

**TOWARDS THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE  
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION PROCESS**

**by**

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**December 2012**

## DECLARATION

I, Stefanus Christian Vorster, the undersigned, hereby declare that the dissertation titled *Towards the conceptualisation of emotional labour in the postgraduate research supervision process*, is my own work. All the resources I used for this study are cited and referred to in the reference list by means of a comprehensive referencing system. I declare that the content of this thesis/article has never been used before for any qualification at any tertiary institution.

I, Stefanus Christian Vorster, declare that the language in this dissertation was edited by FM Weiss (MA in Applied Linguistics and Literary Science).



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Stefanus Christian Vorster

Date: 5 December 2012

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- My colleagues and friends for their encouragement and support
- Everyone else who allowed me to engage with and explore the topic of this study

*Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning. ~ Benjamin Franklin*

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December 2012

## **ABSTRACT**

# **TOWARDS THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION PROCESS**

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This study commences with a preliminary literature review of the existing academic knowledge based on research done on the presence of emotional labour in various occupations.

The purpose of this study is to conceptualise and explore the postgraduate research supervision process and to establish whether emotional labour is present in this context. Recent literature on postgraduate supervision led the researcher to believe that there was evidence that the workload of and work pressure on postgraduate research supervisors have increased in more ways than one. To further investigate this notion, the researcher followed a qualitative approach and applied a social constructivist research paradigm firstly to construct a theoretical framework based on current literature on emotional labour and postgraduate supervision, and secondly to explore the experiences and perceptions of postgraduate supervisors, and to relate the findings to the emotional labour literature on the entire postgraduate supervision process. Purposive and convenient sampling methods were followed in order to get access to a representative sample of research supervisors who complied with the

criteria of being experienced in the postgraduate supervision process. Furthermore, in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with eight postgraduate research supervisors. These interviews produced rich data that was obtained by asking open questions in a semi-structured manner. Themes were developed from the data via thematic data analysis, and member checking was initialised to measure the trustworthiness of the data collected. The findings of this study present sufficient evidence that emotional labour, as experienced by postgraduate supervisors, is present. It also provides an understanding of how postgraduate research supervisors experience their roles as supervisors and what emotional aspects are involved when interacting with students during the postgraduate research process, especially in the South African higher education context.

The practical contribution of this study applies to the relationship between supervisor and student and the postgraduate research supervision process and the finding that the presence of emotional labour can have an effect on this supervisory relationship and the throughput process. In addition, the study contributes methodologically to the investigation of the process of emotional labour and the application of the findings to explore occupations for the presence of emotional labour.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background to the study and an introduction to the rest of the chapters. This chapter states the research problem and the objectives of the study, and considers the study's academic value and contribution to the field, as well as the study's delimitations and the assumptions made. Finally, the key terms used in the study are defined, and the structure of the research layout is discussed.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND

Emotions are part of human beings' day-to-day lives, and, therefore, are also part of their work life. Various emotions, such as joy, sorrow, fear, belonging, isolation, compassion, love and hate, form part of the spectrum of emotions (Guy, Newman & Mastracci, 2008). In the workplace, we interact with various people on an interpersonal basis, and through this interaction we experience multiple emotions. We detect other people's emotions in the workplace, and we have to react in a manner that is acceptable to ourselves and to the society of which we are part. The effort, planning and control that are needed to display organisationally required emotion during interpersonal transactions can be referred to as emotional labour (EL) (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

EL is one of three labour forms, the other two being physical labour and mental labour (Brook, 2009). Hochschild, a sociologist, coined the term 'emotional labour' in 1983 and defined it as "a gesture in a social exchange; it has a function there and is not to be understood merely as a facet of personality" (Hochschild 1983, p. 568). According to Guy *et al.* (2008), an employee must perform work to complete a job; therefore labour is needed. They add that: "Physical labour and emotional labour go hand in hand, creating a synergy. Neither replaces the other, but either by itself fails to accomplish the mission" (Guy *et al.*, 2008, p. 11). Hochschild compares EL to the work of an actor, in other words to the requirement to display the necessary

emotions in a specific role according to the relevant rules of both the society and the organisation of which the person is part. All working people experience some kind of regulation of expression during their daily tasks (Elfenbein, 2007). However, people hold opposing views as regards their willingness and the intimacy of the situation to display or express their emotions in their working roles. Emotional labour is further defined as the "management of feelings to create publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7).

The intensity of the EL that people experience varies depending on how easily they get frustrated with controlling their emotions. The type of job a person engages in, the job environment, and the customers with whom the employee works, are some of the factors that can have an influence on the emotions that the person feels (Elfenbein, 2007). Hochschild emphasises that emotional labour is "bought and sold for the goals of an organization" and, therefore, it is not for the goals of the individual *per se* (Elfenbein, 2007, p. 339). A few authors have challenged the idea of organisational goals in terms of EL, in the sense that it over-focuses on individual experiences at the cost of social relations in the workplace, especially in the service sector (Brook, 2009).

This study explores the concept of EL in the postgraduate research supervision process. It is acknowledged that the concept of EL in academic supervision might be a little different from the EL concept in the traditional service sector where this concept came to fruition. Nevertheless, in the postgraduate supervision process, a service is still rendered to the student and therefore the service aspect is still viewed as relevant to this study. In this regard, emotional labour may be applicable to and may possibly have an effect on the relationship between supervisor and student and the outcome of the supervision process.

There are many dimensions of or layers to a student-supervisor relationship, as is pointed out by Grant (2003). The relationship is not only between two parties, but it is also one which is institutionally mandated and which has a specific goal, namely to complete a thesis or dissertation within a required period of time. Thus far, no research has illuminated how emotional labour affects the supervisor in the

postgraduate supervision relationship process or its outcomes. In South Africa this research is of particular importance because the Department of Higher Education's expectations as regards postgraduate throughput (Swanepoel, 2010) might influence the emotional labour of the supervisor and, consequently, the supervision process. The EL of the supervisor and the outcome of the supervision process might also be influenced by the strategic goal of the South African National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) to develop research capacity and to increase research productivity and research outputs (Swanepoel, 2010).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The relationship between a supervisor and a student consists of more than just giving or receiving instructions and completing the postgraduate dissertation based on the literature in the field or other academic knowledge. Feelings, emotions and individual or personal expectations are also present in this relationship, and these make the relationship complex. The *research problem* of this study is to clarify and conceptualise the term or concept of emotional labour in a postgraduate research supervision process, and to explore how emotional labour possibly affects the supervisor's role and the supervisory relationship. This study investigates the probability that emotional labour, or some form of emotional strain, is present in the postgraduate research supervision environment (Vilikinas, 2008).

### **1.4 PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The purpose of this study is twofold: Firstly, to conceptualise emotional labour (EL) in an academic research supervisory context and, secondly, to explore the extent to which and the instances in which this concept is applicable in the context of postgraduate supervision as experienced and perceived by a supervisor.

## **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study will aim to achieve the following specific research objectives:

- To explore and conceptualise the term 'emotional labour' in the academic environment through a critical analysis of current and relevant literature, specifically as this concept relates to the postgraduate research supervisory process
- To determine if, and to what extent, emotional labour is present as perceived and experienced by a supervisor during the postgraduate research supervision process
- To explore and determine where in the supervision process supervisors experience emotional labour

## **1.6 STRATEGY OF INQUIRY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to give specific direction to the proposed study, the strategy of inquiry is used to identify the procedures involved in a research design. In this qualitative study, the analysis of human experiences (more specifically, a supervisor's experience within a postgraduate process) will be explored. A constructivist world view will be present as supervisors will give their subjective opinions of their experiences of the postgraduate research supervision process. The views of supervisors will in all likelihood be complex instead of narrowed down, which will produce rich data for the study (Huws & Jones, 2008).

Most of the existing research on emotional labour has been based on a quantitative approach (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Elfenbein, 2007; Näring, Briët & Brouwers, 2007). This study will follow a qualitative approach because a new context of EL is being explored, namely in a postgraduate research supervision environment. However, according to the body of knowledge, the study of Ogbonna and Harris (2004) does explore the emotional labour experienced by lecturers in an academic environment.

According to Creswell (2009), a qualitative research design is a means of exploring a human or social problem, and by conducting interviews, human inputs can be obtained. Human experiences and personal feelings and opinions should be identified in order to further study the existence of EL in a supervisory process. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were conducted for data collection. Descriptive information on and in-depth knowledge of supervisors' experiences and perceptions were required, and these could be produced by a qualitative research method (Creswell, 2009).

The aim was to establish that, if emotional labour was indeed present in the postgraduate research supervision process, patterns or relationships of meaning between the experiences of different supervisors most probably occurred during the course of the study (Moustakas, 1994). These patterns can include the time when and the place and situation in which a supervisor experiences emotional labour or some form of it. When these patterns are identified, more intensive research can be done on them.

It was important that the researcher's own feelings did not influence the study. The focus was solely on the EL experiences of the participants (supervisors in the postgraduate supervision process) and how they experienced the various elements of EL. Participants were not led to believe that EL existed, but they were told beforehand that their thoughts on some form of emotional strain were going to be explored. Therefore, direct questions about EL terminology were avoided so as to prevent any confusion that could affect the quality of data gathered. The manner in which this was achieved was to ask questions that explored the participant's own experiences. However, since it is natural for people to defend their moral codes, the researcher had to take care to execute reflexivity and to reflect on the way the research was carried out to make sure that the process was clear to readers (Schurink, 2010).

## 1.7 ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

Research indicates that emotional dissonance can lead to resource loss, which in turn results in psychological strain (Van Gelderen, Heuven, Van Veldhoven, Zeelenberg & Croon, 2007). Therefore, this study is important for the future research of the supervision process in the postgraduate environment, and the findings will hopefully shed some light on the occurrence and effect of emotional labour during the postgraduate supervision process. A study on emotional labour in an academic environment such as this, or one which reflects the experiences of a postgraduate research supervisor, has not been done previously. This study will conceptualise the term emotional labour in a postgraduate academic environment. If it is found that emotional labour is present during the supervision process, this can lead to future research (of a qualitative or quantitative nature) to add to the body of knowledge about the theory and practice of postgraduate research supervision.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following key concepts are defined for the purpose of this study:

**Emotional labour:** Emotional labour is defined by Hochschild as the "management of feelings to create publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild, 1983 p. 7).

**Postgraduate research supervision process:** The supervision process can be defined as the transformation of the postgraduate student into an independent researcher (Grant, 2003).

**Postgraduate research supervision relationship:** The postgraduate supervision relationship between a supervisor and a student involves productive power relations between two or more pedagogical adults (Grant, 2003).

*Table 1.1: Abbreviations used in this document*

| <b>Abbreviation</b> | <b>Meaning</b>                           |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|
| EL                  | Emotional labour                         |
| HEI                 | Higher education institution             |
| HEQF                | Higher education qualification framework |
| NPHE                | National plan for higher education       |
| EQ                  | Emotional intelligence                   |

## **1.9 STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 2 provides a literature study about emotional labour. The literature study mainly integrates the findings of three core studies, namely those of Hochschild (1983), Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) and Morris and Feldman (1996). These studies serve as an exploratory starting point and a basic point of reference. An overview, definitions and previous conceptualisations of emotional labour are provided, and the various sectors in which emotional labour has been explored are inquired into. Chapter 2 also investigates current and fundamental literature on the supervisory process. The literature study explores the supervision relationship, the expectations of the supervisor, the supervisor's experience during the supervision process, and other relevant issues. Finally, the emotional labour process and the supervision process are combined in order to prepare for data gathering.

Chapter 3 outlines the rationale and application of the research methodology used in this study. The research methodology explains the research paradigm, inquiry strategy, sampling method, data collection through face-to-face interviews, data analysis in the form of thematic analysis, research quality and rigour, and research ethics.

Chapter 4 presents a discussion of the research findings. This chapter highlights the themes that emerged when analysing the data collected during the face-to-face interviews. Direct citations of participants' responses are used to confirm identified themes.

Chapter 5 seeks to integrate the study by reporting on its conclusion and exploring the meanings behind the research findings as mentioned in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is the closing chapter and clearly indicates the achievement of the research objectives. It further reports on the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research.

## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 1 served to introduce the exploration of emotional labour as experienced by a postgraduate supervisor and to provide a link between that and the findings set out in Chapter 1.

In the next chapter, the study will explore relevant academic literature in order to set the scene for the methodological execution of this study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND THE POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review will comprise two main sections as depicted in the purpose statement. The first section will give an overview of the literature on emotional labour, whereas the second section will discuss the postgraduate research supervision process.

### 2.2 OVERVIEW OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Every job role requires its own type of emotional engagement. For example, the job of a flight attendant and the job of a police officer require dissimilar patterns of behaviour. Both these work roles have emotional requirements of the person doing the job. People in a work situation are generally expected not to display any negative feelings such as irritability, unhappiness or anger. Therefore, people who are executing their jobs must put in some effort to manage their emotions (Holman, Chissick & Totterdell, 2002). Each occupation requires either that some emotions must be displayed, or that some emotions must not be displayed. Table 2.1 gives a summary of a few emotions that could be at play in a work situation.

*Table 2.1: Display of types of emotion in occupational situations (Adapted from Guy et al., 2008, p. 3)*

|                     |                                                                                                          |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emotional chameleon | Ability to switch the expression of emotions on or off                                                   |
| Good cop, bad cop   | Ability of one worker to pretend to be sympathetic while another pretends to be tough                    |
| Stage left          | Reference to a play taking place on a stage where emotional expression takes place                       |
| Emotional armour    | Ability to exercise restraint in responding emotionally                                                  |
| Emotional mask      | Ability to persuade oneself to suppress emotions so that one feels something different or nothing at all |
| Emotional façade    | Ability to express emotions that one does not actually feel                                              |

It is clear from Table 2.1 that emotional labour involves a number of dimensions. Different dimensions may have different outcomes since more energy may be required to perform certain jobs.

Regardless of how difficult a situation is, a person should regulate and manage their emotions in order to conform to the *display rules* of a job role (Elfenbein, 2007; Steinberg & Figart, 1999). The intensity of the emotional strain people experience when regulating their emotions varies depending on how easily they get frustrated with controlling or regulating their emotions. Barber, Grawitch, Carson and Tsouloupas (2010, p. 174) define emotional regulation as "the effort an individual applies to monitor and alter the experience and expression of emotional states".

It is important for employees to engage in self-regulation in their work situation. Self-regulation allows people to get to know themselves, and it enables organisations to optimise employee performance and well-being (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). The regulation of emotions in the workplace is often called emotional labour. According to Barber *et al.* (2010), previous studies have focused on the display rules required for positive behaviour, especially in the service sector. EL in the service sector has been explored by a number of authors, such as Totterdell and Holman (2003), who studied emotional regulation in service roles; Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), who studied service roles; and Wharton (1993), who studied the affective consequences of service work. However, different occupations with more complex display rules might require more EL because of greater experiences of dissonance.

According to Huy (1999), emotional labour's recognition has facilitated the development of emotional intelligence (EQ), especially, according to Hunter and Smith (2007), on individual and organisational levels. The Control Theory propounded by Stets and Tsushima (2001) is of importance here because this theory's perspective suggests that one's emotional expression is an input and that the display rules are the guidelines or standards for the expression of emotions. When there is divergence between one's emotional expression and the required behaviour or display rules, emotional regulation strategies are required to adjust

one's expression. However, should this adjustment not correspond with the feelings felt, emotional dissonance may take place.

According to Hunter and Smith (2007), a shift in emotional typology can be seen since Hochschild's original work in 1983. In the modern world, the feelings aspect of life is increasingly acknowledged. This may be a positive step, although there is the danger that the language of emotions could be cynically exploited or hijacked for commercial gain and political capital (Bolton, 2000).

The earlier example of a police officer and a flight attendant is used to create two extremes within the emotional labour context. Most jobs fall between these two extremes (Steinberg & Figart, 1999). The reason a police officer might seem to be at the one end of the scale, is because a police officer is more often confronted with human sorrow in the form of violent crimes and death, whereas a flight attendant, who is possibly at the other end of the scale, has to please and keep people happy (Van Geldern *et al.*, 2007). Whether these two occupations define the two ends of the scale is debatable, and the creation of a scale showing the relations between occupations and emotional labour falls outside the scope of this study.

Another example of a job that requires emotional labour is mentioned in a study conducted by Guy *et al.* (2008). In the study, a 911 operator indicates that in that specific job role, one has to speak to people when they feel at their absolute worst. The callers sometimes curse and swear, but the 911 telephone operator has to stay calm in order to get the caller to calm down. This requires emotional labour, according to Guy *et al.* (2008).

As stated previously, emotional labour is, like physical labour, a type of labour. According to James (1992), physical labour is the most readily identifiable, whereas emotional labour has been ignored by theories although it is critical in jobs where service work is performed. Furthermore, Guy *et al.* (2008, p.11) contend as follows: "Physical labour and Emotional Labour go hand in hand, creating a synergy. Neither replaces the other, but either by itself fails to accomplish the mission". In addition,



studies on what emotional labour's impact is on postgraduate research supervision. The main purpose of this study is to conceptualise emotional labour in a postgraduate research supervision environment, and also to explore the instances to which this concept is applicable from a supervisor's perspective.

## 2.3 PREVIOUS CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

As mentioned before, there has been a significant focus on emotional labour since Hochschild coined this term (Grandey, 2000; Steinberg & Figart, 1999). Hochschild grabbed the attention of the world with her book *The managed heart: the commercialization of feeling*, and since its publication in 1983 many perspectives, including Hochschild's perspective on emotional labour, have been introduced. The next section will discuss these perspectives on emotional labour.

The first viewpoint is Hochschild's dramaturgical perspective concerning customer and employee interactions, where the employee is portrayed as the actor and the work environment forms the stage (Grandey, 2000). Hochschild argues that *surface acting* and *deep acting* are used to express the interactions in the work situation (Brook, 2009; Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008; Grandey, 2000). Surface acting only regulates emotional expressions, whereas deep acting represents how the person consciously modifies feelings to display the required emotion. Effort is required to do this, and Hochschild even suggests that when these deep gestures enter the market sector and are bought and sold as labour power, these feelings are commodified (Brook, 2009; Grandey, 2000). This engagement of feelings requires effort and can lead to high stress levels.

Another perspective is on EL as an observable behaviour, in contrast to Hochschild's management of feelings. This perspective is introduced by Ashforth and Humphrey in 1993. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argue that the acting principle may become effortless and routine, and not result in stress as stated by Hochschild. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) propose that EL should relate to task effectiveness in that it demonstrates sincere expression towards the customer. However, they agree with

Hochschild that employees who do not show genuine expressions may experience dysfunctional EL.

Another perspective on EL is that it is "the effort, planning, and control needed to express organisationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions" (Morris & Feldman, 1996, p. 987). According to this definition, emotions are expressed that are partially determined by the social environment in which they are displayed, but that are also controlled by the individual. This perspective corresponds with the perspectives of Hochschild (1983) and Ashforth and Humphrey (1996) in the sense that individuals are responsible for the emotions they display in their job roles.

Morris and Feldman (1996) base their findings on four dimensions, namely: *frequency of interactions, attentiveness, variety of emotions required, and emotional dissonance*. The key source of emotional labour, according to Hunter and Smith (2007), is the management of dissonance generated by the co-existence of conflicting ideologies of practice. According to a critique by Grandey (2000), the perspective of emotional dissonance is not clear enough about the mechanisms by which these outcomes would occur. It also lacks clear conceptualisation about the frequency, duration and variety of EL's presence. The management of emotion can, therefore, not solely be defined by the four dimensions referred to by Morris and Feldman (1996).

By studying the various perspectives of Hochschild in 1983, Ashforth and Humphrey in 1993, and Morris and Feldman in 1996, it is evident that focus is placed on different perspectives, definitions and outcomes of EL. Nevertheless, there is a uniform underlying theme: *Individuals can regulate and manage their emotional feelings and expressions at work*. It is this uniform theme that will be studied in order to determine the effect of EL within the postgraduate supervision process.

## 2.4 THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR PROCESS

The emotional labour process consists of the elements as shown in Figure 2.2 and this process, which will be discussed below, resembles the essence of EL (Holman, Chissick & Totterdell, 2002) which will now be discussed.

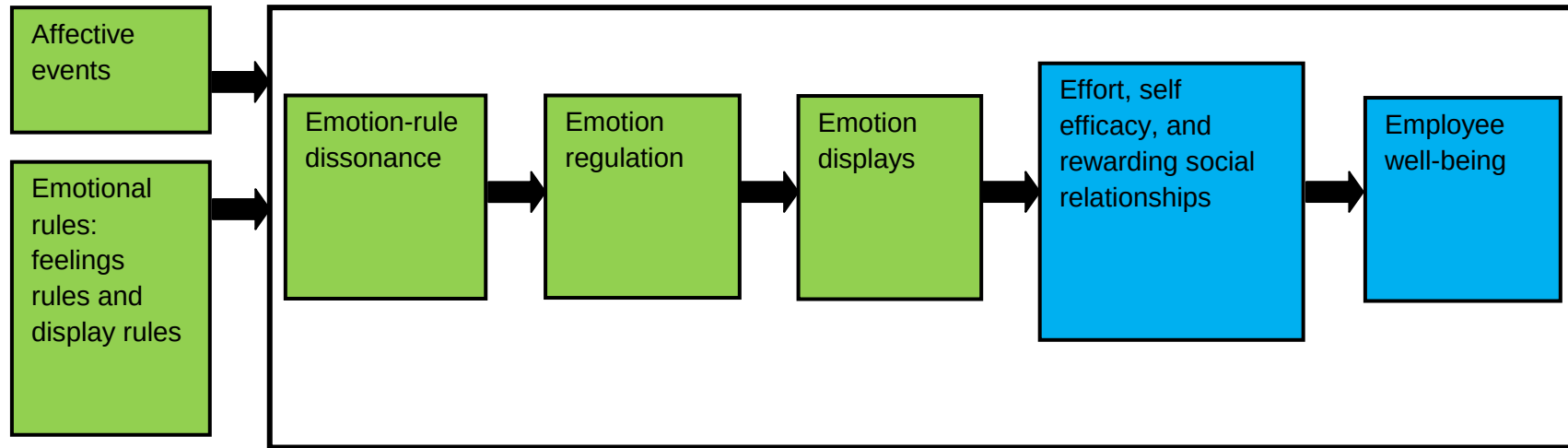


Figure 2.2: The emotional labour process (Adapted from Holman, Chissick & Totterdell (2002))

### **2.4.1 Affective events**

According to academic literature, the starting point of the EL experience is caused or initiated by affective events. Affective events can be described as any occurrences within the working environment that have an impact on the emotions of an individual (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Each individual will experience such an affective event in a different way. In the case of an unanticipated event, this may elicit strong emotions and the more unanticipated the event the more natural the display will be. The emotions displayed might or might not be in line with the required display rules of the job (Lord & Hall, 2005). However, anticipated events will probably be regulated more easily by the individual because he or she will make use of strategies to deal effectively with the events (Lord & Hall, 2005).

### **2.4.2 Emotional rules**

Emotional rules can be divided into two categories, namely feeling rules and display rules. Feeling rules deal with emotions and feelings (Hochschild, 1979). Feeling rules require employees to feel a certain way. Display rules; on the other hand, come into play when employees cognitively distance themselves as mandated by their organisations' expectations (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). These rules have the potential to cause emotional divergence or dissonance for the individuals who experience emotions that differ from the emotions expected by the organisation (Gursoy, Boylu, & Avci, 2011).

Two strategies are employed by individuals in order to cope with emotional dissonance, namely: surface acting and deep acting (Hochschild, 1983). Surface acting can be seen as the display of fake feelings in order to align with expectations, and employees often change their observable features, such as facial expression and tone of voice (Gursoy *et al.*, 2011; Barber *et al.*, 2010). Deep acting is the modification of feelings to match the expectations and actual experience, and this type of acting is considered to provide positive outcomes (Gursoy *et al.*, 2011; Barber *et al.*, 2010; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

### 2.4.3 Emotion-rule dissonance

Many studies have been conducted dealing with EL in the service sector, owing to the fact that service sector roles require a significant 'handling-people-well' element (Wharton, 1999, p. 166). According to Wharton (1999), the effects of EL can be studied by determining the job and worker characteristics across different jobs. Research results obtained by Wharton and Erickson (1995) indicate that a job that requires emotional labour does not necessarily mean that workers experience job-related burnout more than in the case of jobs without an EL element. According to the study on EL by Adelman (1995), desirable jobs produce high levels of satisfaction, even though these jobs demand a higher level of EL (Martínez-In-Igo, Totterdell & Holman 2007). Hochschild (1983) identifies the term *emotional dissonance* to refer to the inauthenticity of a person's actions when dealing with customers. Authenticity is defined as "the unobstructed operation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise" (Kernis, 2003, p. 13).

When there is a difference between felt emotions (feeling rules) and required emotions (display rules), emotional dissonance occurs (Kruml and Geddes, 2000). Furthermore, a number of authors feel that emotional dissonance is considered to be an important indicator of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Zapf, 2002; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993).

According to Kruml and Geddes (2000), the strategies known as deep acting and surface acting can be placed at the opposite ends of a continuum as displayed in Figure 2.2. The continuum displays the effect of emotional dissonance. The emotional dissonance is greater when the feeling rules are further removed from the required display rules of the organisation (Kruml & Geddes, 2000).

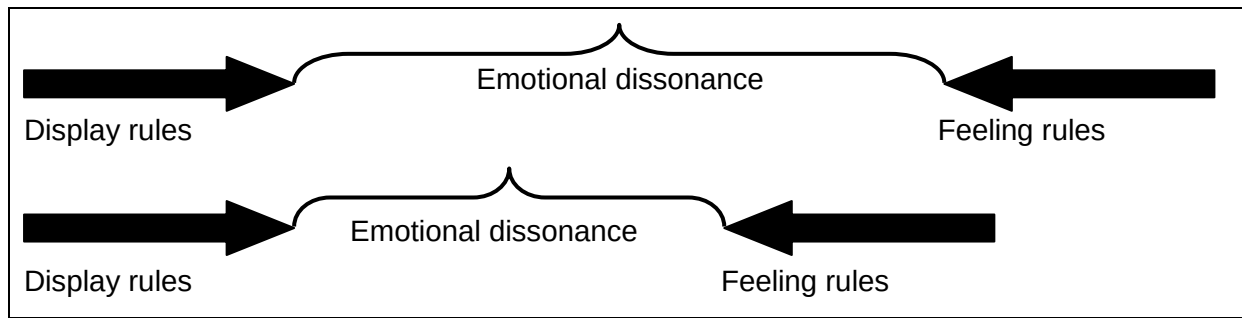


Figure 2.3: Emotional dissonance between display rules and feelings rules

This study explores the occurrence of emotional dissonance in the postgraduate research supervision process. The next section will discuss how emotions are regulated.

