organisation Development Journal*, 9(4), 7-16.
- Barnes, J.G. 1994, 'The Issues of Establishing Relationships With Customers in Service Companies: When Are Relationships Feasible and What Form Should They Take?', paper presented at *Frontiers in Services Conference*, Vanderbilt: American Marketing Association and Vanderbilt University Center for Services Marketing, October.
- Berry, L.L. 1983, 'Relationship Marketing, in Emerging Perspectives on Services Marketing, L. Berry, G. Lynn Shostack, & Gregg D. Upham, (eds.), Chicago: American Marketing Association, 25-28.
- Berry, L.L. 1995, 'Relationship Marketing of Services — Growing Interest, Emerging Perspectives', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4), 236-245.
- Bitner, M.J. 1995, 'Building Service Relationships: It's all About Promises', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4), 246-251.
- Blackburn, R.T., Chapman, D.W. & Cameron, S. 1981, 'Cloning in Academe: Mentorship and Academic Careers', *Research in Higher Education*, 15(4), 315-327.
- Boyd, B. & Jemison, D.B. 1989, 'Hybrid Arrangements as Strategic Alliances: Theoretical Issues in Organizational Combinations', *Academy of Management Review*, 14, (February), 234-49.
- Caldwell, B.J. & Carter, E.M.A. 1993, *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies For Workplace Learning*, The Falmer Group, London.
- Conrad, L., Perry, C. & Zuber-Skerritt, O. 1992, 'Alternatives to Traditional Postgraduate Supervision in the Social Sciences,' in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed), *Starting Research — Supervision and Training*, Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland, 132-157.
- Dabholkar, P.A., Wesley, J.J. & Cathey, A.S. 1994, 'The Dynamics of Long-Term Business-to-Business Exchange Relationships', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 22(2), 130-145.
- Dwyer, F.R., Schurr, P.H. & Oh, S. 1987, 'Developing Buyer-Seller Relationships', *Journal of Marketing*, 51 (April), 11-27.
- Elton, L. & Pope, M. 1992, Research Supervision – 'The Value of Collegiality', in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed), *Starting Research – Supervision and Training*, The Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland, 69-85.
- Erwee, R. 1994, MBA Assignment: 'Theory Testing of Drehmer and Grossmann's Model', Working Paper, Graduate School of Management, University of Pretoria, 1-15.
-

- 
- Green, P. 1997, 'Dual Perspectives on Postgraduate Supervision', <http://ulibase.rmit.edu.au/articles/green1.html#super>
- Gronroos, C. 1990, 'Relationship Approach to Marketing in Service Contexts: The Marketing and Organisational Behaviour Interface', *Journal of Business Research*, 20 (January), 3-11.
- Hallen, L., Johanson, J. & Seyed-Mohamed, N. 1991, 'Interfirm Adaptation in Business Relationships', *Journal of Marketing*, 55, (April), 29-37.
- Hersey, P. & Blanchard, K. 1982, *Management of Organisational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Jackson, C. 1993, 'Mentoring: Choices for Individuals and Organizations', *The International Journal of Career Management*, 5(1), 10-16
- Limerick, B., Heywood, E. & Daws, L. 1994, 'Mentoring: Beyond the Status Quo?', *Leadership Research Concentration*, Queensland University of Technology, 1-86.
- Kram, K. E. & Isabella, L.A. 1985, 'Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development', *Academy of Management Journal*, 28(1), 110-132.
- O'Kane, M. 1997, 'Rand Gears for a Role on the World Stage', *Campus Review*, September 24-30, 13.
- Monaghan, J. & Lunt, N. 1992, Mentoring: 'Person, Process, Practice and Problems', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, xxx (3), 248-263.
- Morgan, R.M. & Hunt, S.D. 1994, 'The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing', *Journal of Marketing*, 58, (July), 20-38.
- Moses, I. 1992, 'Research Training and Supervision', in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed), *Manual for Conducting Workshops on Post-Graduate Supervision*, Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland, 50.
- Mumford, A. 1997, 'Helpers in Management Development', <http://www.mcb.co.uk/topman/members/helpers-in-mgt-dev.html>.
- Palmer, E. & Maani, K. 1995, 'Long Term Relationships in Professional Service Firms: an Exploratory Study', *New Zealand Journal of Business*, 17( 2), 113-128.
- Perry, C. 1994, 'A Structured Approach to Presenting PhDs: Notes for Candidate and Their Supervisors', ANZ Doctoral Consortium, University of Sydney.
- Wilson, J.A. & Elman, N.S. 1990, 'Organisational Benefits of Mentoring', *Academy of Management Executive*, 4(4), 88-94.
- Wilson, D.T. 1995, 'An Integrated Model of Buyer-Seller Relationship', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4), 335-345.
-