#### 2.4.4 Emotional regulation

Emotional regulation can be described as the process used by an individual to "influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 1998, p. 275). Gross (1998) goes on to distinguish between the automatic regulation and the controlled regulation of emotions, in other words, surface acting and deep acting (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Although frequency of occurrences and pretence of positive emotions are still under-researched, Barber *et al.* (2010) remarks that surface acting has been associated with more cases of emotional exhaustion, while deep acting has effects such as personal accomplishment. As regards this observation about the positive experience that flows from deep acting, Wharton (2010) adds that deep acting may be accomplished by individuals who are able to resist negative consequences in the studies performed.

According to Wharton (1999), the issue of individual experiences of EL should be approached by also looking at *performance* and *non-performance* of emotional labour, rather than at the type of role only. Some people may have strategies that they use in order to distantiate or protect themselves from certain situations. Previous studies done by Sutton and Rafaeli (1988) and Paules (1991) indicate that employees knowingly manipulate their feelings in order to prevent them from self-

alienation which is in line with the research of Wharton (1999) and Ashforth & Humphrey (1993).

#### **2.4.5 Emotional display**

Emotional display can be seen as the product of applying emotional regulation or of not regulating emotions (Grandey, 2000). According to existing literature, emotional display is an important requirement in an increasing number of jobs as it has an influence on the work-related outcomes for employees and their organisations (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Marti'nez-in-Igo, *et al.*, 2007). Hunter and Smith (2007) argue that some workers might be required to follow a 'corporate script' in relation to emotional display, whereas Bolton (2000) is of the opinion that others might possess more independence or autonomy in the display of their emotions.

Hochschild (1983) argues that, based on existing studies, women tend to experience EL the most. This can probably be ascribed to the types of jobs they engage in and women's status in the larger society as the caretakers in the workplace (Wharton, 1999). In a study by Wharton (1993), it is found that gender differences do not have an impact on the effect of EL on employees' levels of burnout. However, Bulan, Erickson and Wharton (1997) find that women involved in service sector jobs tend to be 'themselves' as they have the need to interact with others. Conversely, men need frequent interaction with others to feel authentic only when they are not highly involved with their jobs. There is, however, a problem with the statement that gender differences have an influence on the EL of performers and non-performers. Existing research focuses mainly on service-sector jobs which are primarily occupied by females. According to Wharton (1999) research requires a broader focus to include a greater variety of job roles. Only when more job roles are included in the studies, will it be possible to deal with gender issues successfully in terms of EL.

#### **2.4.6 Effort, self efficacy and rewarding social relationships**

The multiple emotional roles of employees can easily lead to role conflict or role overload (Turnbull, 1999). According to Wharton (1999), most of the research on EL,

which mainly focuses on the service-sector, does not distinguish between employees' job roles and their family roles. The element of marriage is automatically included in this idea. Wharton and Erickson (1995) as well as Montgomery, Panagopolou, De Wildt & Meenks, (2006) found that women, in particular, are influenced more by family emotional work than by EL on the job. According to Wharton (1999), there is a complex relationship between the amount of EL performed on the job and the amount of emotional work done at home.

According to Wharton (1999), the jobs that require EL sometimes have positive consequences compared to jobs that do not require emotional labour at all. Negative consequences occur whenever employees lack control over their work. It is important for researchers to focus not only on the positive or negative outcomes of EL, but also to keep the broad outcomes in mind and to explore the relationships between the outcomes (Wharton, 1999).

#### **2.4.7 Employee well-being**

According to Hochschild (1983), performers of emotional labour may find themselves in dangerous situations when they engage in high levels of involvement. However, the same phenomena are not found in the case of non-performers of emotional labour (Wharton, 1999). According to Wharton (1999), the interpersonal skills of employees to protect themselves from burnout, differ. However, employees who are performers of emotional labour experience more satisfaction from emotional labour due to the job autonomy factor. Autonomy allows the employee to deflect some of the hazards of emotional labour (Wharton, 1999) and execute self-monitoring. According to Oyamot, Fuglestad and Snyder (2010), self-monitoring has a broad impact on every phase of close relationships, and the balance of power and influence should be understood. On the other hand, job involvement tends to lead to improved levels of satisfaction in the case of nonperformers of emotional labour. Employees' risk of burnout is increased when they are too involved in their jobs (Wharton, 1999). Burnout can be defined as the "inability to disengage ('escape') from work, by an overwhelming grinding pressure ..." (Guy *et al.*, 2010 p. 8). This idea is supported by Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker-Gail, and Baker (2010) who

state that those employees who engage in high levels of job involvement may become frustrated with their work goals.

## **2.5 EMOTIONAL LABOUR WITHIN DIFFERENT SECTORS**

Various research studies about EL, especially in the service sector, have been conducted. According to Mann (2005), the professions in the field of counselling or guidance have not been included in these studies. There are, however, a few authors, for example Sharon Bolton and Carol Boyde, who believe that EL is used as a blanket term across occupations (in Brook, 2009). Furthermore, Bolton and Boyde are of the opinion that the term EL should be more fully theorised in the specific occupations or industries, and that EL is in fact a type of labour (in Brook, 2009). This statement, as well as the definition of Näring *et al.* (2007) of EL as internal and external behavioural displays of emotion, is valuable for conceptualising emotional labour in the academic environment. Research in other sectors includes: the service sector (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), EL in nursing and teaching (Näring *et al.*, 2007), the hospitality industry (Chu & Murrmann, 2006), and the airline industry (Williams, 2003).

## **2.6 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION**

### **2.6.1 Introduction**

The second section of the literature study will now be presented. The purpose of this section is to explore the nature of postgraduate research supervision as recorded in academic literature. By discussing the various aspects of postgraduate research supervision and the postgraduate research supervisor, the study sets the scene for a theoretical merging of EL and the postgraduate research supervision process.

### **2.6.2 Overview of postgraduate research supervision**

In the current academic climate at higher education institutions (HEIs), universities attempt to produce better quality research students, boost their image as an

institution (Ismail, Abiddin & Hassan, 2011), and expand on a global scale as a university (Murphy, Bain, & Conrad, 2007). Universities should not only deliver quality research students, but should also maintain a good throughput rate of postgraduate research students (Lessing & Schulze, 2002). According to Holderness (2000, p. 14), South Africa's current context of postgraduate supervision is more problematic than it was 20 years ago. Just how important production of knowledge has become in South Africa can be seen when one looks at the target set by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to increase the number of PhD graduates from 1 200 in 2005 to 6 000 in 2025 (Herman, 2011). The South African academic context faces the following challenges: higher education institutions are experiencing a rapid transformation process (Rau, 2004); an increasing percentage of students from previously disadvantaged groups are entering the postgraduate supervision arena, but have limited experience of research practice (Blunt, 2009); and curricula that demand higher student numbers in order to make study field significant (Swanepoel, 2010).

Furthermore, there are barriers that stand in the way of producing more PhD graduates at SA universities (Herman, 2011). Table 2.2 displays these barriers as identified by Herman (2011).

*Table 2.2: Six barriers in South African postgraduate research supervision*

|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Barrier 1: Insufficient funding</b>                                  | The NRF is the main funding source in SA, but the contribution is not always enough to support the PhD production. In order to engage fully with their PhD studies, more than half of the PhD students have to have a full-time job                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Barrier 2: Existing policy recognises one kind of doctorate only</b> | Three models for a doctorate study exist, namely – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the pure model that focuses only on the specific discipline itself;</li> <li>2. the trans-discipline model that gives more freedom than the pure model; and</li> <li>3. the servicing model whereby students develop new and original research</li> </ul> |

|                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                  | South Africa's policy follows the pure model, but there seems to be a need for another model as the country needs to compete more strongly internationally (Herman, 2011)                                                       |
| <b>Barrier 3: Potential doctoral students' pool is too small</b> | Increasing the number of students without compromising on the quality of the students admitted could pose a challenge.                                                                                                          |
| <b>Barrier 4: Supervisory capacity</b>                           | According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) report (2009) there are two students per doctoral supervisor. Doctoral supervisors also have to supervise master's students, of which there are 5.2 students per supervisor. |
| <b>Barrier 5: Recognition of a doctorate</b>                     | Especially among black South African students, a professional degree is much sought after and companies lure promising black students with the result that few of them enter the academic sphere.                               |
| <b>Barrier 6: Limited partnerships</b>                           | Bursaries and scholarships are given, but matters such as intellectual property are still unresolved between universities and companies.                                                                                        |

Because these barriers hamper the postgraduate research supervision process, the throughput and quality of research students might not be as ideal as the country would want these to be. The postgraduate research supervision process and relationship are extremely important factors in obtaining quality postgraduate research students and high throughput rates. In fact, researchers such as Seagram, Gould and Pyke (1998) regard the supervisor-student relationship as the primary factor leading to success or failure. Furthermore, Ismail *et al.* (2011) state that research and supervision have become fundamental to success in postgraduate studies. Although the research and supervision processes in themselves are quite important, it is within the relationship between a postgraduate research supervisor and a postgraduate research student that supervision comes into its own as a knowledge and relational process (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011).

### **2.6.3 Mapping the parties in the postgraduate research supervision process**

The approach that Grant (2003) follows to the mapping of the parties involved in the postgraduate research supervision process is of value for this study. As the study progresses, this approach will be the basis for the discussion and presentation of the relationship between a supervisor and a student as depicted in Figures 2.3 and 2.4. In her study, Grant (2003) describes the supervision process as a layered map within a complex and unstable process. The postgraduate supervision process can be constructed as a triangular association between supervisor, student and the dissertation or thesis (Grant, 1999). According to Grant (2003), these layers are unbalanced. A variety of anticipations exists in the supervision process that includes prearranged as well as standard incidents. Furthermore, psychosocial relations (such as social positioning, gender, age and sexuality) exist at the same time (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004; Grant, 2003).

The student and supervisor form the first layer of supervision. The first layer is uncomplicated at this stage, according to Grant (2003). A second layer is introduced by Grant (2003) that adds the pedagogical power relations found in radical education theories. The pedagogical relationship is in the shape of a triangle formed by the supervisor, student and knowledge (the thesis). The third layer is the next layer to be added to the supervision role. Grant (2003) emphasises that both student and supervisor are individuals, but that they are in a relationship of dependence. Thus, diverse social positioning is experienced. The fourth and final layer, which manifests the unconscious desires of both parties to do well and to meet expectations, is added (Grant 2003). A graphical representation of the triangular relationship within the supervisory process is displayed in Figure 2.4, and this is followed by a discussion of the supervisor-student relationship.

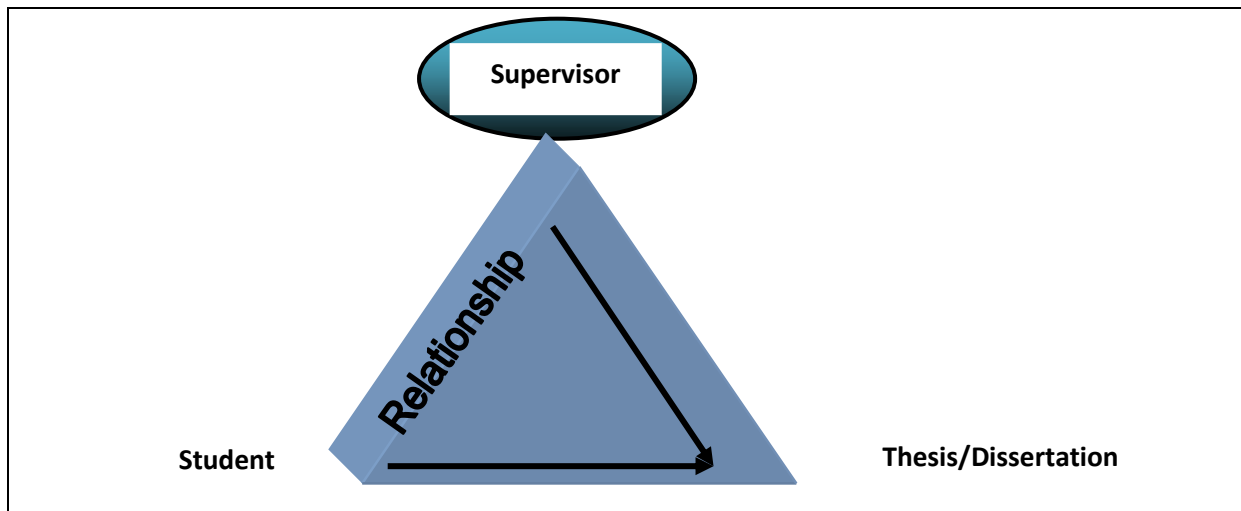


Figure 2.4: Triangular relationship (Adapted from Grant, 2003).

Figure 2.4 indicates the three parties involved, namely, the supervisor, the student and the thesis/dissertation. The arrows pointing towards the thesis/dissertation represent the mutual goal that should be achieved in order to receive (student) or award (university) a master's or doctoral degree.

#### 2.6.4 Supervisor-student relationship

According to Zhao (2001), traditional models of supervision are based on a supervisor working with a student who is motivated and well prepared over a long period of time and is most likely a full-time student. However, the new models of supervision require a supervisor to handle a more 'complex' student in changing environments. Many students study part-time as they need to have a day job (Ismail *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, the population of students is more diverse because students come from different backgrounds, and this diversity demands that the relationship between the supervisor and the student must be more flexible and adaptable (Grant, 2003). Figure 2.5 illustrates the dynamics of the relationship between the supervisor and the student.

Therefore, assigning postgraduate research supervisors to postgraduate students is an important early transaction in the postgraduate supervision process (Ives & Rowley, 2007). Ives and Rowley (2007) recommend that a postgraduate student, especially a PhD student, and a supervisor should have the choice of saying 'no' to

the suggested placement. Furthermore, the choice should be made on the basis of a working relationship, and should take the experience of the postgraduate supervisor as regards the specific topic into account.

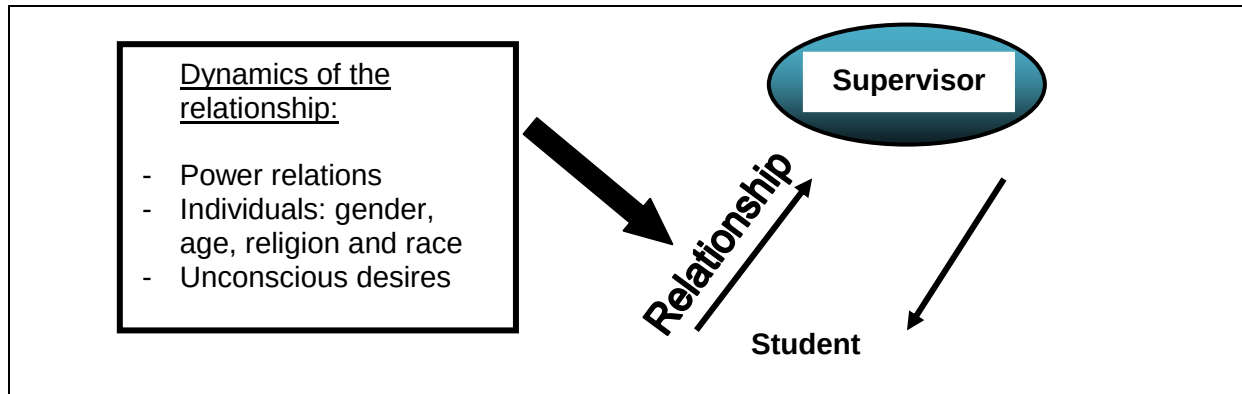


*Figure 2.5: Impact of dynamics on the postgraduate research supervision relationship*

Even though the initial supervisor-student fit can be a matter of choice, the relationship between supervisor and student does have institutionally mandated elements expected by the university (Grant, 2003). According to Swanepoel (2010), higher education in South Africa has been affected by the transformation age and the demand for master's degrees has increased because financial assistance is being provided to students and government expectations are a concern from a university's point of view. Postgraduate supervision processes experience the shockwaves of this transformation, and supervisors are caught between the different expectations of different stakeholders (Swanepoel, 2010).

Supervision has an essential part to play in guiding postgraduate students to complete their dissertations (Ismail *et al.*, 2011). According to Grant and Graham (1994), the supervision relationship can be defined as a pedagogical 'power relation' between two or more people who are capable of acting, without feeling that the one is overpowering the other. Current academic literature supports this notion by referring to postgraduate supervision as a blend of pedagogical and personal relationships influenced by language, knowledge and power (Kamler & Thomson, 2004; Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004).

Franke and Arvidsson (2011) contend that a well-functioning pedagogical relationship between a supervisor and a doctoral student is an important factor for the success of the completion of a doctoral thesis. This relationship faces the challenges of producing a good dissertation and transforming the student into an independent student (Grant, 2003).

#### **2.6.4.1 Power relationship**

Although power is ascribed to the supervisor in the supervision process in light of the supervisor's knowledge, experience and reputation, this might not be the case when the supervision relationship involves a doctoral student. In fact, Adkins (2009) argues that a doctoral student might know more about a specific topic than the supervisor does. According to Lessing and Schulze (2002), a master's-level student should be trained as a researcher, while a doctoral student should make innovative and unique contributions towards the knowledge in the specific discipline.

Nonetheless, as this process plays out, the student becomes more knowledgeable on the specific topic being researched, and it can therefore be expected that the student might become more familiar with the research (Maxwell, 2012). The concept of leadership should be mentioned here because the supervision process requires leading as well as allowing to be led. The role of leading will sometimes be shifted from one to the other during the process. Sometimes the supervisor will lead, for example by setting a benchmark or using his or her previous experience to support the student (Maxwell, 2012; Ismail *et al.*, 2011). At other times the student will be required to lead, for instance by producing a literature study. The needs of the process or programme will determine this leadership shift.

#### **2.6.5 The role of the postgraduate research supervisor**

The role of the supervisor is described by Hodza (2007, p. 1157) as "ensuring the educational development of the student in a manner calculated to evoke him/her to fully realise his/her possibilities of usefulness". According to Ismail *et al.* (2011), the role and motive of supervision is sometimes unclear. They emphasise that the role of

supervision is the most advanced level of teaching, a case of critical conversation and mentorship (Ismail *et al.*, 2011). Lessing and Schulze (2002) state that the contribution of the supervisor is to apply his or her expertise in the research area, support the student and balance the creativity and critique.

Now the question might arise as to 'what is an effective postgraduate supervisor'? James and Baldwin (1999, p. 1) provide a list of what they deem necessary for an effective postgraduate research supervisor. These elements are presented in Figure 2.6.

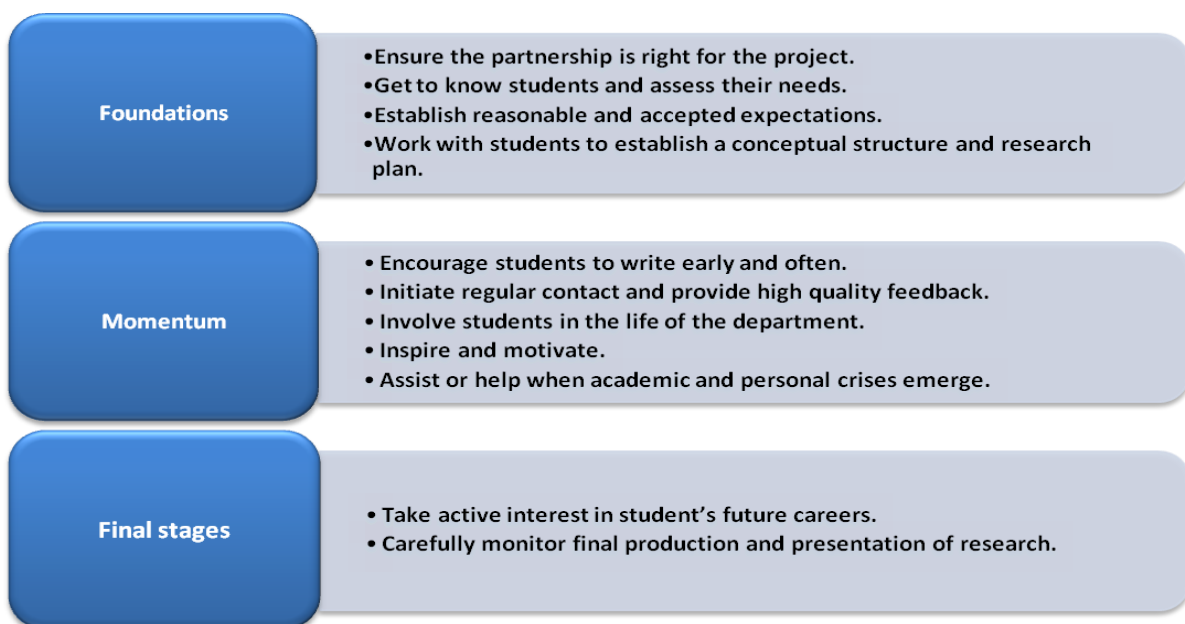


*Figure 2.6: Effective postgraduate research supervisors (Adapted from James & Baldwin, 1999, p. 1)*

Studies conducted by other authors, such as Zuber-Skerritt and Roche (2004), and Hodza (2007), indicate that an effective postgraduate supervisor is one who has a large experience base, encourages and facilitates learning, commits to students, is a good writer, can manage time efficiently and is insightful and supportive. A description of an ineffective supervisor given by Zuber-Skerritt and Roche (2004) includes someone who is judgemental and driven by self-needs, feels uncertain in his or her role and has a small experience base.

Judging from the literature it seems that there are various skills and attributes that are important to being a good postgraduate research supervisor. Although this study is not exploring these aspects, it should be noted that an effective postgraduate supervisor should possess certain skills and develop certain practices in order to enable the postgraduate student to successfully complete a thesis/dissertation.

### 2.6.6 Expectations of the supervisor

A number of shareholders are included in the postgraduate research supervision process apart from the supervisor and the postgraduate student. Parties involved in this process are the government, universities as the providers, lecturers (who, according to Swanepoel (2010), are the key agents in promoting postgraduate studies and research), and students as clients. Figure 2.7 gives the different expectations that external parties have of postgraduate research supervisors.

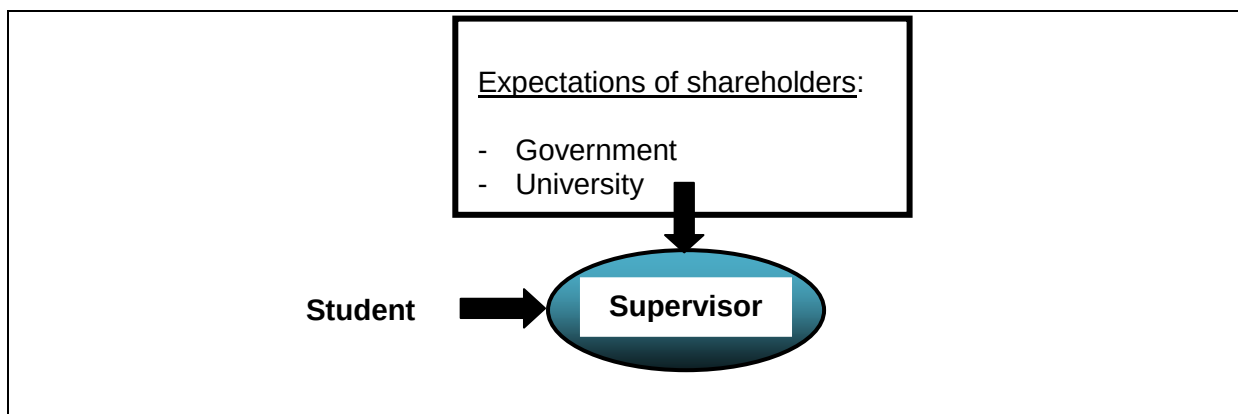


*Figure 2.7: Expectations of the postgraduate research supervisor*

#### 2.6.6.1 Government

South Africa has undergone some radical changes during the past 10 to 20 years in terms of economic, social, cultural and educational development (Swanepoel, 2010; Dysthe, Samara, & Westrheim, 2006). The entire education system, in particular higher education, has been affected by these changes (Viviers & Coetzee, 2007). It has become a strategic goal for South Africa's higher education system to deliver research outputs (Swanepoel, 2010). According to Swanepoel (2010), master's

students are divided into research and non-research categories that are linked to the funding framework provided by government policy. This division may cause a dilemma, according to Swanepoel (2010).

#### **2.6.6.2 Universities as higher education institutions**

After 1994, a bureaucratic oversight of higher education emerged, and the ministerial power to handle higher education was introduced. Public funding has decreased since 1986, placing more pressure on the higher educational institutions' training capacity as well as on the infrastructure of these institutions (Swanepoel, 2010). Simultaneously, higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa have to deal with the fact that international standards are being chased. According to Frick and Kapp (2006), South Africa's higher education has to adapt to changes such as globalisation, an increased demand for quality and greater competition among HEIs. One of the main problems at present is that the demand for postgraduate studies has increased significantly, but that the number of supervisors at universities has not necessarily increased (Swanepoel, 2010). More pressure is exerted on existing supervisors who have to mentor an increasing number of postgraduate students and assist them in completing their dissertations on master's level and theses on doctoral level. Bearing this in mind, Rochford (2003) indicates that worldwide three-quarters of master's students do not finish their dissertations. Furthermore, a study by Lovitts and Nelson (2000) shows that one third of doctoral students abandon their studies within the first year.

However, the positive perspective of universities and society on the supervision process increases the link between the universities and industries which eventually lead to the production of high-level scientists (Zhao, 2001).

#### **2.6.6.3 Lecturer as mediator**

University lecturers fulfil the role of interacting between education and research (Swanepoel, 2010). Postgraduate research supervisors have added roles to fulfil, which place even more pressure on them. In a particular department, a supervisor

often becomes 'the face of the faculty' for graduate students (Ismail *et al.*, 2011), which often leads to students requesting to be supervised by this particular supervisor. In addition, the number of supervisors cannot keep pace with the increase in the number of students. According to Swanepoel (2010), an inadequate command of the English language makes it even more difficult for a supervisor to work with a postgraduate student. Furthermore, Wisker, Robinson and Shacham (2007) have identified the problem of 'learning leaps' which can be attributed to non-Western students' difficulty to cope with Western problem-solving methods.

Another major concern for supervisors is that a master's degree is funded like an honours degree (Swanepoel, 2010). Understandably, lecturers will think twice before supervising a master's student who requires intensive dissertation assistance. However, this might not always be the case. There is also a lot of pressure on supervisors to deliver research outputs (Madue, 2008) and in particular to attain the National Research Foundation (NRF) rating that they receive in South Africa (Rochford, 2003). The NRF rating allows South African researchers to compete and participate with international researchers. The research outputs delivered by South African researchers should thus be on a par with those of international researchers (Frick & Kapp, 2006). Promotion is often linked to research outputs. There is, however, always the danger that whereas everything is done to complete a dissertation on time, the quality of the final product is compromised (Pienaar & Bester, 2006; Green & Bowden, 2012). The focus can easily fall on how many postgraduate students (master's and doctoral students) are delivered, and not on the quality of teaching or other academic work specifications.

#### **2.6.6.4 Student as client**

The primary purpose of a master's degree is to equip the student with specialised and advanced skills for professional occupations. In fact, students feel that the supervision helps them to achieve a scientific or professional goal as it assists them to conduct research following quality standards (Zhao, 2001). According to Swanepoel (2010), the perception is created that the course work done during the master's programme is inferior to the research required for the dissertation. Another

perception is that most master's and doctoral students want to improve their practical skills and do not necessarily want to become professional academic researchers. However, it is the infrequent contact with supervisors that creates unhappiness and challenges for students (Ismail *et al.*, 2011).

A study by Deem and Brehony (2000) indicates that students in the non-science courses are perceived as lone scholars, because they meet with their supervisors more often than they meet with their fellow students. However, Gurr (2001) emphasises that the mindset of a teacher-centred stance should be replaced by a student-centred learning approach, according to which students have a greater say in what they are taught. There are also various pressures on postgraduate students as regards age, race, previous experience and ability, part-time or full-time engagement in higher education, support from their department and financial support (Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Grant, 2003). International students also have to be considered, and it may take a while for these students to adapt to various aspects, such as language and other cultural elements (Deem & Brehony, 2000).

### **2.6.7 Supervisors' experience during supervision**

From a supervisor's point of view, the supervision should make a contribution to students' abilities to effectively and scientifically learn how to conduct scientific research (Zhao, 2001). According to a study done by Franke and Arvidsson (2011), two ways of structuring research supervision exist, namely: *practice-orientated supervision* and *relation-orientated supervision*. Practice-orientated research supervision describes the common research practice of supervisor and student. Here the supervisor creates the necessary conditions for the student to practice, and for the supervisor to assist in meeting the needs of the student.

#### **2.6.7.1 Practice-orientated supervision approach**

During the study conducted by Franke and Arvidsson (2011), the following aspects regarding the practice-orientated supervision approach emerge:

### ***The supervisor transfers a research tradition***

The approach when studying for a doctoral degree or a master's degree is a scientific one, and according to a participant in the study of Franke and Arvidsson (2011), this approach is the most important aspect of the supervision process. The student should master the dissertation or thesis as a research scientist regardless of the type of course for which he or she is enrolled.

### ***The supervisor mediates a research practice***

In the case of postgraduate students, they contribute to the field in which the study is done. The supervisor teaches the master's or doctoral students what is important for research (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). Furthermore, the supervisor guides the students to available resources to enable knowledge transfer (Pearson & Brew, 2002).

### ***The supervisor experiences double roles***

The supervisor experiences a conflict of interest between the roles of being a supervisor and of being a project leader (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). According to Franke and Arvidsson (2011), an example would be when a supervisor moves the research project forward instead of ensuring that a good thesis is compiled.

#### **2.6.7.2 Relation-orientated supervision**

*Relation-orientated supervision* is described as an approach where the student and supervisor lack a common research practice (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). However, the learning process forms the contact point between the supervisor, the student and the thesis. The following roles are seen to be adopted by the supervisor:

### ***Dialogue partner***

The supervisor acts as a dialogue partner (Dysthe *et al.*, 2006), a mediator of knowledge and experience, and a mentor. Students are provided with prerequisites for acquiring knowledge and experience so that they will trust their own ability rather than that of the supervisor to solve research problems. According to Franke and Arvidsson (2011), this is where the student learns. The supervisor plays an authoritarian role in the supervision relationship but should use it to mediate knowledge (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011).

### ***Support role***

The supervisor becomes involved in the lives of students and their problems and worries (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). Furthermore, the supervisor has to play a support role as mentor (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004). According to Franke and Arvidsson (2011), socio-emotional support is the function that a supervisor can provide.

The study concludes that a well-developed common research objective in research-orientated supervision is necessary. The reason is simply that this well-developed common research practice would provide better prerequisites for utilising national and international resources. This approach is in line with the pedagogical approach.

### **2.6.8 Issues experienced in the supervision relationship**

The central issues facing research supervisors are the achievement of quality, effectiveness and productivity in a changing environment (Zhao, 2001).

The supervision relationship also has to contend with issues such as: matching supervisors and students on the basis of working patterns and research methodology (Ives & Rowley, 2007); assessing and meeting the needs and expectations of all parties (Ahern & Manathunga, 2004); developing a research framework and action plan (James & Baldwin, 1999); giving quality feedback during

meetings (Ives & Rowley, 2007); and facilitating effective communication and interaction with the academic society.

### **2.6.9 Challenges**

To be a postgraduate supervisor in the current changing environment seems to pose many challenges. According to Hockey (1996), supervisor intention may include knowledge attainment, joint publications and self-recognition, of which students have different expectations respectively (Hockey, 1996). Therefore, Brown and Krager (1985) propose that equal attention, time and energy be given to all students.

Spear (2000) concludes that one of the most common complaints from research students concerns infrequent or erratic contact with supervisors. The reasons for this may be that supervisors are too busy with administrative or teaching responsibilities, that they have too many students or that they are away from the university too often (Spear, 2000).

Zuber-Skerritt & Roche, (2004) summarise the main problems in graduate supervision as:

- (1) Inadequate supervision: supervisors' lack of experience, commitment, and/or time;
- (2) Emotional and psychological problems: students' intellectual and social isolation; their insecurity to meet the standards, and their lack of confidence in their ability to complete their theses within the specified time or not at all;
- (3) Lack of understanding and communication between supervisor and student; and
- (4) Students' lack of knowledge, skills, training or experience in research methods.

Another problem is that the role of supervision and the motive for supervision also seem to be unclear.

By reviewing the scientific literature on postgraduate research supervision, the study can create a framework for exploring emotional labour within this occupational arena of supervision. The next section examines the two main sections (EL and postgraduate research supervision) of this chapter and attempts to theoretically merge these two constructs.

## **2.7 MERGING THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR PROCESS AND THE POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION PROCESS**

This section aims to bring the two 'worlds' of EL and the postgraduate research supervision process together in theory.

### **2.7.1 Emotional labour in the academic environment**

By using the processes of both these main themes of the study, a diagram can be constructed that displays how these processes are viewed for the purpose of this study. The emotional labour process, as constructed by Holman *et al.* (2002), forms the bottom part of Figure 2.8, which will be used to explore the findings of the study. In addition, the process of postgraduate supervision will be used in harmony to explore how the respondents shape this process and relationship between supervisor and student. The model of supervision used for the study is based on Grant's representation of supervision (Grant, 2003).

In a study done by Ogbonna and Harris (2004), results indicate that EL is perceived by university lecturers to be an everyday occurrence as part of their labour process. The study of Ogbonna and Harris (2004) specifically focuses on the increasing workload lecturers experience in universities. Knowledge-based industries are increasingly becoming a critical part of the industrial landscape, changing the environment in which universities operate (Zhao, 2001). According to the data analysis of the study conducted by Ogbonna and Harris (2004), occupational as well

as organisational expectations appear to be derived from recent work intensification. The study is approached in such a way that old and new universities are represented by the respondents (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004). Lecturers and professors who had been involved with the universities for a while were able to respond to the change in intensification in the particular occupation as lecturer.

In the postgraduate research supervision process, students and supervisors at times find themselves in situations where they cannot show their emotions openly. According to Ahern and Manathunga (2004), a supervisor should be aware of ambivalent feelings on the student's side and should develop strategies in order to handle the positive and negative emotions of the student.

### **2.7.2 Merging the emotional labour process and postgraduate research supervision**

This section aims to merge the EL process and the postgraduate research supervision concept as described in literature and as confirmed by the research findings. No other study thus far has explored the supervisor's perspective on the existence of emotional labour in the postgraduate research supervision process. The relationship between supervisor and student can be compared to that of a customer or client as it requires a 'handling-people-well' element (Wharton, 1999, p. 166).

Figure 2.8 displays a map of the total supervision process inclusive of the relationship between the supervisor, the student and the master's dissertation or doctoral thesis. A triangle represents the person-to-person relationship between supervisor and student, as well as the relationship between the two parties and the outcome in the form of a thesis or dissertation. Furthermore, the emphasis of this study will fall on the supervisor's experience and, therefore, certain expectations are imposed on the postgraduate supervisor. These expectations, according to literature, are likely to be those of the university, stakeholders such as parents, scholarly groups and the government. However, these expectations might look different after exploring the supervisors' experiences.

The relationship between the postgraduate supervisor and the postgraduate student encompasses various dynamics which might have an impact on that relationship. Factors such as power relationships, individual characteristics and unconscious desires might have a possible impact on the relationship (Grant, 2003). By using this graphical presentation, one can get a good indication of when the different events take place and also how they take place.

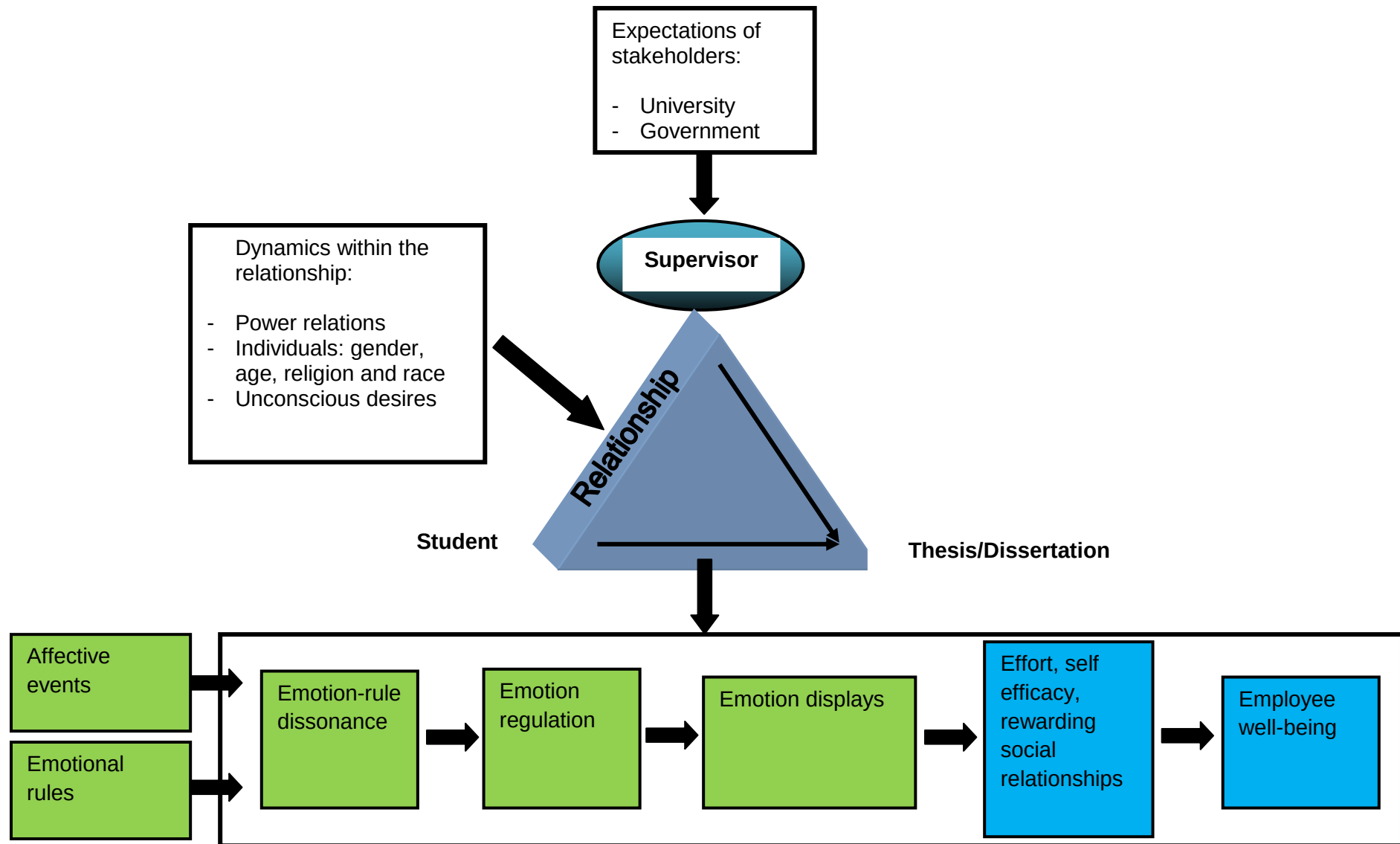


Figure 2.8: Mapping the postgraduate supervision process (Adapted from Grant, 2003; Holman et al., 2002)

When studying the emotional labour process one can start by looking at the affective events and emotional rules. Affective events are described as "occurrences at work that impact individuals' emotions" (Diefendorff and Gosserand, 2003). An example of this would be when one is insulted by someone at work, with the result that one experiences negative feelings and reacts by displaying anger, which is inconsistent with display rules in that environment. Emotional rules can be divided into two 'camps', according to Holman *et al.* (2002), namely: Feelings rules that govern the type and degree of emotional feeling, and display rules that govern the type and the extent of emotional expression. Furthermore, these feelings can be restrictive or expansive (Holman *et al.*, 2002). A restrictive feeling rule is to 'not feel sympathy for a client', while an expansive display rule about the type of emotion is to 'express enthusiasm towards a client' (Holman *et al.*, 2002).

According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) and Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003), the emotional rules tend to be expansive when positive emotions are present, and restrictive when negative emotions arise. Therefore, emotional rules specify the type of behaviour needed to meet the goals of performance and moral behaviour. The employee is motivated to act in accordance with these rules, if his or her feelings are in line with the rules. However, affective events in organisations might cause the employee's felt feelings to differ from the emotional rules, resulting in emotional dissonance.

Emotional dissonance is defined as "the discrepancy between felt and displayed emotion" (Holman *et al.*, 2002). The discrepancy between the employee's felt emotion and the emotional rules, which normally occurs before emotional regulation, is known as 'emotion-rule dissonance', and the divergence between felt emotion and expressed emotion that occurs after emotional regulation is referred to as 'fake emotional displays'. When emotion-rule dissonance occurs, the person will find it difficult to display the required emotion. Therefore, he or she will attempt to regulate the emotional behaviour by using strategies. These strategies are either surface acting, which is used to adjust emotional display, or deep acting where the person alters felt emotion which has the effect of appropriate display (Holman *et al.*, 2002).

The emotional display can consist of either fake emotions or genuine emotions. According to Zapf (2002) and Holman *et al.* (2002), four paths of genuine and fake emotional displays are created. Firstly, when no emotion-rule dissonance occurs, no regulation is needed as it is spontaneously generated. Secondly, emotion-rule dissonance occurs, but the attempt to regulate is absent. Here the behaviour is genuine, but is likely to be seen as non-standard. Thirdly, emotion-rule dissonance occurs and emotional behaviour is successfully regulated through deep acting, which results in genuine emotional behaviour. Finally, emotion-rule dissonance occurs and the emotional behaviour is successfully regulated by means of surface acting, resulting in a fake emotional display. According to Holman *et al.* (2002) these faked emotions may leak as they are masked and may be difficult to hide.

Effort, self-efficacy and rewarding social relationships as well as employee well-being, will merely be acknowledged for now. The reason being, that emotional labour has not been explored in the postgraduate supervision process and the above-mentioned elements' focus fall outside the objectives of this study. However, a comprehensive comparison of three different occupations has been done by Guy *et al.* (2008) regarding the consequences of EL. The findings reveal that EL is a similar occurrence across different contexts as can be seen when the concept of emotional labour is typed into the electronic academic paper database. The kinds of EL will vary, but it is a term used across diverse occupations. Unfavourable consequences of EL are burnout and undermined job satisfaction because of stress, self-alienation and emotional deviance, and inauthenticity caused by emotional dissonance. In turn, favourable consequences of EL will probably be increased job satisfaction, security, self-esteem and empowerment. In the light of these findings, recommendations will be made if these elements occur during the collection and analysis of the face-to-face interview data.

## 2.8 SUMMARY

The literature about emotional labour, as well as about the emotional strain which is experienced during a postgraduate research supervision process, will assist the execution of this study. The findings from data analysis will be used to search for links between what has been found in literature and theory. This study will furthermore dissect and explore the effects of emotions during a supervision process to realise the conceptualisation of emotional labour within the postgraduate research process.

By gleaning knowledge from academic literature, this study constructs a good basis for the exploration of the context in which the study aims to find emotional labour.

According to literature there seems to be evidence of emotional labour for the supervisor during the postgraduate supervision process. Various expectations from multiple stakeholders and multiple roles that should be fulfilled by the supervisor might cause emotional strain. As the postgraduate supervisor's workload increases, it is essential to identify when the difficult periods occur and in what way they present themselves during the supervisory process.

The next chapter will explore the methodology that was used in order to conduct the research of this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: RATIONALE AND APPLICATION**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter addresses the rationale and the application of the research methodology used in this study. Figure 3.1 represents a graphical display of the structured discussion of the research methodology and process. First, the research design and research philosophy will be discussed. Thereafter, the selection of respondents and sampling will be discussed, as well as how the data was collected. The data analysis discussion will follow, and the chapter will conclude with the aspects of quality, rigour and ethics that have been taken into account throughout this qualitative study.

In this chapter the researcher of this study will give a personal and practical overview of how the research was conducted and what methodology was applied. However, it should be taken into consideration that it is impossible to provide the full explanation of every step and decision that has been taken, due to the depth of the study. The structure, as displayed in Figure 3.1, and the chronological process will also be elaborated upon, including the key phases and methodological decisions, in order to establish quality and rigour.

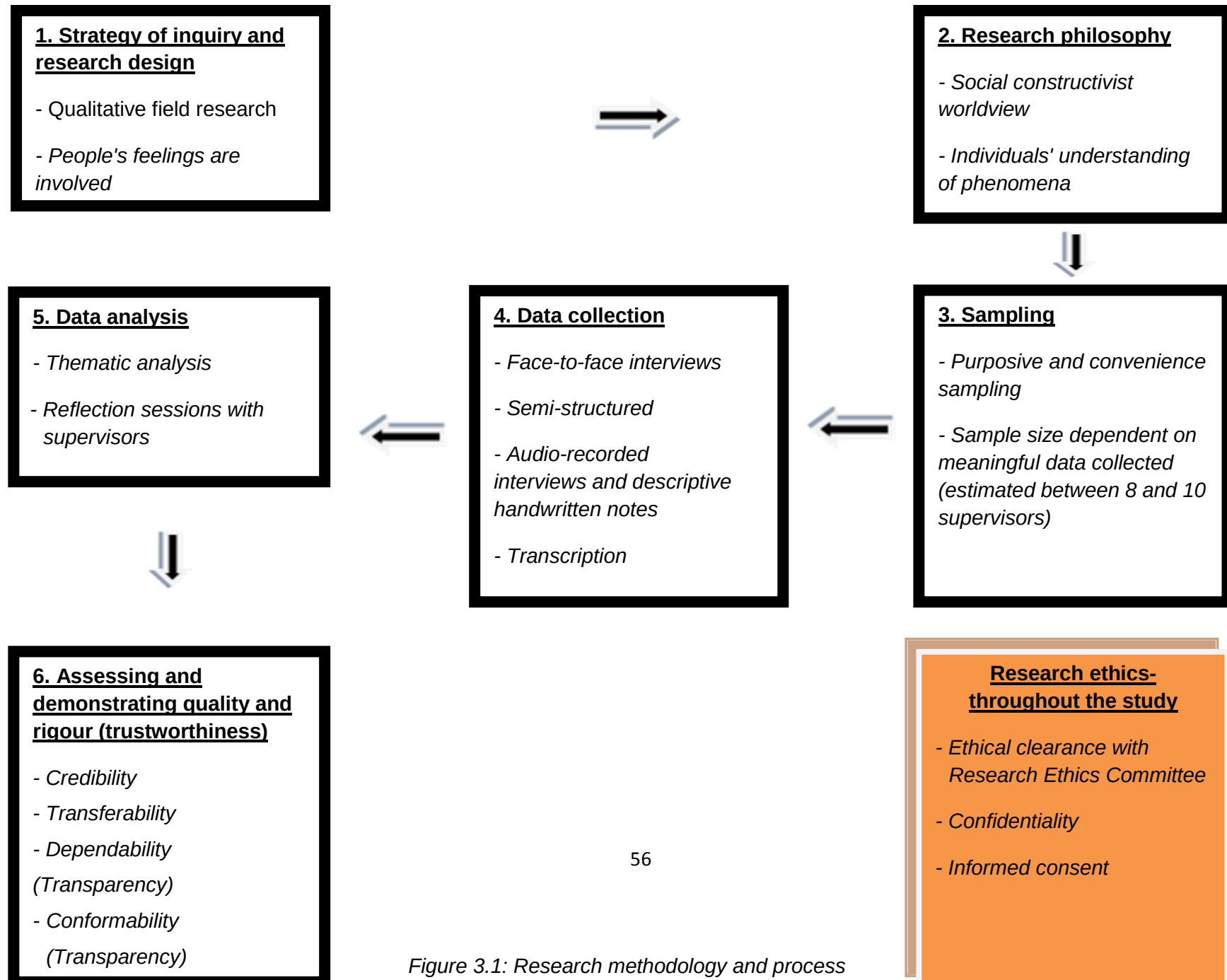


Figure 3.1: Research methodology and process

## **3.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DESIGN**

Most of the research on emotional labour that has been conducted thus far followed a quantitative approach (Elfenbein, 2007; Näring *et al.*, 2007; Erickson & Wharton, 1997). This study, however, follows a qualitative design as the research question and objectives stated in Chapter 1 require the discovery of and deeper insight into the construct emotional labour in a postgraduate research supervision environment. Human experiences and personal feelings and opinions need to be identified in order to further study the existence of emotional labour (EL) in the postgraduate supervisory process. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were conducted with postgraduate research supervisors, making them the units of analysis of this qualitative research approach (Babbie, 2005). The qualitative research design is aimed at exploring, understanding and representing a human or social problem, and by doing semi-structured interviews, descriptive human inputs are obtained (Creswell, 2009; Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999).

An inductive approach was used, which means the observation first took place through the collection of data, and then patterns started to occur in the data as the study unfolded.

### **3.2.1 Strategy of inquiry**

In order to give specific direction to the proposed study, the strategy of inquiry was used to identify the procedures involved in a research design. In this qualitative study, the analysis of human experiences (more specifically, the supervisor's experience within a postgraduate process) was explored by means of providing information to the respondents through verbal interchange or conversation (Law, Stewart, Letts, Pollock, Bosch & Wesmorland, 1998). A constructivist worldview was present, as supervisors gave their opinions about their experiences of the postgraduate research supervision process. According to Jackson and Sorensen (2006, p. 176), social constructivism is the

"human awareness or consciousness and its place in world affairs". Complexity in the views of supervisors was found, in the sense that each participant shared a unique experience of postgraduate research supervision. These complexities led to rich data for the study (Huws & Jones, 2008).

However, certain patterns and relationships of meaning occurred between the experiences of different supervisors during the course of the study (Creswell, 2009). These patterns included the time, place and situation with regard to how supervisors experienced emotional strain or other emotional feelings.

### **3.2.2 Biases**

It is important for the researcher to withdraw emotionally from the study and disregard personal feelings as the researcher is in a sense the primary tool for data collection, according to Law *et al.* (1998). The focus is solely on the experiences of the participants (supervisors in the postgraduate supervision process) and how they experience the phenomenon (postgraduate research supervision). The researcher should under no circumstances lead a participant to believe that something exists. The method used to achieve this, was to ask questions that focused on the supervisor's own experiences. By posing open-ended questions, the researcher could concentrate on listening to participants recounting their experiences during the postgraduate research supervision process.

During the interviews, direct questions containing EL-specific terminology were avoided, as this could possibly have created confusion and affected the quality of data gathered. Since we are human beings it is in our nature to defend our moral code, but as the researcher is not a postgraduate researcher supervisor, it was easier to disregard personal feelings. However, the researcher still had to execute reflexivity in order to reflect on the research process and the way it rolled out in order to make the process visible to readers as proposed by Schurink (2010). According to Stehlik and Chenoweth

(2005), reflexivity can be incorporated into the research methodology of a study, and by explaining exactly how the methods are used in this study, reflexivity is obtained.

### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM / PHILOSOPHY**

In order to engage with the research on a deeper level than mere data gathering, one needs to examine the beliefs and fundamentals of qualitative research. In the words of Maree (2007, p. 47), this is known as "a paradigm", which is defined as "a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world-view ...". Furthermore, a paradigm addresses fundamental assumptions that we as humans believe are the truth of reality. This is known as "ontology" (Maree, 2007). The question of "How do we know?" is regarded as the "epistemology", which, along with ontology, forms the assumptions of peoples' experiences in qualitative research.

The study focuses on how the postgraduate research supervisor understands and experiences the process and relationships of postgraduate research supervision within the academic world. According to Creswell (2009), the social constructivist worldview is applied when humans try to make sense of the world around them. This worldview is applicable to this study, as it follows a qualitative approach to explore and discover certain experiences within the supervisor's role as postgraduate overseer (Creswell, 2009).

The next section will describe the sampling methods that were applied in the study.

### **3.4 SAMPLING**

The aim of a qualitative sampling approach is to select an information-rich sample from the population, so that the results of studying the sample can then be generalised back to the population (Marshall, 1996). The researcher of this study was clear on **what**

(research topic and research objectives) to study and **how** (research philosophy and research design) to study it. It was then time to consider the participants **who** would possibly be studied.

This study made use of probability sampling. Sampling is described as the process used to select a portion of the population for a study (Babbie, 2005). The sample selected for this study is based mainly on the purposive and convenient sampling approaches. The reason for using purposive sampling and convenient sampling is due to the research objectives as well as the qualitative nature of emotional labour within the postgraduate supervision process. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to choose supervisors who were familiar with the process of postgraduate supervision and who could share their experiences by giving answers to in-depth questions (Babbie, 2005). Purposive sampling in itself seeks to maximise the depth and richness of data addressed by the research questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In this study, postgraduate research supervisors with at least five years of supervision experience were chosen for the purpose of data collection.

Additional criteria used to select the participants for the sample (convenience purposive sampling and snowball sampling) were: Postgraduate supervisors of master's and doctoral studies at South African universities who supervise more than one student at a time. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), the sample of interviewees should share similarities with regard to the research objectives.

Snowball sampling was used as the process proceeded. This method of sampling falls under non-probability sampling (Babbie, 2005), and it refers to the approach of asking respondents for references to other possible candidates for the purpose of collecting data (Babbie, 2005; Patton, 1990). In this study, snowball sampling took place during the interviews when a postgraduate research supervisor referred the researcher to another possible participant, who was subsequently interviewed.

Although convenient sampling is seen as the least rigorous technique (Marshall, 1996), it can support purposive sampling. In the case of this study the convenient sampling technique was not rigorous in the sense that access to supervisors in the postgraduate supervision process was not that difficult. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted and therefore the sample did not have to be large. However, the population size could not be exactly predicted as this was a qualitative study, and the sample size depended on the amount of meaningful data collected and on the point when data saturation was reached (Tuckett, 2005). In this study, data saturation started to become evident at interview seven, but eventually eight people were interviewed. The eighth interviewee offered to do an interview after learning about the scope of the study at a presentation at an international conference in Cape Town in 2012. Therefore, this eighth interview served as the "verification of data saturation" interview.

The postgraduate supervisors who were selected for the study were personally contacted by using face-to-face communication, telephonic arrangements and email messages. The location and time for the interview was arranged according to the respondent's schedule and convenience.

#### **3.4.1 Gaining access to research participants**

The participants needed to be able to provide information-rich and experience-based responses to allow the researcher to obtain information that would lead to answering the research questions. Therefore, the researcher decided to interview participants with at least five years' experience as postgraduate research supervisors (See Table 3.1). The chosen participants had an average of more than eight years' experience as postgraduate research supervisors, which can be considered as experienced.

*Table 3.1: Interviewee biographical information*

| <b>Interviewee</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Years as supervisor</b> | <b>Type of students</b> |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Interviewee 1      | Female        | 17 years                   | Master's and PhD        |
| Interviewee 2      | Female        | 16 years                   | Master's                |
| Interviewee 3      | Male          | 36 years                   | Master's and PhD        |
| Interviewee 4      | Male          | 11 years                   | Master's and PhD        |
| Interviewee 5      | Female        | 15 years (In USA and RSA)  | Master's and PhD        |
| Interviewee 6      | Female        | 20 years                   | Master's and PhD        |
| Interviewee 7      | Female        | 8 years                    | Master's                |
| Interviewee 8      | Female        | 10 years                   | Master's and PhD        |

### **3.5 RESEARCH PROCESS**

Figure 3.2 displays the various phases followed in order to apply the methodology stated in the study:

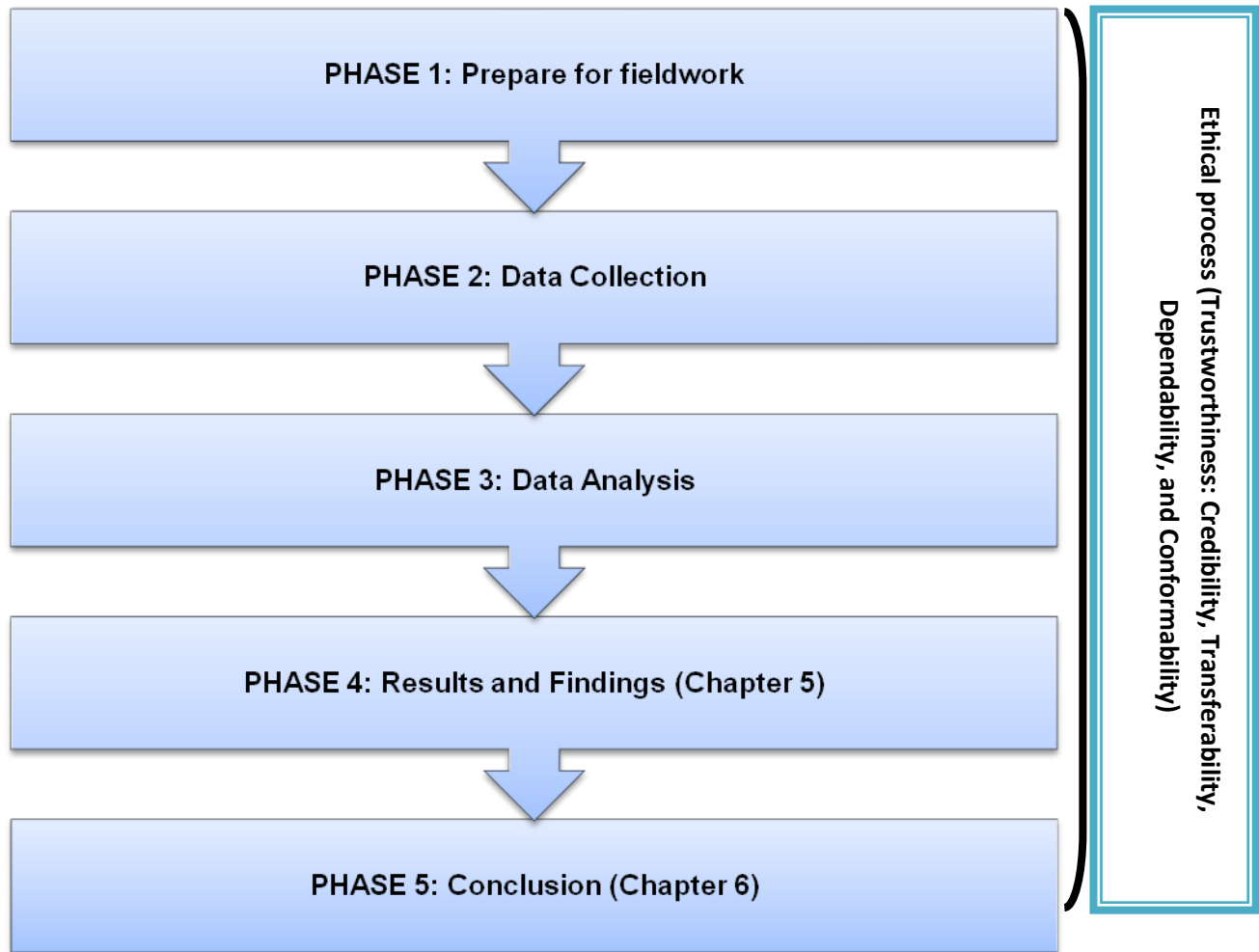


*Figure 3.2 Research process followed*

### **3.5.1 Phase 1: Preparation for fieldwork**

Most of the participants were contacted via email as this was a convenient medium to use. The initial contact with the participants was to inform them about the study and to ask them if they would be willing to participate. An example of such an email is presented in Figure 3.3. Most of the participants were interviewed in their own offices as the researcher wanted to follow the practice of allowing the respondents to be in their own environment (Babbie, 2005). This was a matter of convenience for the participants.

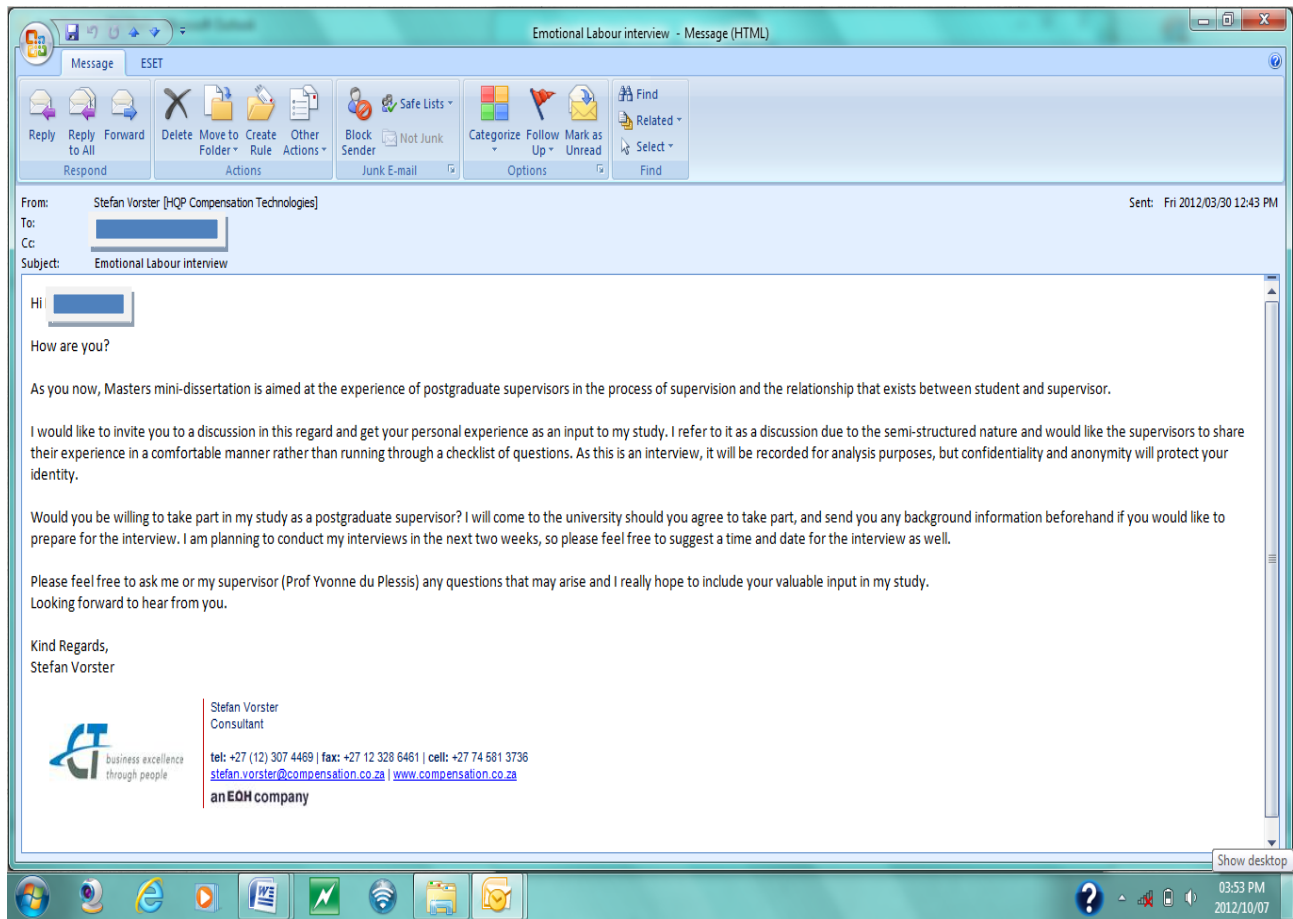


Figure 3.3: An example of the email sent to participants

After the participants had been contacted and their availability for the semi-structured interviews had been ensured, the semi-structured interview questions were finalised. The questions were constructed in the form of guiding notes and the researcher revised these in collaboration with the promoter. The questions were selected based on the research objectives set out at the beginning of this study, as well as on the literature available on emotional labour.

Table 3.2 displays the approach of a qualitative interview as compared to a dramaturgical model introduced by Myers and Newman (2007). The following comparisons can be used for the purpose of the methods used in this study:

*Table 3.2: A dramaturgical model of the qualitative interview (Adapted from Myers & Newman, 2007)*

| <u>Concepts</u> | <u>Description</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drama           | The interview is compared to the whole process of a drama, which include the stage, the stage props, the audience, the script, and the performance of the actor (In this study, the supervision process)                                                                                                             |
| Stage           | The stage is the environment where the interview takes place, which include the organisational setting and the social situations. It is also where the props, such as pens, notes and a dictaphone, are used as data collection tools. (In this study, the postgraduate supervisor's office)                         |
| Actor           | The interviewer and the interviewee each play their roles as "actors" in the following manner: The researcher's role is to be interested in the supervisor's experience and the supervisor (interviewee) is the "actor" who has the knowledge.                                                                       |
| Audience        | Both the interviewee and the interviewer take turns at playing the audience. However, the interviewer should listen intently to the response of the interviewee (supervisor) who does most of the speaking and shares his or her experience. The readers of the completed research can also be seen as the audience. |
| Script          | The script is partially developed and contains the questions asked during the interview. (The audio recording contains the detail which will be transcribed into the script.)                                                                                                                                        |
| Entry           | The dress code of the researcher should be applicable to the situation and should not attract the attention of the interviewee.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Exit            | Leaving the stage (interview) does not signal the end of the process, as the interviewer will come back to the interviewee (in an informal or formal manner) to check and verify the data collected during the interview.                                                                                            |
| Performance     | All the aspects mentioned in the table form part of the overall performance of the interview.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

The process that was used for the data collection will now be discussed.

### **3.5.2 Phase 2: Data collection**

The method of data collection that was used supports the qualitative nature of this study as is informed by the study objectives. Therefore, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the supervisors. Interview questions were pre-constructed using literature findings and background information on emotional labour to direct the topic at hand. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to digress from the format of both the questions and answers (Hofstee, 2006).

#### **Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews**

The advantages of conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews include the following: the researcher can examine the participant's body language and gestures that substantiate or contradict the words spoken; misunderstandings or misinterpretations can be overcome directly; interviewers can ensure reasonable questions on interviewees' level of understanding; and potential new areas can be explored as the semi-structured format allows more flexibility than structured interviews (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2004). An added advantage of conducting face-to-face interviews is the gathering of primary data which provides rich and in-depth data for the study. Primary data was gathered directly from the postgraduate research supervisors.

According to Hofstee (2006), a researcher needs to set specific goals to obtain certain data from interviews, which, in this case, were the research objectives set out at the beginning of the study. The questions were constructed with each objective in mind.

There are, however, also a few disadvantages of semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The researcher has a big responsibility to ask and respond to the important questions. Furthermore, bias may occur more readily than with structured interviews, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews are time-consuming (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2004). The researcher tried to stay as objective as possible throughout the process, and

this was possible to achieve because the researcher is not a postgraduate research supervisor.

Open-ended questions were used so that the participants could add their personal experiences without having to be prompted to think in a specific direction (Creswell, 2009). The face-to-face interviews consisted of approximately 30 to 45 minutes each, and were conducted in the form of relaxed conversations. All the interviews took place in the participants' workplace except for one interview which took place in Cape Town in a town apartment. However, none of these environments contained any significant distractions or interference, and the recordings could be done with ease. Furthermore, all the interviews, except one, were conducted in Afrikaans as this is the participants' mother tongue and they felt comfortable discussing their experience in this manner. The participants and the interviewer are fluent in Afrikaans and English, and sometimes English phrases and words were used as well. The manner in which the interviews took place will now be described.

### **3.5.2.1 Initiating the discussion**

It was important to be well prepared for the interview and to be in control of the situation. The preparation included emotional preparation as well as familiarisation with the content to be discussed (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011). Preparation in the form of practising appropriate body language and structuring the phrasing of the questions was done beforehand with the promoter. Thereafter, the researcher conducted a pilot interview, which served to provide self-confidence to proceed with the interviews. During the pilot interview the researcher noted that it was important to closely observe certain behaviours displayed by the interviewees (Schurink *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, the pilot interview served as a sounding board to test the interview questions and make adjustments. The first pangs of anxiousness about the answers the questions would elicit were dispelled after the questions had been adjusted somewhat.

In fact, the pilot interview produced such a rich content that it could be included in the study.

The first step the researcher took during the interview was to introduce himself and to outline the main purpose of the research interview. A brief background about the concept of emotional regulations and displays within the broad context of work was given. However, mention was made of the topic and the scope of the interview before the interview began to give the participant an idea of the context the research planned to explore. It was important not to give too much information to the supervisor as the study might require secrecy (Hofstee, 2006). The image that was portrayed at the beginning was important, with a view to making the participant feel comfortable about the ensuing discussion.

After the participants had read through the consent form, they had a final chance to decide to participate and sign or not. They were also given the assurance that they could withdraw from the proceedings at any time during the interview. Before each interview, authorisation was requested for making an audio recording of the interview for transcription purposes.

The term emotional labour was deliberately not mentioned, because it might not be familiar to the respondents. Another reason for not mentioning it was because emotional labour had never before been researched in the context of postgraduate research supervision. The next part of the face-to-face interview was to make the consent form available to the participants to read so as to give them the reassurance that their identity would be protected as promised in the initial email sent to them. Matters dealt with in the consent form included the protection of their identities by means of anonymity of their identity, the use of code names only accessible to the researcher, and the recording of the interview for data analysis purposes only. Table 3.3 displays the interview schedule of the participants.

*Table 3.3: Interview schedule*

| Interviewee number | Interview date | Interview location | Interview duration |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1                  | 2012-03-14     | Pretoria           | 40 minutes         |
| 2                  | 2012-03-16     | Pretoria           | 23 minutes         |
| 3                  | 2012-04-26     | Pretoria           | 23 minutes         |
| 4                  | 2012-04-03     | Pretoria           | 32 minutes         |
| 5                  | 2012-04-13     | Pretoria           | 34 minutes         |
| 6                  | 2012-04-11     | Pretoria           | 25 minutes         |
| 7                  | 2012-04-25     | Pretoria           | 32 minutes         |
| 8                  | 2012-07-24     | Cape Town          | 22 minutes         |

The interviews took place over a period of a month as the researcher had to take time off from work to meet with the participants. The interview with interviewee number eight was arranged for later on short notice and took place in Cape Town in July 2012. The researcher used this last interview to test whether the research's data saturation point had in fact been reached.] Therefore, by that time the sampling had reached the closing stages as a point of redundancy in emerging themes had been reached in accordance with the description of Law *et al.* (1998).

### **3.5.2.2 Listening and reflecting**

Verbal communication and non-verbal communication are part of everyday interactions, and an interview is no exception. During the interview between the researcher and the

supervisors, mutual interaction took place. Furthermore, probing was used in many cases to stimulate the participants for more specific or more in-depth information (Schurink *et al.*, 2011). The interviews could be described as fluent two-way conversations (Maree, 2007). Verbatim quotes were also of great help (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004).

Sometimes the researcher had to ask supervisors to focus on the original question again especially when they started to digress by discussing and analysing students' perspectives as well. According to the traditional structure of an interview, interviewers should maintain control over the interaction between interviewee and interviewer (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This proved to be one of the challenges of face-to-face interviews as the conversation would deviate from the direction of the original question at times.

A researcher must be a good listener and must concentrate on following what the participant says (Law *et al.* 1998). The content and the process of providing information during the interview are important. The interviewer should be able to put himself or herself in the shoes of the interviewee and use techniques, such as reflecting back, to respond to the interviewee.

**A transcription (in Afrikaans) of an instance when the researcher reflected back to an interviewee (in this case Interviewee 1):**

*Prof. het nou gesê van die omgewing wat bietjie druk uitoefen ... wat sal Prof. sê is nog 'n druk wat julle ervaar uit die omgewing?*

Translation of the Afrikaans transcription into English: *Prof., you referred to the environment that is a cause of some pressure ... could you perhaps tell me what additional pressure you experience from the environment?*

When the respondent mentioned the pressure experienced from the environment it set the researcher thinking about the additional pressures that could be experienced from

the environment, and this prompted him to formulate the next question based on the remark that the respondent had made.

The idea was not to threaten the participant or to make him or her uncomfortable, but to get a better understanding of the participant's experiences. According to Schurink *et al.* (2011), probing techniques can be used by the researcher during interviews. Keeping questions open, tracking the conversation, clarifying briefly what the researcher's understanding of the conversation is (all the while allowing the participants to share their experiences), and then summarising the interview by referring to critical information and repeating it in their own words, are ways in which probing can be done (Schurink *et al.*, 2011).

While the researcher was interviewing the participants, trying to stay as objective as possible and looking for patterns of behaviour, he came to the realisation that he fell under the category of 'observer as participant'. According to Maree (2007), a researcher who can be classified as an 'observer as participant' is one who gets involved in a situation, but focuses on his or her role as an observer. Such a researcher makes sense of the social dynamics of participants' values and beliefs while staying uninvolved in the dynamics of the setting (Maree, 2007).

The semi-structured interviews used during the data collection followed a flexible structure and utilised the interview guides in order to keep the conversation on track. According to Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004), qualitative interviews may be adapted more clearly to the route of events in individual cases. The interview guides had a certain order to allow a reasonable flow, and the interview questions were asked in a manner that made them easy to comprehend. Furthermore, the interview guides and questions were constructed in a manner that allowed room for exploration of other areas that developed as the interviews progressed. According to Conneeley (2002), the questions asked should not be so specific that alternative possibilities of enquiry are closed off.

The postgraduate research supervisors' experience with postgraduate research supervision was investigated by asking between ten and twenty-five qualitative research questions in a semi-structured manner. Interviewees were asked to talk about the following: their time-period in supervision, their field, their level of engagement with postgraduate students, their likes and dislikes, strategies they used as postgraduate research supervisors, the environment in which they supervised and their emotional experiences of being involved in postgraduate research supervision.

According to Schurink *et al.*, (2011), a relationship of trust throughout the process of the interview is a fundamental part of qualitative interviewing. Even though the interviews were relatively short, the open approach which was followed allowed the participants to be at ease. The researcher emphasised that the interviews were nothing more than informal discussions. In accordance with the approach of Conneeley (2002), the openness of the interviewee revealed the existence of a feeling of trust.

### **3.5.2.3 Field notes**

The researcher kept a research journal (used for personal reference and not for presentation in the study) for making notes about observations made during the interviews. Throughout the transcription process these notes were used to refresh his memory of the interview and to visually recall the expressions and body language of the participants. The journal was mainly intended to serve as an audit trail and not as additional content to be used in this document, as per an example given by Babbie (2005).

### **3.5.2.4 Recording and storing the data collected**

For the purpose of data recording, the researcher used a Sony digital recorder and placed it between himself and the interviewee. The digital recorder made good quality voice recordings of the interviews possible. The interviews took place in closed offices,

which further ensured good quality recordings. The researcher made sure that the recorder had been fully charged before each interview and that the memory card had enough space on it to capture the recording. However, due to a technical problem the interview with Interviewee 7 did not record. Consequently, the researcher double-checked when next he recorded an interview. Luckily the researcher could fall back on the notes taken during the interview with Interviewee 7.

After each interview the researcher immediately copied the electronic data (called computerised data by Mouton, 2001) to his personal computer and to a reliable flash drive to ensure the safe storage of the data in multiple places. The researcher renamed the interview according to the participant's name to avoid confusion. The audio files could then be opened by any media player, but QuickTime Player was chosen as the standard media player because this player has a slow playback function and a function for automatic playback a few milliseconds after each pause. This function came in handy during the transcription process.

### **3.5.3 Phase 3: Data analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is defined by Maree (2007, p. 99), as the "range of approaches, processes and procedures whereby researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected of the people and situations that they are investigating."

#### **3.5.3.1 Method of data analysis**

The next phase of the research was to start analysing the data collected during the face-to-face interviews. This phase was somewhat daunting in that it introduced a new realm of the study which involved evaluating the meaningfulness of the data collected. However, the researcher kept reminding himself that the qualitative nature of the study allowed the responses of the respondents to lead the researcher, and that that could be

an interesting and exciting part of the research journey. This approach can be described as an inductive approach towards qualitative research (Maree, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once data analysis starts, the researcher should keep in mind that the processes of data collection and data analysis are of a cyclical nature. The researcher should go back, if necessary, to the participants and verify the correct understanding of the data collected. This study analysed the data by using the thematic analysis approach, according to which data is organised into specific themes. The method of thematic analysis is used for "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). It is important to analyse data in a specific manner so that the study can be compared to other studies or research done in the field.

In line with the process of thematic analysis propounded by Braun and Clarke (2006), the approach in this study consisted of the following phases:

### **Phase 1: Organising and preparing the data analysis**

Step one of the analysis was to order the data. The interviews were transcribed using headphones and the QuickTime player, and all the notes taken during the interviews were labelled and read into the interview database on Microsoft Excel. The exact words of each interview were transferred into a Word document created for each participant and saved on a hard drive under their names for further analysis. This was a time-consuming process, but the researcher chose to do the transcriptions himself as it afforded him the opportunity to relive the interviews and to create a picture of each participant's experience.

## **Phase 2: Familiarisation with the data**

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews was transcribed using headphones, a computer and a digital recording device. Images and diagrams could be added to these transcriptions. As suggested by De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, Poggenpoel and Schurink (1998), the researcher read through all the data to become familiar with what had been discussed and to decide what information was valuable and important.

After having read the data, sorting and arranging it and making notes, the next phase was to generate codes.

## **Phase 3: Generating initial codes**

Coding is the process whereby a researcher carefully reads through the transcribed data and divides it into analytical units (Maree, 2007). These units are then coded or marked by means of names. Three stages of coding were used in this study for the generation of codes. The first stage consisted of open coding, according to which the data could be categorised according to commonalities. Furthermore, similar comments were grouped together. The purpose of open coding is to reduce the data to a small set of themes, and to name and categorise the data (Babbie, 2005). Although the set of themes and codes gets narrowed down, the coding process is still inductive, because, as Maree (2007) indicates, the researcher develops codes as the data is coded. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 10), a "theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set".

The "New Comment" functionality in Microsoft Word was helpful here as displayed in Figure 3.4.

ondersteunend en sukkelend en huilend klaargekom, en die kandidaat het darem geslaag. Jy weet  
 (jy altyd maar bly as die eksterne darem net die kandidaat laat slaag. Op 'n paar geleenthede, uh in  
 die ou bedeling wat jy kan dit nie meer vandag doen nie dit word nie meer toegelaat nie, maar in die  
 ou bedeling kon ek darem 'n eksterne eksaminator kontak en vir hom sê die produk wat ek stuur is  
 regtig die beste wat ek uit hierdie kandidaat kon haal), en ek dink dis 'n slaagpunt werd. En kyk teen  
 hierdie agtergrond na die produk en dit het nie in my opinie daartoe gely dat hierdie ou beïnvloed  
 het om (n slaagpunt) te gee nie. Ek dink dit was nogal 'n goeie sisteem want die eksterns waardeur  
 nogal (n bietjie terugvoer) en so aan. Maar op daai manier het ons darem... kon ek darem daarin slaag  
 om die mense ten minste te laat deurkom. Um...so...maar vandag is dit nie meer moontlik nie, uh  
 daar is geen kontak met jou eksterne eksaminatore nie, en so voorts nie. So, as jy dan so produk  
 wegstuur hoop en bid jy maar net deesdae dat die (eksterne eksaminator) ten minste darem 'n vyftig  
 persent sal toeken.

**Comment [579]:** Supportive, Emotional

**Comment [580]:** Glad when external examiner pass student

**Comment [581]:** Best out of candidate

**Comment [582]:** In past, contact external examiner

**Comment [583]:** Pass mark

**Comment [584]:** System

**Comment [585]:** Feedback to external examiner

**Comment [586]:** External examiner

Figure 3.4: Open coding of text

The second stage consisted of axial coding, according to which connections are made amongst the categories in order to form subcategories and differentiate between concepts that are already available (Flick *et al.*, 2004). Contexts were also compared for further exploration. Additional data was moved back and forth in order to refine the categories. Axial coding allows the researcher to identify clusters, patterns and relationships. Each participant's codes were transferred to their own column, and codes were coloured according to similarities. Figure 3.5 displays a small section of the code book to illustrate the axial coding done.

| Interviewee 1                  | Interviewee 2                | Interviewee 3          | Interviewee 4                       |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Process                        | Role                         | Period                 | Period                              |
| Ensure quality                 | Angry                        | Type of Students       | Role                                |
| Role                           | Role - Percpetion of student | Role                   | Strategy when choosing students     |
| Relationship                   | Process - EBW                | Job Description        | Topics                              |
| Expectations                   | Process                      | Discourse              | Approach                            |
| Memorandum of understanding    | Metaphor                     | Relationship           | Category of students                |
| Deliverables/Results           | Enjoy                        | Match                  | Process                             |
| Timeline                       | Astonished                   | Option to choose       | Type of student                     |
| Phases                         | Under estimate               | Limitation             | Quality work                        |
| Challenges                     | Impressed                    | Process                | Strategy                            |
| Depends on student             | Not nice/Don't enjoy         | Comfortable            | Let student go                      |
| Number of students             | Frustration                  | Client                 | Time                                |
| Initial contact                | Pressure                     | Freedom of choice      | System                              |
| Shared view                    | Time Pressure                | Accomodate preferences | Workload                            |
| Forced ideas                   | Workload                     | Fit                    | Promotions - outputs                |
| Insight                        | Student dissapear            | Expectations           | Pressure                            |
| New to students                | Start from beginning         | Job Agreement          | Strategy of University              |
| Wish list                      | Let thesis go to soon        | Feedback               | Pressure on SA supervisor           |
| Organisation to Academic world | Not a quick thing            | Deadlines              | International research requirements |
| Strain                         | Time                         | Exam periods           | Publish articles                    |
| Proposal - stressful           | Focus divided                | Multiple roles         | Legislation                         |
| Involved in the process        | Burden                       | Outputs                | Focus areas                         |
| Contact                        | Registration                 | Agreement              | Pressure                            |

Figure 3.5: Example of a section of the axial coding

The third and final stage was to apply selective coding according to which the core categories were selected and examined for interconnections. Flick *et al.* (2004) says the following about selective coding: "Selective coding takes the core or central category from the summarised data and systematically links back to the research questions. During the process of selective coding, the core categories are defined in terms of the conceptual framework that emerged".

Colour codes were used to manage the data according to the core codes, and the axial codes were selected or allocated to each core code as displayed in Figure 3.6.

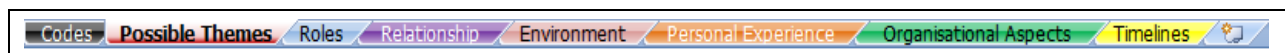


Figure 3.6: Selective coding and finding themes

Up to this point, coding displays the procedure which has been followed in order to show a valid and reliable path for establishing the themes (Babbie, 2005).

#### Phase 4: Searching for themes

After the initial codes were categorised, they were collated into potential themes for the study. Thereafter, further data that was relevant to the identified potential themes was collected from the transcriptions. Potential themes that emerged from the table (as indicated in Figure 3.6, and the colour codes were listed on a different Microsoft Excel sheet. These themes were then narrowed down to only a few (some themes served as subcategories). Selective coding took place at that stage as the codes chosen formed the storyline.

The possible themes emerged when the codes were compared between different respondents, and were allocated as displayed in Figure 3.8.

| <u>Interviewee 3</u>             | <u>Interviewee 4</u>      | <u>Interviewee 5</u> | <u>Interviewee 6</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Freedom of choice                | Pressure                  | Impact on supervisor | Valuable             |
| Remind yourself of the situation | Pressure on SA supervisor | Co-supervision       | Sorry                |
| Empathy                          | Frustration               | Pressure             | Not nice/Don't enjoy |
| Frustration                      | Self realisation          | Frustration          | Rewarding            |

*Figure 3.7: The theme of personal experiences*

## **Phase 5: Reviewing themes**

During this phase a thematic map should be drawn up to display the various themes. For the purpose of this study this was done in Microsoft Excel. Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that the researcher should check the themes against the coded extracts and the entire data set. It is important to note that when one does inductive analysis, one follows a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## **Phase 6: Producing the meaning of the themes**

In the final phase, the analysis links up with the research objectives and the literature. A scholarly report on the analysis can then be compiled. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2004), the data analysis is done to check for consistency of data collected and to look for patterns of response among participants (Creswell, 2009). Reflection, in collaboration with the interviewees, is also a critical part of report writing, to ensure that the data reflects the participants' responses correctly. Reflection took place during the production of the report for this study.

During this phase, the possible themes were narrowed down to six, and in the process the themes were interrelated. Because each theme had to link back to the objectives, member checking was done. The six themes were then listed and defined as indicated in Table 3.4. A clear and unambiguous definition and description should be given to

each theme to communicate its essence. This phase represents an ongoing analysis to refine the themes identified in phases three and four.

*Table 3.4: The final six themes and their descriptions*

|                                     |                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Role</b>                         | The role of the postgraduate supervisor determines what the daily activities of a supervisor are.    |
| <b>Relationship</b>                 | The relationship between supervisor and student within the postgraduate research supervision process |
| <b>Environment</b>                  | The context and surroundings in which the postgraduate research supervision process plays out.       |
| <b>Personal experience/Emotions</b> | The emotions the postgraduate research supervisor goes through during this process and relationship  |
| <b>Organisational aspects</b>       | The organisational impact on the postgraduate research supervisor                                    |
| <b>Timeline</b>                     | The planning around time in this process                                                             |

### 3.5.3.2 Actions followed for managing the data for analysis

The data from the face-to-face interviews was recorded with a voice recorder and stored electronically on a computer as well as on flash drives for further analysis. The recordings were renamed on the computer so as not be confused with other recordings. Recording the interviews allowed the researcher to go back to the data and write findings based on what the respondents had said. The recordings, together with their transcriptions, were saved in a secure location on a computer. Two code books were created during the coding phase: the one contained the participants' names and the other one contained encrypted information to prevent unauthorised access. The original code book was also stored securely on a computer. By using open coding first, then comparing themes, and finally doing more focused coding, the core themes obtained could be triangulated back to the literature (Castro, Garcia, Cavazos Jr. & Castro, 2011).

### 3.6 ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING QUALITY AND RIGOUR

Qualitative research offers flexibility and simplicity in terms of data collection (Babbie, 2005). However, qualitative research is not ideal for arriving at statistical descriptions of big populations. Accuracy and credibility are essential during the qualitative research process. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative validity implies that the researcher verifies the findings of the data collection process by executing specific procedures. Validity, in the qualitative sense of the word, is one of the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Babbie, 2005). Validity procedures include inter-coder agreement. The inter-coder agreement, otherwise known as cross-checking, occurs when a researcher finds another person to agree on the codes used in the study (Creswell, 2009). This was done by the researcher and both his supervisors.

Furthermore, multiple validity strategies identified by Creswell (2009) were used and include: triangulation (different supervisors' evidence to build justification themes), member checking (taking descriptions back to supervisors to verify accuracy), thick and rich descriptions to substantiate findings, clarification of any biases, and making use of an external auditor. People have different orientations towards subjects in general, and the researcher should acknowledge that there will be bias in the qualitative approach when conducting interviews. As indicated in Figure 3.3, the trustworthiness of the research was maintained at all times in the research process.

Qualitative reliability shows the consistency that is obtained by using trustworthy procedures across different researchers or projects (Creswell, 2009). During the process of qualitative research it is important to create a protocol or database of the reliability procedures that were followed. In this study transcripts were double-checked to make sure obvious mistakes were not present, definition of codes was used throughout the study, and cross-checking took place with a fellow researcher (Creswell, 2009). The study also tried to keep biases to the absolute minimum.

A study is only trustworthy if the reader of the research report judges it to be so (Rolfe, 2006). As displayed in Table 3.4, the quality and trustworthiness of a study can be increased by the following four constructs:

Table 3.5: Trustworthiness of the research process (Conneeley, 2002; De Wet & Erasmus, 2005).

| Trustworthiness                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Credibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Transferability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Dependability<br>(Transparency)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Conformability<br>(Transparency)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Credibility refers to the match between the research participants' views and the researchers' reconstruction of the data gathered from the participants. Member checking is described as taking data and interpretations back to the participants to confirm the credibility of the information (Lincoln and Guba, 1994).</p> <p>The researcher discussed the themes extracted from the interviewee data with multiple interviewees in order to increase the credibility of this study.</p> | <p>Transferability is when the findings from the study can be transferred to another case. The way in which transferability was reached, was by showing the exact construction process of the study. In the case of qualitative research there may be situational uniqueness which makes conclusions unique to the study. According to Krefting (1991), the manner in which the participants are selected can, however, have an influence.</p> | <p>The logical research process that was followed throughout the study should be clear in order to ensure dependability. Dependability can be strengthened by showing an audit trail (Bradbury-Jones, 2007) and this was done by keeping a research journal as well as evidence of all the documents used during the study. The researcher took pains to show the total research process and the way everything fitted together, and this contributed towards the dependability of the study.</p> | <p>Conformability refers to the gathering and documentation of evidence during the research process as an audit measure. In the case of this study, code books, transcripts, electronic interview data and written notes were stored safely.</p> <p>Dependability and conformability make up the overall transparency of the study.</p> |

### 3.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

When conducting qualitative face-to-face interviews, there are a few ethical issues or problems that need to be overcome. Apart from the requirement to comply with copyright laws and to steer clear of plagiarism, there are other steps that need to be taken to preserve research ethics. The following considerations and actions will be followed for the purpose of this study (Standard Operating procedures: Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria: January 2006):

#### 3.7.1 Informed consent

"Research should, as far as possible, be based on participants' freely volunteered *informed consent*" (Corti, Day & Backhouse, 2000, p.3). According to Creswell (2009), the researcher should develop an informed consent form for participants to sign before engaging in the research. Elements of a consent form that were used for this study are the following: Identification of the researcher; identification of the sponsoring institution; indication of how the participants were selected; the purpose of the research; the benefits of participating; the type of involvement; the risks for the participant; the emphasis of the voluntary participation of the participant; and the researcher's contact number in case questions arose during the process.

Furthermore it was important to emphasise the academic purpose of the study and to give the participant the assurance that no financial gain was derived from the research. The researcher had to record the interviews for data analysis purposes; however, the participant had to give his or her consent to record the interview with the digital recorder. Ethical approval was also required for the postgraduate study, and the process involved two steps: Firstly, permission was required from the Dean of the Faculty, Human Resource Department, University of Pretoria in which the study was conducted. Furthermore, ethical approval of the research proposal had to be obtained from the Faculty's Postgraduate Committee. Secondly, a memorandum of understanding needed to be registered by the supervisor and the researcher after the Faculty's Postgraduate Committee had confirmed the appointment of the supervisor. These steps were duly followed for this study.

### 3.7.2 Codes of behaviour

The participant has to be seen as a person with feelings. During the research process, the participants should be treated as unique human beings in their specific contexts. It is therefore also important to safeguard the identities of the participants and to respect their anonymity. According to Corti *et al.* (2000) a robust system of replacing names is necessary to maintain participants' anonymity. Microsoft Excel was useful here as one can simply replace the participants' names with an anonymous title, and save it as a new platform to work from as indicated in Figure 3.8. According to Corti *et al.* (2000), machine-readable documents used in MS Word should always be scanned by the researcher in order to prevent any documents giving away the identity of the participants. Basic human rights apply during the whole process. Therefore, the code book and transcriptions are presented in such a way that participants cannot be identified. Only the researcher has a copy of the names and identities of the respondents, which he will use to review the process.

|               |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Interviewee 5 | Interviewee 6 | Interviewee 7 | Interviewee 8 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|

Figure 3.8: Anonymous workbook in Excel

### 3.7.3 Justice, fairness and objectivity

The dignity of the participant should be respected. As mentioned before, the identities of the respondents were linked to interviewee numbers and these identities were not revealed in the study. Only the researcher knew the identities of the respondents, and he stored them in the raw data in a secure place.

### 3.7.4 Integrity

A researcher's actions should speak of honesty and fairness, and a researcher should accept being held accountable for his or her limitations, competence, beliefs and values. Because of a researcher's close involvement in the qualitative research process, these are critical aspects. From a postgraduate student's perspective, bias

was limited to the little prior knowledge about the process and the variables that had an impact on the postgraduate supervisor.

### **3.7.5 Sensitivity**

Participants must be treated with sensitivity and the researcher must maintain his values while preserving the dignity of the participants in the study. During the interviews, empathy and emotional intelligence on the side of the researcher played a major role. The nature of the study demanded that these principles be adhered to.

### **3.7.6 Confidentiality**

The documents used during the interviews, and all other documents that could possibly identify the participants, were kept safely in electronic formats in three different locations to provide anonymity to the participants. Only the researcher would be able to identify the participants from the recordings and the original consent forms. These requirements are in accordance with the proposed ethical guidelines (SPMA, 2006).

## **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The main aim of this chapter was to describe the research methodology and methods used in this research study. This was achieved by stating the research design, exploring the strategy of inquiry, the sampling strategy, the data collection process, the way in which the data would be analysed, the research quality as well as research ethics. This chapter aimed to give the reader a clear and holistic picture of the research approach and the methods used. The next chapter presents the research findings of the study by describing the themes identified during the analysis process.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results and findings of the study. This is done by discussing the themes that emerged from the face-to-face interviews which were conducted with eight postgraduate supervisors. It is important to note that the themes were not identified beforehand but were extracted from the transcription data and the handwritten notes obtained from the interviews. The focus, therefore, falls on the postgraduate supervisor's experience during the postgraduate supervision process.

The themes chosen are linked to the discussion in the literature study. In order for the data to remain trustworthy and to reveal the direct experiences of the supervisors who were interviewed, the study has stayed true to the original transcriptions as the main input of this chapter. Furthermore, to verify that the data analysis is trustworthy, the researcher executed member checking with Interviewee 1 who confirmed that the analysis was indeed truthful. The results will now be discussed and related back to the research objectives set out in Chapter 1.

The following interviewee coding system will be used to discuss the results from the data that was collected:

|               |                                                                                                         |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Interviewee 1 | She has been a postgraduate supervisor for 17 years and has supervised on master's and doctoral levels. |
| Interviewee 2 | She has been a postgraduate supervisor for 16 years and has only supervised master's students.          |
| Interviewee 3 | He has been a postgraduate supervisor for 36 years and has supervised on master's and doctoral levels.  |
| Interviewee 4 | He has been a postgraduate supervisor for 11 years and has supervised on master's and doctoral levels.  |

- Interviewee 5      She has been a postgraduate supervisor for 15 years, both nationally and internationally, supervising master's and doctoral students.
- Interviewee 6      She has been a postgraduate supervisor from the late 1980's and has supervised master's and doctoral students.
- Interviewee 7      She has been a postgraduate supervisor for eight years, and has supervised master's students. (Only handwritten notes of this interview could be used due to recording problems.)
- Interviewee 8      She has been in postgraduate supervision for 10 years, supervising master's and doctoral students.

## 4.2 EMERGING THEMES

Displayed in Figure 4.1 is an outline of the discussion that will be used to explore the results obtained by means of face-to-face interviews in a semi-structured design and through thematic analysis. The themes that emerged from the data are divided according to the objectives (stated in Chapter 1) where their influence is possibly the most significant. These themes may also apply to the other objectives and their application is not necessarily limited to a single objective.

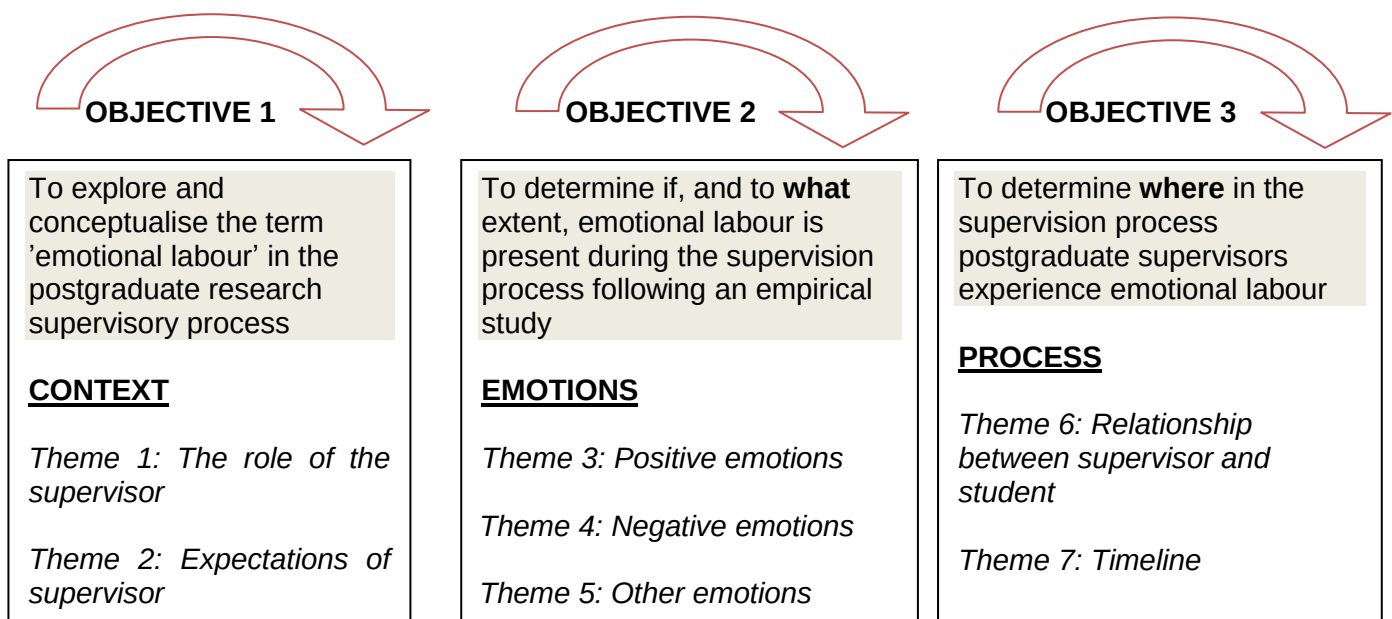


Figure 4.1: Outline for discussion of objectives and themes

In order to see the full picture of the themes and their subthemes, Table 4.1 is introduced early in this chapter. Table 4.1 expands on Figure 4.1 for the purpose of structuring the discussion.

*Table 4.1: Summary of the themes discussed*

| THEMES                                                | SUB-THEMES                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>1. ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR</b>                      | Setting of standards and quality of work                                                                   | Student support                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Focus on and clarity of study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                 |
| <b>2. EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISOR</b>                  | Macro environment                                                                                          | <u>Meso environment:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• NRF</li> <li>• Career advancement and promotion</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Research culture and access to data</li> </ul> | <u>Micro environment:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research communities</li> <li>• Student contract</li> <li>• Parents and students</li> </ul>                                                                                                  |                 |
| <b>3. POSITIVE EMOTIONS</b>                           | Pleasant experiences                                                                                       | Satisfaction and rewards                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Positive revelations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                 |
| <b>4. NEGATIVE EMOTIONS</b>                           | Unreasonable student expectations                                                                          | Stress and anxiety                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <u>Frustration:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of quality students</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Status/power</li> <li>• Editing</li> <li>• Non-compliance with requests</li> <li>• Writing, language and statistics</li> </ul> | Anger           |
| <b>5. ADDITIONAL EMOTIONS</b>                         | Empathy and sympathy                                                                                       | Burden                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Guilt                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |
| <b>6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT</b> | Clients in the supervisory process                                                                         | Dynamics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Caring                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Career and work |
| <b>7. TIMELINE</b>                                    | <u>Starting phase:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuring</li> <li>• Proposal</li> </ul> | Middle phase                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <u>End phase:</u><br>Quality inclosure                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                 |

## 4.3 CONTEXT

In order to achieve Objective 1 of the study, namely "to explore and conceptualise the term 'emotional labour' in the postgraduate research supervisory processes", the postgraduate supervision context, the internal and external environments and their expectations have to be explored.

Before the various contextual aspects can be discussed, it is important to first study the responses of the participants as to what exactly the role of the postgraduate supervisor entails, as this will give context to what the typical postgraduate supervisor deals with in his or her job. It is important to note that it is not yet clear whether the postgraduate supervisor experiences emotional labour in the postgraduate supervision process. The fulfilment of the three objectives stated earlier is still anticipated.

### 4.3.1 Theme 1: The role of the supervisor

In order to understand the dynamics and process of being a postgraduate supervisor, it is essential to first understand the role of a postgraduate supervisor. This section will examine the role of a postgraduate supervisor through the respondents' eyes. Once it is clear what exactly a postgraduate supervisor's role is, the study will explore the various emotions at play in the postgraduate supervision relationship and during the postgraduate supervision process. Table 4.2 gives examples of the codes that led to the theme of the role of the supervisor. According to data collected from selected quotes taken from the face-to-face interviews, the perceptions of postgraduate supervisors are that they fulfil the following roles, as indicated in Table 4.2.]

Table 4.2: The role of the postgraduate research supervisor

| Interviewee 1           | Interviewee 2  | Interviewee 3                     | Interviewee 4         | Interviewee 5           | Interviewee 6  | Interviewee 7 | Interviewee 8  |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Depends on student      | Job            | Multiple roles                    | Category of students  | Instrumental role       | Lecture        | Lectures      | Statistics     |
| Forced ideas            | Teach          | Supportive                        | Support to colleagues | Mothering role          | Multiple roles | Coaching      | Multiple Roles |
| Involved in the process | Co-supervision | People Knowledge                  |                       | Taking care             | Support        |               |                |
| Watchdog                |                | Be able to work with young people |                       | Cheer up                | Standards      |               |                |
| Leadership role         |                | Personal Pressure                 |                       | Responsibility          |                |               |                |
| Lecturing is easier     |                | Own career development            |                       | Supervisor expectations |                |               |                |
| Mother role             |                |                                   |                       | Moral obligation        |                |               |                |
| Positive role           |                |                                   |                       | Honesty                 |                |               |                |
| Ensure quality          |                |                                   |                       | Help                    |                |               |                |
|                         |                |                                   |                       | Counsellor              |                |               |                |
|                         |                |                                   |                       | Coach                   |                |               |                |

#### 4.3.1.1 Setting of standards and quality of work

As indicated by the respondents, a postgraduate supervisor plays a pivotal role in setting the standards and ensuring that the research conducted is on an appropriate level:

Interviewee 6: *"Wel ek moet 'n bepaalde standaard stel en ek moet sorg dat hierdie student by daai standaard uitkom. [Well, I should set a specific standard and I should see to it that this student achieves that standard.]*

Interviewee 1: *"...dat die student gehalte werk doen..." [... so that the student does quality work...]*

According to the respondents the supervisor needs to set standards and ensure quality work. Furthermore, it became apparent during the interviews that due to the responsibility of supervising many students, the risk exists that the quality of the research might suffer:

Interviewee 3: *"Die waarheid is, 'n ou kan nie meer as vier hanteer nie. As jy dit ordentlik wil doen, kan jy nie meer as vier PhD studente hanteer nie." [The truth is, one cannot handle more than four. If you want to do it thoroughly, you cannot handle more than four PhD students.]*

Based on the response by Interviewee 3, quality is an important factor for a postgraduate supervisor. From the perspective of fulfilling multiple roles, a postgraduate supervisor might find himself or herself in a paradoxical situation as described by a respondent:

Interviewee 1: *"...en 'you've missed the moment' as ek dit so kan sê. So baie keer ... en nou praat jy van besigheid ... besigheid gaan oor 'throughputs'. Navorsing gaan oor kwaliteit. So daar's daai paradoks ook, sien jy. Dit is goed wat jy moet bestuur ..." [... and you've missed the moment if I can phrase it in that way. So often ... one talks about business ... business is about*

throughputs. Research is about quality. So, you see, there's also that paradox. These are things you have to manage.]

Judging from the responses, the supervisor's role of setting a standard and managing the quality of the research is essential. Work pressure as well as external pressures, such as throughput rates, are to be managed according to the standards set by external role players.

#### 4.3.1.2 Student support

As the student is a person with feelings who engage in relationships, the function of support might become essential (Pearson & Brew, 2002). Although postgraduate supervisors are seen as figures with extensive knowledge and experience, they might be required at some stage to play an additional role which includes taking account of the softer issues. In this regard a respondent commented as follows on her role as a postgraduate supervisor:

Interviewee 5: *"I would say the answer is more roles with a big 's' ... ..so one role, I call it the instrumental role, just helping that student to focus on their topic, but then there's the other role which is the mother role. I call it the mother role. Where you have to be almost like ... taking care of their psychological well-being ... .... So part of what I do is try to take care of them in terms of their psychological and emotional issues, like when they get discouraged I've got to cheer them up."*

When students face difficulties in their research or their personal lives, the supervisor may become a sounding board for personal problems and has to 'take care' of the student. Another respondent responded as follows:

Interviewee 3: *"Jy moet regtigwaar, om 'n goeie supervisor te wees ... beteken jy moet goed met mense kan werk. Jy moet eintlik 'n sielkundige kan wees vir daai kandidaat of student. 'Mm ... omdat daar soveel persoonlike goed daaraan verbonde is."* [You must really, to be a good supervisor ... means you

*must be able to work with people. You must actually be a psychiatrist to that candidate or student. Uh ... because there are so many personal things attached to it.]*

From the responses it seems that student support is an important part of the role of a postgraduate supervisor. Furthermore, the process of working on a postgraduate degree is seen as a lonely process for a student and therefore this support is needed. However, another respondent had a slightly different view:

Interviewee 2: *"... ek kan vir jou 'guidance' gee en goeters, en ek kan empatie met jou hê maar ek is nie jou 'counsellor' nie...." [... I can give you guidance and so forth, and I can have empathy with you, but I am not your counsellor ... .]*

Although the respondents perceive being a 'counsellor' to the student slightly differently, it is evident that a postgraduate supervisor should possess a certain degree of people knowledge. By playing an 'instrumental' role, the relationship between supervisor and student stays task orientated, but as this process sometimes gets harder, the supervisors feel that they should show empathy. The extent to which the postgraduate supervisor provides empathy and 'nurturing' depends on the supervisor's personal preference as well as on the relationship between the supervisor and the student and its dynamics.

#### **4.3.1.3 Focus and clarity of study**

When doing a master's degree or a PhD, a lot of information has to be dealt with regardless of the quantitative or qualitative nature thereof. The postgraduate supervisor has a certain role to play in order to guide the student in the right direction. Respondents shared their outlook in this regard:

Interviewee 4: *"... baie min studente ... het rêrig, wanneer hulle begin met 'n PhD... 'm ... klarigheid. So ek sien my 'job' net as een van fokus." [... very few*

students have ... uh ... clarity when they start with a PhD. So I only see my job as one of focus.]

Interviewee 1: *"Ek kan nie praat vir iemand anderste nie, maar my rol as 'n toesighouer soos ek jou aan die begin ook gesê het, is om seker te maak dat die student gefokus bly."* [I cannot speak for someone else, but my role as supervisor, like I told you at the beginning, is to make sure that the student stays focused".]

Interviewee 2: *"Weet jy, ek dink dis belangrik ... dat ek sien dit bloot as 'n rigtinggewende en leidinggewende rol."* [You know, I think it is important ... that I simply see it as a directional role and a guidance role.]

Being a postgraduate supervisor is a responsible role as one has to use one's knowledge and experience in academia to make sure that students stay on the correct path and retain focus (Grant, 2003). This often requires a supervisor to lead or to guide. A participant put forward a compelling argument by suggesting that any person who wanted to be a postgraduate supervisor had to go through a training process. This particular example referred to his department's supervisors:

Interviewee 3: *"... So, ek dink dat ... 'm ... enige persoon wat 'n supervisor word, moet ... behoort ook 'n bietjie opleiding te kry daarin ... .... Dis nie net 'n studieleier nie, daar's tegniese goed, akademiese goed, maar veral ook baie persoonlike dinamika daaraan verbonde."* [So, I think ... uh ... any person who becomes a supervisor should get some sort of training in it ... .... It is not only a study leader, there are technical things, academic things, but also a lot of personal dynamics involved.]

From the results it is evident that a postgraduate supervisor has to be considerate of the student's personal issues, but still keep in mind that the research has to be delivered. The data collected indicates that a possible definition for the role of a supervisor (for the purpose of this study) could be: "The role of a postgraduate supervisor is to set a specific standard, be accountable for the end result, and keep

students focused and motivated by playing a nurturing and supportive role throughout.”

#### 4.3.2 Theme 2: Expectations of the supervisor

Now that the role of the supervisor has been described, the study will look at how different elements affect the role of a postgraduate supervisor and also the relationship between a supervisor and a student. According to literature, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, the following elements have an effect on or create expectations of postgraduate supervision as a whole: university demands, shareholder expectations, and rules and regulations set by the government of a country. Although the literature discusses these expectations in terms of the process, these have a direct effect on the supervisor. They do not necessarily have a direct effect on the student, but they may well have an indirect effect via the supervisor (as an interviewee pointed out):

Interviewee 3: *“So, ja, ek dink jou ‘supervisors’ as dosente se persoonlike druk op hulle vir hulle eie loopbaanontwikkeling en vordering ... .. moontlik sal dit ook daartoe lei dat hulle meer druk op hulle studente gaan laai ...”* [So yes, I think the personal pressure on your supervisors, as lecturers, as regards their own career development and advancement ... .. might lead to their putting more pressure on their students.]

Thus, the supervision relationship lies at the heart of the system. The two parties involved are the supervisor and the student, but this study looks only at the supervisor’s experience. Table 4.3 displays the codes identified from the interview data, from which the theme of expectations of the supervisor was extracted.

Table 4.3: Expectations of the environment on the supervisor

| Interviewee 1                       | Interviewee 2  | Interviewee 3          | Interviewee 4                       | Interviewee 5            | Interviewee 6     | Interviewee 7      | Interviewee 8 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Organisation to Academic world      | Academic world | University system      | International research requirements | SA context               | Time framework    | Number of students | International |
| Environmental pressure              | Expectations   | New environment        | Legislation                         | United States of America | External examiner | External Examiner  |               |
| International and National          |                | Numbers - Pressure     | System                              | Isolated in SA           |                   |                    |               |
| Environment                         |                | Too little supervisors | Quality work                        | South Africa - Alone     |                   |                    |               |
| Not a research culture in SA        |                | Equal chance           | Publish over seas                   | USA - Preparation better |                   |                    |               |
| Academic environment                |                | Pressure               | Number of students                  | Full time                |                   |                    |               |
| International – pay people for data |                | Supervisor shortage    | Relevance                           | Three people             |                   |                    |               |
| International congress              |                |                        | Pressure                            | Formal                   |                   |                    |               |
| Economy                             |                |                        |                                     |                          |                   |                    |               |
| Number of students                  |                |                        |                                     |                          |                   |                    |               |
| Throughput                          |                |                        |                                     |                          |                   |                    |               |
| External Examiner                   |                |                        |                                     |                          |                   |                    |               |

Expectations of the environment or external expectations have an impact on the postgraduate supervisor on three different levels. For the purpose of analysis, these levels can be compared to the classic model of the macro, the meso, and the micro environments. Each level will now be discussed as displayed in Figure 4.2.

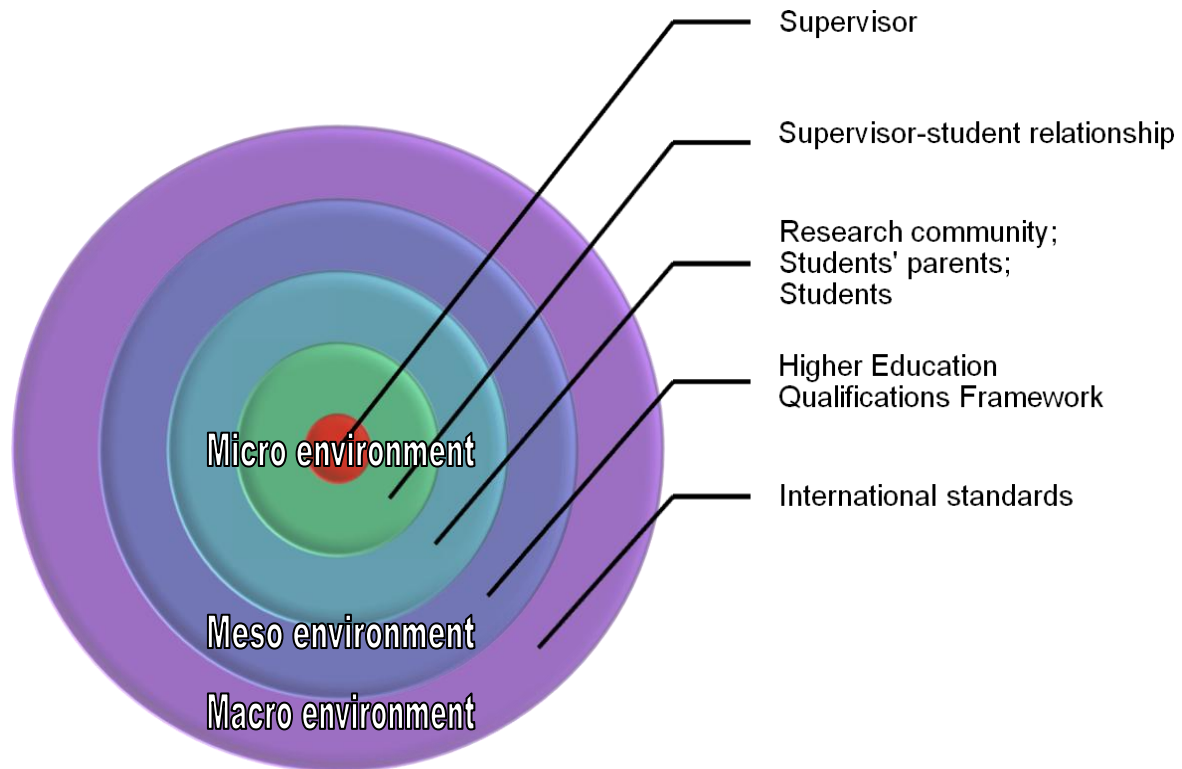


Figure 4.2: A model of external expectations of the postgraduate research supervisor

#### 4.3.2.1 Macro environment

For the purpose of this study, the *macro environment* will be considered to consist of international standards or trends. From the supervisor's perspective, these are the standards and trends that have to be followed in order to stay relevant in the academic world (Herman, 2011). Supervisors become aware of the impact of these standards and trends on them when they try to establish the relevance of their research in the international scope of academic contribution. Not only do the research topics need to be relevant and up to date, but the quality of the research work has to be of a certain standard. One way of keeping abreast with these trends, is by attending international conferences. As a representative of one's country, one is apt

to compare and investigate how things are done in other countries. Therefore, when supervisors engage with supervisors from other countries, it can be a learning experience to see whether one's own research is relevant outside one's country's borders. The example below demonstrates this point:

Interviewee 1: *"Man, ek sit baie keer, dan sit ek by oorsese kongresse en goeters, dan praat ons so met die ouens oorsee ... .. as hulle hoor hoeveel studente ons 'supervise' dan val hulle flou ... want dit is in elk geval 'ridiculous'..."* [I often sit at overseas conferences and so on, then we speak to the people overseas ... ..when they hear how many students we have to supervise they want to faint, because it is ridiculous in any case.]

The response indicates that there is a perception that postgraduate supervisors in South Africa might have to supervise more students than the average postgraduate supervisor in other countries. If this is indeed the case, it means that every supervisor possibly has to supervise quite a large number of students. Furthermore, in contrast to some other countries, supervisors have to handle their students single-handedly. One supervisor described the situation as follows:

Interviewee 5: *"The whole system in South Africa actually frustrates me, because to think that an individual can work with a single person and produce a significant piece of work. That is a ... that is the most frustrating thing, because it takes a while, you know you've done research."*

Therefore, from a macro environment point of view, there are possible discrepancies between how supervisors in South Africa are expected to supervise and how supervisors in other countries supervise. Most likely the supervisors are directly impacted by international expectations as these expectations filter through all the layers and reach the supervision relationship between the supervisor and the student. In the South African context the supervisor as an individual is responsible for his or her students' completion of a study project. How exactly these aspects influence the emotional side of things will be explored further on in the study.

#### 4.3.2.2 Meso environment

The *meso environment* in the model includes the national developments in South Africa, facilitated by the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF). The HEQF is designed to accommodate different types of educational institutions, provide for creative curriculums, enhance the quality of research, be compatible with international standards and be internationally recognised, to name but a few. The HEQF also regulates and specifies the qualification types and how they relate to each other. Postgraduate qualifications include postgraduate diplomas, honour's degrees, master's degrees and doctoral degrees (Council on Higher Education, 2011).

Throughout the face-to-face interviews the participants made it clear that, aside from supervisor-student expectations, they had to cope with definite expectations from various areas. These will be discussed further on in this chapter. A participant who had been in a supervision position for over twelve years put it this way:

Interviewee 1: *"So, ons is onder verskriklike druk vanuit die omgewing uit om af te lewer. Daai 'throughput' rate wat hulle van praat, daai aflewering ..."* [We are under great pressure from the environment to produce. The throughput rate they refer to, that delivery...]

A simple representation of the national hierarchy on which this study wishes to focus is shown in Figure 4.3.

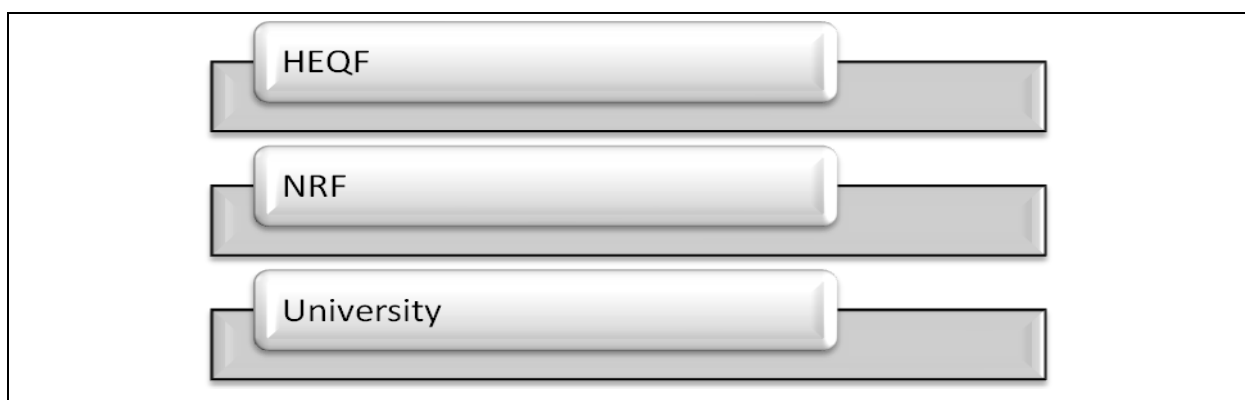


Figure 4.3: Hierarchy of higher education

## **Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)**

It is clear that there is a heavy workload on the shoulders of postgraduate supervisors and that the throughput rate of master's and doctoral students has been identified as crucial by the HEQF (Council on Higher Education, 2011). In South Africa this is especially the case due to a lack of adequate expertise and skills in the workplace (Council on Higher Education, 2011).

The legislative background of the HEQF comes in the form of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997) and the Higher Education Amendment Act, 2008 (Act 39 of 2008). Furthermore, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) is responsible for the quality assurance and implementation of the HEQF (CHE, 2011). A respondent shared his opinion on the matter of legislation:

Interviewee 4: *"Ons het nuwe wetgewing in ons land. Ons het nuwe 'issues', ons het nuwe probleme. Daai goed is uitge-'sort' in die wêreld, maar ons moet nog ons eie goed uitsorteer. Nou's die vraag waar ... waar fokus ek ... So, dit is 'n ... dis 'n ander druk dié."* [We have new legislation in our country. We have new issues, we have new problems. Those things are sorted out in the rest of the world, but we still have to sort out our own things. Now the question is ... where do I focus ... So this is a ... this is a different kind of pressure.]

According to Van Niekerk (2004), the issue of the focus area – also mentioned by the participant – is a key concern regarding the value system of the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE). Van Niekerk (2004) goes on to say that South Africa is being lured to accept the global value system, and that this might lead to a disregard of the local value system.

## ***National Research Foundation (NRF)***

The majority of supervisors who are involved in the process of postgraduate supervision are expected to deliver not only as far as lecturing to students is concerned, but also to deliver research outputs in the form of articles or papers (Swanepoel, 2010; Pienaar & Bester, 2006). Furthermore, it is usually expected of these supervisors to develop as researchers in order to put their departments or universities on the international radar. The National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa has certain standards or levels by which they rate these researchers (Pouris, 2007). The link between the rating system and the financial support or funding provided is displayed in Table 4.4 (Pouris, 2007):

*Table 4.4: Difference between rated and unrated researchers (Adapted from Pouris, 2007)*

| <b>Rated researchers</b>                                                                                                                                          | <b>Unrated researchers</b>                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Five-year grants</p> <p>Rated researchers who allow their ratings to lapse or lose their ratings – not eligible for funding until they regain their rating</p> | <p>Two-year grants</p> <p>Qualify for a maximum of six years of funding (three two-year grants) – have to be rated after the six years to qualify for funding</p> |

In order to reach a certain level, the academic researchers have to publish a number of articles on relevant topics, and these articles have to conform to a certain standard. A component of this NRF rating also consists of the amount of students being supervised, as well as the topics these students research. Furthermore, the NRF subsidises universities in the form of financial incentives for the number of students that enrol for research (Moses, 1984).

## ***Career advancement and promotion***

Another very important consideration is supervisors' promotion of their careers and the implications this has as far as their NRF ratings are concerned (Pienaar & Bester, 2006). Participants had the following comments about the NRF ratings:

Interviewee 4: *"Ouens sal sê, oukei, maar ... waar elke ou in die departement nou moet een en 'n half 'research outputs' gee ... NRF navorsers moet meer gee. Hulle verwag meer van jou. Want jy's mos dan 'n navorser."* [People will say, okay, ... but where every person in the department has to give one and a half research outputs ... NRF researchers should give more. They expect more of you because you are a researcher.]

Interviewee 3: *"Hedendaags, met jou jonger dosente word hulle bevordering eintlik al meer gekoppel aan die NRF-gradering. So hulle het daai addisionele druk op hulle en om by die NRF-gradering uit te kom, is harde werk en so voorts ... daar is bepaalde voordele daaraan verbonde en so voorts, maar dit beteken dat jy net soveel meer tyd aan jou eie loopbaanontwikkeling moet spandeer. Ek dink dit gaan daartoe lei dat mense minder tyd beskikbaar het vir hulle studente totdat hulle daai gradering bereik het, maar dan moet dit nog steeds in stand gehou word."* [Nowadays, with your younger lecturers, their promotion is increasingly linked to the NRF grading. So they have additional pressure on them, and to get to that NRF grading is hard work and so on ... it has advantages and so on, but it means that you have to spend so much more time on your own career development. I think the result is going to be that people will have less time available for their students until they achieve their grading, and then it should still be maintained.]

Interviewee 1: *"... en aan die ander kant is dit druk van die akademiese omgewing af, buite die universiteit, want jy moet jou 'scholarship' hou ... en al hoe jy jou 'scholarship' hou en NRF 'rating' kan kry is deur navorsing en publikasies."* [... and on the other hand, it is pressure from the academic environment, outside the university, because you have to maintain your scholarship ... and the only way to maintain your scholarship and obtain your NRF rating is by doing research and getting published.]

Interviewee 6: *"Voorgaads is 'n deel van hierdie, nagraads is 'n deel van hierdie, maar hierdie is net 'n deel van wat ek doen. Vir hierdie deel kry ek eintlik erkenning by hierdie universiteit, want dit gee vir my 'n NRF 'rating'."*

[Undergraduate is part of this, postgraduate is part of this, but this is only a part of what I do. For this part I do get recognition at this university, because it gives me an NRF rating.]

In a sense, it seems as if the NRF ratings probably have an even bigger impact on the career advancement of lecturers in lower positions. However, this study will not do an in-depth investigation into the careers of lecturers. What is important though is that a full professorship is dependent on a person's research outputs, as well as any promotional purpose regarding a postgraduate supervisor. From the perspective of a full professor, the NRF level is to be nurtured in order to maintain career development (Pouris, 2007).

Judging from the interviews it seems that one has to focus on the NRF outcomes from a junior academic level in order to be promoted. Furthermore, supervisors' NRF status is very important and has to be maintained. The NRF rating has its pros and cons – a supervisor gets research funding and is supported to keep up to date in the academic environment, however, it also brings extra pressure to bear on the supervisor to do more research, and leaves less time for postgraduate supervision.

### ***Funding***

One of the NRF's outcomes is to fund research in South Africa. These funds get allocated to higher education institutions and are then used to conduct scientific research (Blunt, 2009). However, the following comment made it clear that there is a concern regarding the reward from the NRF:

Interviewee 5: *"Well, the NRF, they ought to give us more money...."*

This comment addresses the issue of extrinsic rewards of postgraduate and academic research. Although these funds are not part of the supervisor's monthly salary, it enables a supervisor to achieve outputs, provided the funds are available. The following response touched on another aspect of NRF funding, which is cause for concern:

Interviewee 8: "... die frustrasie met die NRF op die oomblik is dat, en ek is jammer om te moet sê, maar hulle is rassisties. Ek het by hoeveel gevalle al gehad wat ek aansoek gedoen het vir befondsing, want my goed is alles goedgekeur maar die geld was nooit gegee nie ... .. tien van ons vrouens het aansoek gedoen ... agt was blank en twee was anderskleuriges ... geen blanke vrou het 'n [award] gekry nie ... .. want ek wil graag swart studente oorsee vat vir kongresse maar ek het nie geld om dit te doen nie want die NRF wil nie vir my geld gee nie." [... the frustration with the NRF at the moment, and I am sorry to have to say this, but they are racially prejudiced. I have applied for funding on numerous occasions, because all my things are approved but the money was never granted ... .. ten of our ladies applied ... eight were white and two were people of colour ... no white lady got the award ... .. because I want to take black students overseas for conferences but I do not have the money to do it because the NRF does not want to give me the money.]

From the results it seems that postgraduate supervisors are reliant on the money to deliver and to inspire their students. The career advancement opportunities the NRF can offer to supervisors also seem to be restricted. Opportunities such as taking students overseas and developing them as academics by attending conferences can be the initiatives that the supervisor wants to implement for the development of research. The aspect of rewards for a supervisor's work will be explored further on in the study.

### **Universities**

A university as an institution should adhere to the guidelines set by the HEQF. The following factors have an impact on universities:

### Increased pressure due to massification

The massification drive allows many students to enter South African universities yearly, and student numbers increase. Some courses are so full that they have to raise the bar of academic prerequisites in order to maintain realistic postgraduate class sizes. Comments made by participants in the interviews support the notion that supervisors feel overwhelmed by the increased pressure from the academic environment to produce high quality research students (Swanepoel, 2010):

Interviewee 3: *"Dit het toegeneem oor die jare. Op die oomblik sit ons eintlik met te min 'supervisors' en te veel studente. Dit beteken die druk op ons het baie toegeneem in terme van die aantal kandidate wat per 'supervisor' hanteer moet word ... en dit lei daartoe dat jy jou tyd moet versnipper tussen kandidate om ... om aandag aan hulle te gee...."* [It has increased over the years. At the moment we actually have too few supervisors and too many students. This means the pressure on us has increased in terms of the number of candidates per supervisor that have to be handled. This leads to a situation where you have to divide your time among candidates ... to give attention to them....]

The respondent noted that the ratio of students to supervisor had spiralled out of control during his supervision career. Other respondents agreed that that was indeed the case:

Interviewee 5: *"Well, we're overburdened ... we're overburdened. I mean we have more students than we can handle, but once my name is put there I cannot really ... I just squeeze ... I mean I just do it. You know I ... you have an obligation. You'd better negotiate that upfront with your HOD [Head of Department] before you take the assignment, because once you take an assignment, you need to see it through."*

Interviewee 1: "... as hulle hoor hoeveel studente dan val hulle flou ... want dit is in elk geval 'ridiculous' ...." [... when they hear how many students they want to faint, because it is ridiculous in any case.]

As the demand for university education increases, the demand for lecturers, support staff and supervisors also increases. However, it is highly unlikely that there will be an equal increase in supervisor-student ratios. Therefore, supervisors in postgraduate supervision are experiencing an increased intake of students.

### University as a business

A university as an entity cannot function only as an academic institution without engaging with the corporate world: but does this mean a university can function as a business in terms of throughput? By delivering students, an academic institution cannot necessarily function as a company manufacturing products or rendering services. The following observation was made by a participant:

Interviewee 1: "... want uit 'n omgewingskant uit moet ons ... word ons baie gedruk as 'n besigheid ... .... Jy word heeltyd ge-herinner as toesighouer dat daar gaan nie meer geld wees nie. Die subsidie stop ... en dan is jou toesighouding nul van waarde vir die universiteit ... so enige student wat verby sy subsidiëringstydperk is, beteken niks vir die universiteit nie ... maar dit beteken vir my nog iets, want van daai studente het waardevolle navorsing ...." [... because from an environment perspective, we have to ... we are pushed as a business ... .... You are constantly reminded as a supervisor that there will not be any money. The subsidies stop ... and then your supervision is of no value to the university ... so any students that are past their subsidy periods mean nothing to the university ... but it still means something to me, because some of those students have valuable research ....]

Financial pressures and time constraints seem to be the underlying factors of the scenario in which the university operates as a business. A similar argument was put forward in the following response:

Interviewee 3: *"So ja, ek sal sê die getalle-druk het daar ... gelei tot tydsdruk en dit maak die proses ... 'mm ... meer negatief en veroorsaak ook dat jy nie die toepaslike aandag kan gee aan elke kandidaat wat jy graag sou wou nie. 'Mm, en dit sou ek sê ... is ... sien ek op hierdie stadium na al my jare hier as die belangrikste frustrasie omtrent waarmee ek sit. Ek het te veel mense waaraan ek gelyktydig aandag moet gee."* [So, yes, I can say the pressure of numbers has ... led to time pressure and ... uh ... it makes the process more negative and makes it impossible for you to give the required attention to each candidate in the way you would like to. Uh ... and I have to say it ... is ... at the moment ... after all my years here, the most important frustration I have to contend with. I have too many people to give attention to at the same time.]

As indicated by the respondent, the number of students also increases the pressure because the throughput rate gets increased by the universities. This study will not expand on the issue of a South African university being run as a business.

### ***Research culture and access to data in South Africa***

When looking at a country through the eyes of a researcher, one can contemplate whether research as a whole is a core focus area. This ultimately has an influence on almost every aspect of human life. A respondent gave her view on the research culture in South Africa:

Interviewee 1: *"Daai data moet gesoek gaan word, dis deel van jou navorsing en dan kom daai studente met hulle leë hande, en ek verstaan dit. Ons het nie 'n navorsingskultuur in Suid Afrika nie."* [The data needs to be searched for ... it is part of your research, and then that student comes back empty-handed ... and I can understand that. We do not have a research culture in South Africa.]

What is interesting to note is that this is not necessarily the trend in other countries, according to Interviewee 1:

Interviewee 1: *"Jy weet, studente oorsee, betaal hulle respondente omdat hulle aan my ... hulle kry sê nou maar vyftig duisend rand, ek vat net, net vir hulle data-insamelingsproses. Nie analisering nie, data-insameling. So, hulle betaal die mense om die goed in te vul."* [You know, students overseas pay their respondents because they ... they get ... let us say ... fifty thousand rands, only for their data collection ... not analysing, data collection. So they pay the participants to do the filling in.]

Furthermore, at South African universities, postgraduate students need to collect data purely by asking possible participants to complete a survey or take part in an interview. However, this is as far as it goes, except if students use their own money to reward participants if they feel the need to do it. It appears as if many universities outside South African borders are given money or other incentives for research purposes.

When collecting data for a postgraduate research degree or project, it is important to use relevant and current sources on which to base the facts of the study. In order to do reliable and effective research one has to tap into resources that are reliable and trustworthy, and use participants who are knowledgeable to meet the requirements of the study. A respondent shared her experience regarding the access to data in South Africa:

Interviewee 8: *"Nog 'n frustrasie, en dis veral met kwantitatiewe navorsing, is dat ... ons sukkel verskriklik om toegang te kry tot data en baie keer wat ek doen met my studente, ek sit ontsettend baie 'effort' daarin ...."* [Another frustration, especially with regard to quantitative research, is that ... we struggle to get access to data, and often ... and what I do a lot, is I put in a lot of effort into that ....]

The respondent went on to say:

Interviewee 8: *"... internasionaal is [die] neiging die artikel opsie, jy weet vir die PhD ... so al my PhD-studente by die nuwe universiteit kies almal die*

*artikel opsie....*” [... internationally, the trend for a PhD is the article option ... so all of my PhD students at the new university choose the article option.]

The argument put forward here is that some South African universities should consider alternative forms of exposing their students to the international scene in order to expand the focus of the research and to create new options for staying relevant as a university.

The meso environment, therefore, contributes to the concerns that supervisors have in the postgraduate supervision process. The next section will deal with the micro environment, the influence of which becomes even more direct for supervisors and their relationships with postgraduate students.

#### 4.3.2.3 Micro environment

Various parties can play a role in shaping and influencing the immediate environment, the *micro environment*, in which the postgraduate supervision relationship is situated. These parties will now be explored.

##### **Research communities**

Research should address issues that are relevant both nationally and internationally. This is especially the case when a supervisor or researcher is accredited on an international level. However, it became evident during the contact sessions with supervisors that research communities followed certain trends which were relevant at specific times. As in the case of international research, national researcher communities prefer to follow certain research methodologies across the board.

Interviewee 4 stated the following: *"Ons het nuwe 'issues', ons het nuwe probleme. Daai goed is uitge-'sort' in die wêreld, maar ons moet nog ons eie goed uitsorteer."* [We have new issues, we have new problems. Those things are sorted out in the rest of the world, but we still have to sort out our own things.]

A supervisor and a student engage on a deeper level, therefore a student has certain expectations. These expectations, which could vary from reasonable to unreasonable, will now be discussed.

##### **Student contract**

When students enter postgraduate programmes at universities, they expect supervisors to assist them with the postgraduate process.

In order to minimise the uncertainty with regard to the specific expectations and responsibilities of both parties, a memorandum of understanding is signed by both the supervisor and the student. The memorandum of understanding deals with issues

pertaining to the dissertation process and the general regulations of the university, such as registration and writing of articles on research findings. Participants recognise the need for such a document as this serves as a contractual agreement as well:

Interviewee 1: *"Dat jy en die student 'n goeie verhouding het, dat julle presies weet waar julle staan met mekaar en dat die student weet wat is sy of haar verwagtinge, ten opsigte van jou ... jy weet ons het mos nou deesdae daai 'memorandum of understanding', maar dit is eintlik waarom dit gaan."* [So that you and the student have a good relationship, so that you know exactly where you stand with each other, and so that the student knows what his or her expectations are with regard to you ... you know we have the memorandum of understanding these days, but that is what it is about.]

Interviewee 3: *"So, ja, daai tipe van administratiewe vasmaak van dinge is nogal krities belangrik en natuurlik uitspreidend ... om daai beloftes of daai vasmaakbeginsels na te kom sodat dit nie net verbreek word of verskuif word na willekeur nie."* [So, yes, that type of administrative tying up of things is critically important and it follows naturally that those promises or principles must be kept and not be broken or altered at will.]

Although this memorandum of understanding is signed, it does not exclude all the challenges that a supervisor and student might encounter. One of the respondents even mentioned that she was burdened by the administration of the memorandum of understanding in the sense that she was 'playing the policeman':

Interviewee 2: *"... so, ek is 'n sleg ou wat daai admin betref, maar weet jy wat is vir my sleg ... as ek die mense ... jy moet 'track' hou van elke student se vordering."* [... so, I am not too good with administrative matters, but you know what I do not like ... when I have to ... you have to keep track of the progress of every student.]

The respondents acknowledge the necessity of a document that stipulates the rules and regulations of the university as regards the postgraduate supervision process. Although this document apparently places an administrative burden on the supervisors, they regard such an agreement as necessary.

### ***Parents and students***

Supervisors may also experience pressure in the postgraduate supervision relationship or process when parents get involved in their children's studies. The potential meddling of parents will occur most likely in the case of master's students, as some of these students are still relatively young and are dependent on their parents to fund their studies.

In discussions with supervisors, it became apparent that some of the students' parents took on the supervisors when progress was slow or not up to standard.

Interviewee 8: *"Wel, ek het jou vroër vertel van hierdie ouer wat my gekontak het wat totaal en al onbillik was jy weet ... so mens moet maar diplomaties wees jy weet ... terug 'respond', maar wat my frustreer het is, dit is 'n familie 'issue' wat niks met my uit te waai het nie...."* [Well, I told you earlier about a parent that contacted me who was totally unfair ... so one must be diplomatic in your response, but what frustrated me was that it was a family issue that had nothing to do with me.]

A participant in the face-to-face interviews gave a response that summarised the various pressures experienced during the postgraduate supervision process:

Interviewee 1: *"Hulle wil 'n pond vleis hê en hulle druk vir jou. So dis druk van die student ook om klaar te maak ...."* [They want their pound of flesh and they put pressure on you. So, there is also pressure from the student to finish ....]

Although there are obvious pressures from the environment that affect the emotional experience of postgraduate supervisors, the relationship between supervisors and

students is a further source of pressure. This relationship is described in literature as complex and it is thus important for this study's objectives to explore this area from the participants' perspective. The next section will discuss Objective 2, which is 'To determine if, and to **what** extent emotional labour is present during the supervision process', based on an empirical study of the participants' responses.

#### 4.4 EMOTIONS

When two people engage in a relationship, no matter what type of relationship, emotions are constantly at play. The relationship in a postgraduate supervision process is no exception. The second objective of this study is to determine to what extent supervisors experience emotions in this postgraduate supervision process. The focus will therefore fall on the relationship between supervisor and student, and this is illustrated in Figure 4.2. By following an empirical approach, this study aims to collect data from supervisors on the process of postgraduate supervision. As mentioned previously, face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data, and the data concerning supervisors' emotions will be discussed and explored in this section.

When studying emotional labour, it is not only about the bad experiences of people. As indicated in the literature, there are also positive elements attached to a role or job that possesses emotional labour. This study, therefore, intends to explore the positive and negative experiences of supervisors during postgraduate supervision. Table 4.5 displays the various codes that can be categorised as positive, negative and other emotions.

Table 4.5: Personal emotional experiences of postgraduate supervisors

| Interviewee 1                | Interviewee 2        | Interviewee 3                    | Interviewee 4             | Interviewee 5                | Interviewee 6        | Interviewee 7 | Interviewee 8               |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Strain                       | Angry                | Freedom of choice                | Pressure                  | Pressure                     | Valuable             | Up's          | Enjoy                       |
| Proposal - stressful         | Enjoy                | Remind yourself of the situation | Pressure on SA supervisor | Frustration                  | Sorry                | Relieved      | Rewarding                   |
| Don't like/Don't enjoy       | Impressed            | Empathy                          | Frustration               | Driving supervisor crazy     | Not nice/Don't enjoy | Emotions      | Frustration                 |
| Hope                         | Not nice/Don't enjoy | Frustration                      | Self realisation          | Humble                       | Rewarding            | Down's        | Empathy                     |
| Pressure                     | Frustration          | Like starting a new job          | Stimulation               | Burden                       |                      |               | Anger                       |
| Easier                       | Pressure             | Rewarding                        | Satisfaction              | Worry                        |                      |               | Emotional Display           |
| Harder                       | Time Pressure        | Conceal emotions                 | Angry                     | Negative behavioural pattern |                      |               | Frustration - Communication |
| Enjoy/Like                   | Sympathy             | Temper                           | Rewarding                 | Paranoid                     |                      |               | Emotionally draining        |
| Frustration                  | Easier               | Stress                           | Non-judgemental           | Cover yourself               |                      |               |                             |
| Emotional guilt              | Burden               |                                  |                           | Negativity                   |                      |               |                             |
| Regulate emotions            |                      |                                  |                           | Don't like                   |                      |               |                             |
| Emotional build-up           |                      |                                  |                           | Emotional highs              |                      |               |                             |
| Nightmares                   |                      |                                  |                           | Anxiety                      |                      |               |                             |
| Satisfaction                 |                      |                                  |                           | Anticipatory                 |                      |               |                             |
| Don't enjoy/Don't like       |                      |                                  |                           | Paranoid                     |                      |               |                             |
| Get angry                    |                      |                                  |                           | No control                   |                      |               |                             |
| Hard                         |                      |                                  |                           | Fear                         |                      |               |                             |
| Too much to handle           |                      |                                  |                           | Greatest thrill              |                      |               |                             |
| Level of strain              |                      |                                  |                           | Anticipation                 |                      |               |                             |
| Difficult to let students go |                      |                                  |                           | Uncertainty                  |                      |               |                             |
| Nice emails                  |                      |                                  |                           | Worry about students         |                      |               |                             |
| Love letter                  |                      |                                  |                           | Have to be mean              |                      |               |                             |
| Negative love letter         |                      |                                  |                           |                              |                      |               |                             |
| Positive emotions            |                      |                                  |                           |                              |                      |               |                             |

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
|  | Positive emotions |
|  | Negative emotions |
|  | Other emotions    |

The emotions that can be perceived as positive will now be indicated and discussed.

#### 4.4.1 Theme 3: Positive emotions

##### 4.4.1.1 Pleasant experiences

Finding joy and meaning in one's work keeps one interested in one's work and encourages one to persist in doing one's daily job (Wrzesniewski, Dutton & Debebe, 2003). One would imagine that a supervisor enjoys working with people and likes being involved with research. Even though emotional labour was initially only studied in the service sector, the studies expanded to other areas as well. Nevertheless, engaging in supervision can also be seen as a service that is rendered to students and a university. The idea of a customer-client relationship in this 'service-orientated role' will be explored further on in the study. With regard to pleasant experiences, a respondent had the following view to share:

Interviewee 4: *"... die positiewe goeters is, ek weet oor die laaste tien jaar het ek 'n sekere 'skill' ontwikkel om ... om navorsing te struktureer ... so ... en dit is ook vir my lekker ... om te sien dat die goed mooi gestruktureerd loop en so aan."* [The positive things are that over the past ten years I have developed a certain skill to ... to structure research ... so ... and I enjoy it ... to see when things are well structured and run smoothly.]

The process in itself can be rewarding in the sense that supervisors enjoy starting and finishing a study under their supervision. Moreover, as stated by the respondents, enjoyment was derived from developing people:

Interviewee 2: *"Wat vir my lekker is, is om te sien, weet jy wat .... hoe studente in staat is om ... om anders na goeters te kyk. As ek hulle goed leer, die goed hulle eie te kan maak."* [What I enjoy is to see ... you know what ... how students are able to look at things differently. When I teach them something, to make it their own.]

By developing a student and allowing him or her to take ownership of the process, seems to be a very satisfying experience for a supervisor. Ultimately this will also

lead to the completion of a research project. More positive emotions will be discussed below.

#### 4.4.1.2 Satisfaction and rewards

Apart from enjoying one's work, one's work has to provide some form of satisfaction or reward. Reward can be material or otherwise (Mottaz, 1985). Satisfaction and rewards describe the nature of an outcome after a certain amount of effort has been put into something. The rewards of a job can refer to intrinsic as well as extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are those rewards that a person feels as "inherently interesting and enjoyable", whereas extrinsic rewards refer to something which leads to a "separable outcome" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). The former is more applicable to the emotions of supervisors that are explored in this study, although extrinsic rewards also have an influence on a person's emotions. Participants gave the following reasons for experiencing the role of a postgraduate supervisor as rewarding:

Interviewee 6: *"Vir jou as dosent is dit vreeslik ... 'mm ... bevredigend want ek gaan gee byvoorbeeld nie al die klasse vir hulle nie, ek gaan doen net daai goed wat by my navorsing aansluit, nè."* [For you as a lecturer it is very ... uh ... satisfying because I don't necessarily present all the classes to them, I actually just go and do the things that have to do with my research.]

Due to the structuring of the respondent's supervision, she derives a certain amount of satisfaction from it. This is mainly due to the interest she has in the field of study that the students are working in. Further rewarding experiences were described by respondents.

Interviewee 3: *"Kyk, dis belonend in die eerste plek omdat jy self deur daai proses was en jy herinner jouself aan hoe belangrik dit vir jou was om klaar te maak."* [Look, it is rewarding in the first place, because you yourself went through the process and you remind yourself of how important it was for you to finish it.]

Interviewee 4: "... en ... jy weet 'n ou ... as van daai twintig ouens, net een ou  
hoef vir jou sê: 'Jis, jy weet jy't my kop oopgemaak, ek dink nou anders oor  
goed', ... dis kompensasie vir my, of dis lekker ... ek het ... wel, dis tog eintlik  
waarvoor ek hier is." [... and ... if ... only one of those twenty guys tells you:  
'Wow, you opened my mind ... I now think differently about things' ... that's  
compensation for me, or I enjoy it ... well that's actually why I am here.]

Interviewee 8: "Jy weet, so, wat lekker is ... is om te sien, jy weet, hoe die  
studente groei en ook daai satisfaksie in die sin van ... die gevoel van jy't 'n  
bydrae gemaak, jy weet, in iemand se lewe om hom op 'n verdere vlak van sy  
loopbaan en sy professionele ontwikkeling te kry ... en dit is vir my nogal  
'rewarding'...." [You know what is nice ... to see how the student grows and  
also the satisfaction in the sense ... the feeling that you have made a  
contribution to someone's life to get him onto the next level of his career and  
professional development ... and that is rewarding for me.]

Interviewee 1: "Dis miskien hoekom ek so baie studente vat, want dit is vir my  
'n groot satisfaksie as hulle klaarmaak." [That's maybe why I take so many  
students, because it gives me great satisfaction when they finish.]

From the data obtained in the face-to-face interviews, it is evident that supervisors find postgraduate supervision rewarding based on their specific experience of the process or relationship. What came out in the interviews is that when students take ownership of and are genuinely interested in their topics, supervisors immediately feel rewarded intrinsically for all the effort put in. Furthermore, supervisors feel satisfied when they see the impact on students' lives and personal growth when they complete their thesis or dissertation. Extrinsic rewards will be covered at a later stage, as these rewards were not experienced as particularly satisfying by the participants, and often generated negative emotions.

#### 4.4.1.3 Positive revelations

During the interviews, the participants indicated that they were impressed by students' unique and extraordinary treatment of their chosen research topics. In other words, they found it gratifying when students made their studies their own and gave evidence that they were worthy of their master's or doctoral degrees. This is ultimately what should be accomplished by a postgraduate degree. This is how the respondents described their experiences in this regard:

Interviewee 5: *"But there are good sides, but in the good sides of this thing when you get the emotional highs, is when ... when the student ... you just say one thing to them like: 'You really ought to look at such and such', and then that student goes off and, boy, they bring you back something where they take it a distance"*.

Interviewee 7 also specifically referred to the emotional highs the supervisor experienced when a student learnt something new and made the study his or her own.

Interviewee 2: *"Mm ... en dan kom jy by bronne wat hulle gesoek het wat ek dink ... jig, ek wonder waar de duiwel het jy dit gekry ... Dit verstom my keer op keer. Dan dink ek, jitte, maar dit is ... dit is baie kreatief gedoen."* [Uh ... and then you get to the sources that they have searched and I think ... where the devil did you find this ... It astonishes me time and again ... and I think, but that is very creative.]

Interviewee 4: *"... maar ek vat haar want sy werk ... sy wil werk op hierdie probleem van my ... So dis vir my baie lekker."* [... but I take her because she works ... she wants to work on this problem I have ... So, I enjoy that a lot.]

From the results it seems that supervisors have a great appreciation for students who are creative and innovative in their research project. Even though they would like

every student they supervise to pass and do well in their research, if a student shows interest it makes a supervisor smile even more. This emphasises the point that supervisors derive satisfaction from developing students to become independent researchers – a point that was mentioned a couple of times during the interviews. Although these enjoyable moments in the supervision process do not necessarily prove or disprove the presence of emotional labour in the postgraduate supervision process, the existence of work satisfaction prove that although there might be negative emotions in this process, there are certainly positive emotions as well.

As displayed in the results, there are multiple positive experiences and opinions regarding the postgraduate supervision process. However, some of the results reflect a few negative aspects. Although this study does not aim to focus on the outcomes of EL, EL can be the cause of emotional strain, which, over a long period of time, can lead to decreased job satisfaction and even burnout.

#### **4.4.2 Theme 4: Negative emotions**

Although the postgraduate supervision process in itself will be explored under Objective 3, the emotional experiences of supervisors in the postgraduate supervision process that will be mentioned in this section might serve as examples of the negative emotions or emotional lows that supervisors experience, in particular those referred to by Interviewee 7. Although postgraduate supervisors do feel rewarded and satisfied, there are a few aspects of postgraduate supervision which they find less satisfying. These aspects may possibly cause emotional strain. The negative emotions identified in the next section are somewhat intertwined, but still the different emotions of the postgraduate supervisor are apparent.

During the data collection and analysis, it became clear that supervisors also experienced negative emotions in the postgraduate supervision process. These negative emotions are strong and have potential consequences if not managed correctly. Respondents had their own views on what they did not enjoy about the supervision process and the relationship with students, but there are a few issues common to many of the negative emotions.

#### 4.4.2.1 Unreasonable student expectations

When students engage with supervisors in the postgraduate supervision process, they might expect the supervisors to know everything in their field and to have lots of experience (Frawley-O'Dea, 2003). However, supervisors might not feel they know everything all the time. The supervisors that were interviewed responded in the following manner:

Interviewee 2: *"... weet jy wat, ek is nie daai wandelende ensiklopedie om al daai goed vir jou te gee nie ... .. ek moet dit ook iewers gaan soek. Ek het nie al daai goed op die punte van my vingers en 'quote' hierdie bronne net so nie."* [... you know what, I am not a walking encyclopaedia to give you all those things ... .. I must also go and look for it. I do not have all those things at my fingertips and quote the references just like that.]

Interviewee 5: *"... but I think 'cause I'm a highly rated researcher people think I know the answers to everything ... I don't ... .... So this is one of the difficulties of being a supervisor ... .. and I think that's one of the emotional things for a supervisor."*

The respondents indicated that although they had experience and knowledge in their particular fields of study, they did not know everything about every topic. They did, however, know how to become knowledgeable on a specific topic and guide the students through their research. However, the purpose of a postgraduate degree would be defeated if the supervisor did all the work. It is advisable that, in addition to signing the memorandum of understanding, a discussion must take place between a supervisor and a student to connect on a personal level and to communicate the expectations that both parties have of the supervision relationship.

#### 4.4.2.2 Stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety are part of most occupations (Lu, 1999), and postgraduate supervisors will agree that there definitely are stressful and anxious moments from time to time. As soon as people get stressed or anxious this usually has an impact on the way they engage with others. According to Gilbreath and Benson (2004), stressful events in the work environment can lead to anxiety, depression and even burnout. This study will, however, not look into the various consequences of stress in the work environment in depth.

The specific moments at which stress and anxiety appear in the supervision process will be discussed later on in the study. The following responses echoed the stressful and anxious experiences which supervisors endured:

Interviewee 1: *"... die student die voorlegging doen en dis nogal 'n angstige proses hoor ... vanaf die toesighouer se kant af ..."* [... the student has to present his proposal and that is quite an anxious process ... from the supervisor's side ...]

The above response from the postgraduate supervisor is in agreement with the finding of Blunt (2009) that supervisors and students consider the proposal to be a significant part of the supervision process. Another respondent described her stress and anxiety as follows:

Interviewee 2: *"... en sy werk sê vir hom, weet jy wat, as jy dit nie gaan doen nie, is jy daai 'job' kwyt ... so ek voel ook verantwoordelik. Die kind kan sy 'job' verloor ... so nou druk jy my in 'n blik ... verstaan jy, want eintlik is jy besig om my af te pers ook ... op die ou end word dit my probleem ook ...."* [... and his employer tells him, you know what, if you are not going to do it, you lose your job ... so I feel responsible. The kid can lose his work ... so now you put pressure on me ... understand ... so actually you are busy blackmailing me as well ... in the end it becomes my problem too ....]

The responses indicate that the interviewees do indeed experience stress and anxiety in the postgraduate supervision process. At times during the interviews, respondents made reference to the way in which a student's employer puts pressure on the relationship between a supervisor and a student. It seems that some stages of the supervision process, such as the presentation of a research proposal, are particular sources of stress.

### **External examiner**

The final outcome of a master's dissertation or a doctoral thesis is determined by the marks of the final evaluation done by a party from outside the university. However, before this can happen, the supervisor has to ensure that the study is good enough to send for evaluation. Respondents shared their views regarding that stage in the process:

Interviewee 3: *"Ja, natuurlik is jy maar bekommerd jy weet, jy wil graag hê ... jy weet hoe belangrik dit is vir die kandidaat om te slaag en so voorts ... .. maar jy weet dis maar 'n baie onvoorspelbare saak ... watter reaksie jy van die eksterne eksaminator gaan kry ... maar, jy hoop altyd vir die beste ... maar, ja, dit veroorsaak spanning."* [Yes, naturally you are worried you know ... you want ... you know how important it is for the candidate to pass and so forth ... .. but you know it is a very unpredictable matter ... what reaction you are going to get from the external examiner ... but you always hope for the best ... but, yes, it is stressful.]

In the interviews, postgraduate supervisors expressed concern about external examiners on more than one occasion. This process is usually an external one and not related to the relationship between the supervisor and the student. However, supervisors should control their emotions so as not to put pressure on students. Another example of such a comment was the following:

Interviewee 5: *"Until those examiner reports come back I don't know if I've done a good enough job. I think I have, but I won't know exactly. So we have a lot of uncertainty and anxiety about that. So anybody who tells you they don't,*

*they're lying ... .. until I see those external examiner reports I don't know.  
You see that's the gamble."*

Stress and anxiety were expressed by the supervisors when they shared their experiences about the process, about certain stages in the process, about their uncertainty and anticipation related to the final results from the external examiner, and about the indirect pressure put on them by students' employers. Furthermore, one of the supervisors mentioned that sometimes, when the student was under pressure at work, he or she could blackmail the supervisor to get feedback.

#### **4.4.2.3 Frustration**

Throughout the interviews, supervisors mentioned that frustration was one of the main negative emotions they experienced. Most of the time, frustration was caused by a situation they had no control over. The following section will underline the various situations or aspects that cause frustration among postgraduate supervisors. The term frustration will serve as the umbrella term for the emotions mentioned.

#### ***Selection of quality students***

Postgraduate students are screened for admission to do master's or PhD degrees by going through a rigorous process that can include an interview, presentation of proof of work experience, previous academic marks, and sometimes a personality test. According to the *South African Government Gazette* (22869, 51), the learner should: have the capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts; have a capacity to critically self-evaluate and continue learning independently in order to develop as a professional; have a capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically; and have a capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.

Although certain criteria are in place for selecting students, this may not always be sufficient, as suggested by the interviewees:

Interviewee 4: *"So, een van my frustrasies is dat ons nie behoorlike keuring het van die student wat toegelaat is nie."* [So, one of my frustrations is that we do not have proper selection for students who are admitted.]

Interviewee 8: *"... die studente is toegelaat en die professor het natuurlik gesien die student gaan nie die paal haal nie, toe word hy na my toe geskuif. Jy weet, en dis 'n verskriklike frustrasie as mens 'n student het wat regtig nie aan die vereistes voldoen nie ..."* [... students are admitted and the professor, realising that the student is not going to make it, dumps the student on me. You know, and that is a big frustration ... when you have a student who does not meet the requirements ....]

According to the respondents, the admission process of students is essential considering the future of the supervision relationship as well as the pipeline of future students. The admission requirements for a master's or PhD degree should be measured extensively and should include interviews, psychometric assessments and consideration of work experience in order to make more accurate predictions. Furthermore, the parties entering into this supervision relationship should also try to find a collaborative understanding. The relationship itself will be explored further on in the study.

### ***Time management***

The ability to manage time during a master's or PhD degree is one of the main determinants of whether students complete their research projects (Lee, 2008). Furthermore, the supervisor also has to apply time management (Lee, 2008). This is especially the case in South Africa because many master's degree and PhD degree students have a full-time job while doing these degrees (Conrad, 2003). This is what the respondents had to say in this regard:

Interviewee 6: *"... daar's drie hoofstuk een's, daar's drie hoofstuk twee's ... dit is vir my baie sleg ... en dis dan wanneer dit uit die tydraamwerk uit raak."* [...

there are three chapter one's, three chapter two's ... that is frustrating. That is when the time framework goes haywire.]

Interviewee 2: *"M'm ... ek dink wat my frustreer is dat ek sien ... dat die ouens nie tyd maak ... en ek sê vir jou 'n skripsie ... gaan nie oor die onderwerp nie ... dit gaan oor jou vermoë ... jou deursettingsvermoë ... .... Dis nie 'n 'quick fix'-ding hierdie nie en ek dink wat my frustreer is dat ouens tot op die laaste minuut wag."* [I think what frustrates me is that I see ... students do not make the time, and I tell you a dissertation ... it is not about the topic ... it is about your ability ... your perseverance ... .... This is not a quick fix thing, and I think what frustrates me is that students leave it until the last minute.]

To a certain extent a lack of time spent on one's research is the nemesis of ownership. In other words, students who do not engage in their research will find it difficult to complete their research as their involvement with the topic is limited. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh and Whitt (2005), identify the amount of time and effort spent on academic activities as one of the key components of student engagement.

The supervisor aids the student in building frameworks that can be followed to create clarity and to manage time. A respondent expressed her frustration in this regard:

Interviewee 8: *"Wat my ook frustreer in die verhouding partykeer is dat ... m'm ... jy weet, die studente ... ek sien ... ek skep vir hulle raamwerke, jy weet die hoofstukke ... en dit maak my baie vies as hulle nie volgens die raamwerk altyd gaan nie want ek gee nogal baie detail."* [What also frustrates me in the relationship sometimes is ... you know, the student ... I see ... I create a framework for the chapters ... and it makes me very angry when they do not keep to the framework, because I give a lot of detail.]

Managing time during postgraduate studies is essential especially if one holds down a job as well. According to the interviewees, time frames are essential to guide the supervisor and student in terms of what needs to be completed when. Furthermore,

supervisors feel that students should engage more in their research by reading up on their topics.

### ***Status/power***

In a relationship such as a postgraduate supervision relationship, there are definite power relationship dynamics at play between the knowledgeable and experienced supervisor and the postgraduate student who is either inexperienced or experienced in his or her field. Respondents had the following views on this relationship of power:

Interviewee 8: *"Hy was 'n direkteur van 'n 'government organisation' en het my soos 'n P.A. [personal assistant] behandel. Ek het reguit vir hom gesê, luister hierso, by die 'government organisation' kan jy 'n watsenaam, 'n PA hê en die 'shots call' ... hier 'call' ek die 'shots'."* [He was a director of a government organisation and treated me like a P.A. I told him straight, listen, at the government organisation you can have a P.A. and you call the shots ... here I call the shots.]

Interviewee 4: *"... ek het 'n ander student, hy is die ... die ... m'm...'deputy governor' van die reserwebank in 'n ander land ... .. ek meen 'time pressure is big' vir hulle. So, dis ... dis 'n frustrasie vir my, want ek sien die potensiaal."* [I have another student ... he is the deputy governor of the reserve bank of another country ... .. I mean time pressure is big for them. So it is a frustration for me because I see the potential.]

Both the above responses reveal that the postgraduate supervisors felt that they did not occupy the position of power in the relationship. However, it was made clear that not all supervisors would accept not being in control.

It is evident that the status and power of a student can have an influence on how the postgraduate supervisor approaches the student. A student who is fresh from university and continues with a master's or PhD degree, will generally see the supervisor as the one with the superior knowledge in that particular field. However,

when a student occupies a high-profile position, the supervisor is not necessarily seen as the knowledgeable one.

### **Editing**

Students usually turn to their supervisors for advice on structuring their research or planning the way forward. However, sometimes they expect a postgraduate supervisor to be the editor of their work as well. A student can try his luck by giving the supervisor drafts to read. A respondent expressed her familiarity with that situation as follows:

Interviewee 5: *"You know, I will read it, but I cannot sit there and wordsmith it ... .. if you give it to me and every time I pick it up I still see that same typo, it means that you are not doing your part. I'm reading at a high level. My job is not to sit there and look at every single word ... .. it is so frustrating."*

Interviewee 8: *"Nog 'n ding wat 'n mens frustreer is dat as jy vir studente terugvoer gee ... ek meen ek sit met 'n student wat by 'version' nommer twintig is, jy weet, en dan maak hulle nog dieselfde foute."* [Another thing that is frustrating is ... when you give students feedback ... I mean I have a student who is busy with version twenty, you know, and then they still make the same mistakes."]

According to the interview data collected, supervisors experience frustration when students do not spend enough time on their dissertations or theses. The reason for this is because the student has to become knowledgeable on the study topic so that they can take ownership of the process. Additionally, supervisors also get frustrated when they have to edit students' work as this wastes valuable time and prevents the supervisor from reviewing the important aspects of the work. Supervisors may sometimes feel that the students do not really give their full co-operation.

### ***Non-compliance with requests***

Communication between people is essential for any relationship to function effectively. Various forms of communication are used during the postgraduate supervision relationship of which email is one of the main methods. A respondent explained her frustration about students not complying with requests.

Interviewee 1: *"Die frustrasies wat ek beleef is dit ... dat die studente luister nie as jy met hulle praat nie. Ek stuur vir hulle goed en ... hulle wag 'n maand, twee maande ... dan 'strip' my sole ... want ek kan nie goed oor en oor en oor stuur nie".* [The frustration I experience is that the students do not listen when you talk to them. I send them things ... they wait a month, two months ... then my soles strip ... because I cannot send things over and over again.]

From the responses it seems that the language editing (spelling and grammar) of drafts is a big frustration to supervisors. They would prefer to focus on the content and the structure of the research document. The next frustration is strongly linked to the aspect of editing the research work.

### ***Writing, language and statistics***

On a postgraduate level a student should be able to formulate ideas in a scientific way. Furthermore, the writing style and language used should be on a high level, yet understandable to a person in the field. Despite the fact that the final product is sent to a language editor, the student should still be able to formulate ideas and structure the study document. Participants expressed their views on students' writing abilities:

Interviewee 3: *"Dan hoop jy ook jy kry 'n kandidaat wat kan skryf want dis nogal baie frustrerend om ook die heeltyd 'n 'language editor' te wees ... of 'n taalkundige te wees ... so ja, dis nogal frustrerend as jy iemand kry wat nie kan skryf nie. Wat veral nie wetenskaplik redelik goed kan skryf nie."* [Then you also hope that you get a candidate who can write because it is very frustrating to be a language editor all the time ... or a linguist ... so yes, it is

frustrating when you get someone who cannot write. Especially someone who cannot write scientifically....]

Interviewee 4: *"... dit is so 'n bron van irritasie ... die taal is verkeerd, die goed is verkeerd ... vir my is taal 'n groot 'issue' ... want een, kan ek hom in Afrikaans nie help nie, al ons terminologie is in Engels, maar twee, is ons so vrot in Engels ... jy weet dis altwee kante, dis 'n paradoks tipe van ding."* [... it is such a source of irritation ... the language is wrong, everything is wrong ... to me, language is a big issue ... because firstly, I cannot help him in Afrikaans because our terminology is in English, but secondly ... our English is so poor ... you know, both sides ... it is a paradox kind of thing.]

It seems that the writing up of the research is a concern among postgraduate supervisors. Some universities offer modules to assist students with their writing. An additional frustration as regards quantitative research was mentioned by one of the supervisors:

Interviewee 8: *"En 'n ander frustrasie by van die universiteite is ook dat ... m'm ... sommige van ons universiteite, jy weet ... lei nie hulle studente behoorlik op om hulle eie statistieke te doen nie."* [And another frustration at some of the universities is that some of them, you know ... do not train their students properly to do their own statistics.]

Students are not necessarily capable of doing the statistics themselves due to the limitations in their undergraduate courses.

The interviewee went on to say:

Interviewee 8: *"... en dan natuurlik 'n ander probleem ook wat ons met studente ... is dat die statistiese sagteware is nie beskikbaar vir almal nie. Ek meen SPSS is soos in derduisende rande ... dan kry jy nie eers behoorlike opleiding in dit nie, so ..."* [... and then obviously, another problem we have with students is that the statistics software is not available to everyone. I mean

SPSS costs thousands of rands ... .. and then you do not even get decent training to use it.]

Although this particular respondent was the only one who mentioned this frustration, it definitely holds water and is an important consideration for quantitative research.

The frustrations mentioned are not the only ones that supervisors experience, but the respondents' comments covered some of the most significant frustrations. Frustration over long periods of time can easily lead to other forms of negative emotion. The frustrations that supervisors experience take place at various stages in the supervisory process. This will be further explored in section 4.4.3.

#### 4.4.2.4 Anger

According to the interview data, supervisors experience anger in the postgraduate supervision process. They do not always display these feelings of anger, and these instances represent 'acting', in other words they withhold or adapt the emotions that they feel (Hochschild, 1979). According to the data collected it is not always clear whether the supervisors adapt their emotional displays, but some emotional control was often apparent. The following responses by participants were recorded:

Interviewee 5: *"Okay, well, sometimes the students disappear. I do get angry with that because I have invested a lot of time already and then they disappear."*

Interviewee 8: *"... en ek kommunikeer gereeld met my studente en dit maak my woedend as ek vir studente goed stuur en hulle vat drie maande om my terug te 'respond' ... .. as ek elke een moet 'spoon feed', heeltyd moet opvolg ... dit maak my baie kwaad."* [... and I frequently communicate with my students ... and it makes me very angry when I send students things and they take three months to respond ... .. if I have to spoon feed every one, have to follow up constantly ... that makes me mad.]

Interviewee 2: *"Ek moet jou eerlikwaar sê, ek is ... ek is altyd vies as 'n student vir my sê ... m'm ... hulle weet nou nie hoe om dit te doen nie, want weet jy, dit sê vir my jy't nie genoeg gelees nie"* [I must honestly tell you, I always get angry when a student tells me ... uh ... they do not know how to do this or that, because you know ... that tells me you have not read enough.]

The possibility of surface acting might be relevant to these comments. These respondents indicated that one sometimes had to regulate the things one said for the sake of the supervisor-student relationship. Another supervisor commented on experiencing anger in that process and admitted that he needed to regulate his emotions:

Interviewee 4: *"Hy stuur vir my 'n 'proposal' ... en onmiddellik toe was ek die vieste in. Toe skryf ek vir hom 'n lang 'email'. Ek moet eintlik vir jou die 'email' lees ... Eers het ek vir hom geskryf dis 'n bol !#\*& en ... maar ek het dit nie gestuur nie en toe nou na 'n uur toe gaan ek weer terug toe sê ek hierdie, jy weet, toe sê ek, is ... m'm ... 'non-substance'; toe haal ek die woord !#\*& uit ... 'non-substance' ... En dan probeer ek fokus op het die ou iets positiefs, dan weet jy wat gebeur is, 'n ou kyk na 'n student en jy besluit: Jong, hierdie ou gaan dit 'anyway' nie maak nie. [He sends me a proposal ... and immediately I became angry. I then wrote him a long email. I must actually read you the email. First I wrote him this is a bunch of @\$#\*, but then I did not send it ... and then after an hour I went back and I said ... this is ... uh ... non-substance, and I took out the word @\$#\* ... ..., and then I tried to focus on whether he had anything positive to say, but you know what happens then is you look at the student and you decide ... well, this guy is not going to make it anyway.]*

Surface acting and deep acting were displayed in this event. The participant actually wrote the email but did not send it. Instead he changed the language usage before sending it. That was where the regulation of emotions became evident. Furthermore, the participant shared his personal philosophy which had an effect on how he judged

these situations. In other words, his deep acting resulted in a positive response, and the emotions he displayed in his toned-down email were genuine.

Another respondent shared her view about a situation where she was asked to extend the deadline via a letter:

Interviewee 2: "... ek word net daai brief ge-'mail' ... ek moet asseblief hierdie uitstelbrief teken. Nou kyk, nou word ek warm onder die kraag ... en wat vir my frustrerend was ... en ek het op daai stadium net gesê, weet jy wat, ek gaan nie goedsmoeds nou hierdie brief teken nie." [... I just received the letter via email ... I must please sign this postponement letter. Now look, I get hot under the collar again ... and what was frustrating to me ... and at that stage I just told myself I was not going to calmly sign that letter.]

Anger often comes to the fore whenever a specific situation triggers the emotions of a supervisor. Even though anger and frustration are mentioned interchangeably at times, it seems that frustration is present constantly, whereas anger comes and goes. This study does not suggest that all supervisors are frustrated at all times, but there is an undertone of this emotion in most of the interviews. Interviewee 7 referred to emotional ups and downs, and this seems to be an indication that supervisors experience positive and negative emotions during the postgraduate research supervision process.

#### **4.4.3 Theme 5: Additional emotions**

During the interviews, other emotions also came to light which do not necessarily fall under the label of positive or negative.

##### **4.4.3.1 Empathy and sympathy**

Showing empathy or sympathy for someone else's situation facilitates an atmosphere of care. When you know someone genuinely understands your situation, the relationship often grows and develops to another level. In the postgraduate

supervision relationship, when looked at from a customer-client perspective, it is essential for the supervisor to understand the needs of the student. The respondents gave their input on that matter:

Interviewee 2: *"Ek dink wat my nou baie help is die feit dat ek met 'n student kan sit nou omdat ek dit self in my skripsie gesien het, en ek wil amper vir jou sê, ek dink ek ervaar baie keer die frustrasies beter wat die student het ... .. ek het baie begrip vir dit want, weet jy wat, ek is nou self daardeur."* [I think, what helps me a lot now is the fact that I can sit with students because I experienced it in my own dissertation, and I can almost say that I think I understand the student's frustration better, because, you know, I went through that process myself.]

Interviewee 3: *"Ek herinner my aan my eie onsekerheid en onvoldoende kennis en angs en onsekerheid en al daai tipe van goed. So, ja, dit hou die proses realisties en dit maak dat jy in voeling is met jou kandidaat of student se situasie"* [I remind myself of my own uncertainty and insufficient knowledge and anxiety and uncertainty and all those kinds of things. So, yes, it keeps the process realistic and you stay in touch with your candidate's or student's situation.]

Interviewee 8: *"... en ek het byvoorbeeld studente gehad wat deur egskeidings is. So, jy weet jy's 'n studieleier, maar jy weet mens moet half 'lenient' wees teenoor hierdie goeters."* [... for example, I've had students that had gone through divorces. So, you know you are a study leader, but you know you have to be lenient with regard to these things.]

From the responses it seems that supervisors can sometimes identify with the students' situations. Supervisors use their frames of reference to reflect on their journeys as students. They have some sympathy and empathy for their students because they understand that a postgraduate degree is not a 'walk in the park'.

#### 4.4.3.2 Burden

A burden in the context of this study refers to the emotional load a supervisor carries. As previously mentioned by the respondents, postgraduate supervisors are overburdened by the number of students they have to supervise as well as by the multiple roles which they have to fulfil. Respondents gave additional responses regarding burdens in their roles as postgraduate supervisors:

Interviewee 2: *"... weet jy wat is vir my sleg ... as ek die mense ... jy moet 'track' hou van elke student se vordering ... ek wil amper sê daai polisieman ding om te sê, weet jy wat ... ek moet ... en dit is vir my sleg."* [... you know what I do not like ... when I have to ... you have to keep track of every student's progress ... I almost want to say that policeman ... to say you know what ... I must ... and that I do not enjoy.]

Interviewee 5: *"... I say to them, you know what, by the time you finish this thesis you will know more about that topic than I've ever known. You're also educating me. I can direct you generally on research methodology ... So in that sense ... uh ... it's a burden to me."*

The burdens mentioned by the respondents above were also mentioned during the other interviews. These burdens seem to place unnecessary strain or an emotional load on the shoulders of the supervisors.

#### 4.4.3.3 Guilt

Some events may arise where a supervisor is forced to act according to the rules and regulations specified by the university or by higher education institutions (HEIs). Such action is not necessarily advantageous for the student, and sometimes supervisors would not have chosen to act in these ways. Sometimes regulations, such as those governing timelines or deadlines, require drastic action, for instance letting a student go because of poor progress or not keeping to the time limit.

Interviewee 1: *"... en ek skop hulle af hoor. Dis net bitterlik moeilik om dit te doen want ek het baie tyd aan daai student spandeer ... .... So, jy't 'n ander ... uitgeskuif of nie gevat nie wat miskien kon klaar gemaak het. So dan het jy nog daai skuldgevoel ook ... emosionele skuldgevoel. Verstaan jy, dit is daai goeters ... en, ja, dit is nie altyd maklik nie ... voel of jy iemand 'fire' ... in so posisie, en dis nie lekker nie."* [... and I kick them off. But it is very difficult to do that because I spent a lot of time on those students ... .... So you dumped someone else or did not take someone on who, maybe, could have finished. So then you also sit with that guilt ... emotional guilt feeling. You understand, it is those things ... and, yes, it is not always easy ... it feels as if you are firing someone ... in such a position and it does not feel good.]

As indicated by this respondent, as well as by Interviewee 3 in a later discussion, a supervisor is sometimes faced with the hard decision to let a student go. That is when guilt is experienced.

#### 4.5 PROCESS

In this section, the third objective of the study, namely 'To determine **where** in the supervision process postgraduate supervisors experience emotional labour', will be explored based on the responses received in the interviews with the postgraduate supervisors. The purpose of exploring the process is to see where in this postgraduate supervision process supervisors experience emotional labour. The section will begin by looking at how the process has changed in the views of the respondents, and subsequently the relationship between supervisor and student will be explored.

The study will also explore the changes that might have occurred within the process since the supervisors were in postgraduate supervision. The reason for this is to allow the respondent to think about the process itself and to express any emotions they might have with regard to the current process compared to the former process.

A characteristic of today's fast pace of living and rapid technology developments, is that processes change continuously, and people have to adapt to the ways in which information is communicated and received. In the postgraduate research process it is no different (Swanepoel, 2010). A respondent commented on this matter:

Interviewee 2: *"... Jy kan al daai inligting elektronies kry nè ... so ek dink dit het baie verander in die sin van ... die inligting is makliker beskikbaar. Ek dink die probleem net met dit is ... om oorweldig te word deur hierdie baie inligting. Verstaan jy, want nou is dit 'n 'overload' van 'information' en jy moet in staat wees om te kan sif."* [... You can get all the information electronically ... so I think it has changed a lot in the sense that information is easily accessible. I think the problem with that is ... to be overwhelmed by the amount of information. You know ... because now there is an overload of information and you have to be able do filter it.]

Information overload has become one of the drawbacks of the current technological age, and Yew, Ahmad and Jaafar (2011) even contend that higher education institutions are haunted by the internet. It can be assumed that supervisors' role to guide student's research becomes ever more important because supervisors need to provide the correct guidance in terms of content. However, students should also give input into this process as supervisors have limited time to evaluate research projects. As mentioned before by the respondents, a postgraduate supervisor is not there to verify every single word of a thesis or dissertation.

Two further comments were made by supervisors regarding the labour-intensive environment and a change of focus:

Interviewee 1: *"Jy weet wat, vandag, jy't netnou gevra van die omgewing, ons sit in 'n 'labour intensive' omgewing ook. 'n Student kan 'n saak maak teen jou ... en dit gebeur, en dan moet jy bewyse hê."* [You know what, today, you asked about the environment just now, we are in a labour intensive environment too. A student can bring an action against you ... and it happens, and then you have to have evidence].

Interviewee 3: *"So, die hele fokus op navorsing en navorsingsuitsette gaan hierdie verhouding in my opinie ... 'mm ... inderdaad heelwat beïnvloed."* [So the whole focus on research and research outputs will, in my opinion ... uh ... change the relationship significantly.]

In the opinion of the postgraduate supervisors, more pressure will be brought to bear on the process and on the supervision relationship because of the increase in the workload. However, in contrast to the views of the other respondents, Interviewee 4 could not really identify any major changes in the process while he had been a postgraduate supervisor:

Interviewee 4: *"Ek weet nie of dit rêrig verander het nie. Ek het baie meer ondervinding opgedoen."* [I do not know if it has really changed. I have acquired much more experience.]

Another respondent's comments suggested that a supervisor gained more experience and adopted certain strategies to deal with the process:

Interviewee 8: *"Jy weet, na al die jare van studieleiding weet mens teen hierdie tyd wat kan werk en wat nie. Jy weet, soos byvoorbeeld, vroër jare kon ek bekostig om individueel studieleiding te gee vir studente."* [You know, after years of supervision, by now you know what will work and what not. You know, for example, years ago I could afford to give individual supervision to a student.]

The responses indicate that the postgraduate supervisors do experience some changes in the process, which include access to information through electronic data, the labour-intensive environment, and co-supervision.

#### **4.5.1 Theme 6: Relationship between supervisor and student**

Research indicates that the supervisor-student relationship is essential for the success of producing a research study worthy of a master's or a PhD degree (Mainhard, Van der Rijst, Van Tartwijk & Wubbels, 2009; Ives & Rowley, 2007). Therefore, it is important to explore the relationship between a postgraduate research supervisor and a postgraduate research student.

The data collected from the face-to-face interviews indicates that a supervisor and a student and the dynamics of their relationship make each relationship unique. These dynamics, which include aspects such as gender, religion, race, age and language, will not be studied in depth in the study. The study will focus on the two individuals who enter into a relationship in the postgraduate supervision process, namely the supervisor and the student, who bring their unique personalities and preferences to the relationship. This theme is explored according to the responses obtained from the supervisors (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: The relationship aspects between supervisor and student

| Interviewee 1                      | Interviewee 2                | Interviewee 3         | Interviewee 4         | Interviewee 5                                | Interviewee 6                    | Interviewee 7 | Interviewee 8 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Relationship                       | Role - Percpetion of student | Type of Students      | Type of student       | Personal Problems                            | Struggle with student            | No recording  | Parents       |
| Memorandum of understanding        | Type of students             | Relationship          | Student expectations  | Students dissapear                           | Students from other universities |               | Relationship  |
| Shared view                        | Memorandum of understandi    | Expectations          | Student buy into idea | Tough love                                   | Relationship                     |               | Acomodating   |
| Contact                            | Motivate                     | Real people           | Student dissapears    | Hard to tell students its not for them       | Not always a success story       |               |               |
| Strong students                    | Police man                   | Best out of candidate | Interest              | Diferent personalities                       | Communicate                      |               |               |
| Type of student                    | Blackmail                    | Agreement             | Language              | Needy students: Emotionally and content wise | Feedback                         |               |               |
| Personality                        | Student dissapear            | Promises              | Feedback              | Student hide uncertainty                     |                                  |               |               |
| Positive vibe from student         |                              | Written agreement     |                       | Can't drop student                           |                                  |               |               |
| Students dissapear                 |                              | Fit                   |                       | Great impact on supervisor                   |                                  |               |               |
| Student not directly affected      |                              | Worried about student |                       | Full time students                           |                                  |               |               |
| Power                              |                              | Personal dynamics     |                       | Part time students                           |                                  |               |               |
| Face-to-face contact               |                              | Client                |                       | Connection                                   |                                  |               |               |
| Walk path with student             |                              |                       |                       | Prepare student                              |                                  |               |               |
| Feedback from student              |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |
| Initial contact                    |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |
| Pressure from student              |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |
| Directly confront student          |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |
| Potential                          |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |
| Emotional relationship transaction |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |
| Student roles                      |                              |                       |                       |                                              |                                  |               |               |

#### 4.5.1.1 Clients in the supervisory process

As mentioned earlier, postgraduate supervision from a supervisor's perspective can be seen as a service delivery role. Interactions with clients are part of the job, and these clients consist of the student, the student's spouse or parents, and the university to which the individual belongs. However, the student can be seen as the primary client as he or she is the one directly and actively involved in the postgraduate supervision process. A respondent put it this way:

Interviewee 3: *"As 'supervisor' het ek nou nie soveel vryheid nie want elke student is my kliënt; ek kan nie voorkeure gee met wie ek wil werk en nie wil werk nie ... .... Jy lewer 'n kliëntediens of jy nou hou van jou kliënt of nie."* [As a supervisor I do not have that freedom because every student is my client, and I cannot have a preference for working with the one and not with the other one ... .... You render a customer service whether you like your client or not.]

As stated in the response, it is not really possible to choose a supervisor or a student. Nevertheless, the supervisor has a responsibility to guide the student through this process. As mentioned by Interviewee 3, although a supervisor cannot choose a 'client', the supervisor has to maintain a good relationship with this client. In the words of a respondent:

Interviewee 4: *"... jy kry twee soorte studente: 'n dooie perd en 'n wille perd. Nou, ek verkies die wille perd, want jy weet hy't gewoonlik energie en hy ... jy moet hom net in die regte rigting stuur, maar hy't sy eie momentum. 'n Dooie perd kry ons ook baie."* [... you get two types of students: a dead horse and a wild horse. I prefer a wild horse, because he usually has energy and he ... you must just guide him in the right direction ... but he has his own momentum. A dead horse we also get a lot.]

As mentioned by the respondent, a supervisor sometimes has to deposit more energy into a student who is not motivated or engaged in the research process.

When asked how much input was required from a supervisor, the respondents replied in the following manner:

Interviewee 5: *"A lot because you see ... you know it's a huge ... well, I still have a lot of responsibility because it's a huge investment for that student."*

To judge from the participant's comments, postgraduate supervisors do recognise their students as their clients. Whether or not postgraduate supervisors are allowed to choose their clients (this will depend on the department involved and the supervisors' areas of expertise), the 'investment' from the student's side will stay important and the postgraduate student should be guided through the research process.

#### **4.5.1.2 People dynamics**

Although this study will not explore people dynamics, for example gender, language, age, personality and religion, in depth, it does acknowledge that these have an effect on how a supervisor and a student engage in the postgraduate supervision process. According to a respondent, the relationship with each student was unique:

Interviewee 3: *"... en jy leer maar om jou verhouding en jou werk in daai verhouding te skik na die twee mense wat betrokke is in die proses. So, ja, aan die een kant is daar seker reëls waarvolgens dit moet geskied, maar aan die ander kant wyk dit soms baie af van daardie reëls in terme van die aard van die verhouding wat ontstaan tussen kandidaat en 'supervisor'."* [... and you learn to handle the relationship and your work in that relationship according to the two people who are involved in the process. So, yes, on the one hand there are certain rules according to which this must take place, but on the other hand it sometimes deviates a lot from those rules in terms of the nature of the relationship that develops between the candidate and the supervisor.]

As mentioned previously when discussing the frustrations that supervisors experience, the language aspect of postgraduate research can be a possible dynamic in the relationship that affects the research process. The following good response was given by one of the respondents when asked about the relationship between a supervisor and a student, and about the way the relationship could be affected by various situations and dynamics:

Interviewee 6: *"... maak nie saak van waar af hy kom nie, en dit maak nie saak wat hom terug gehou het nie. Dit kan taal wees ... armoede impakteer op jou studente. Hierdie student van my, daai ene, ek bedoel, haar rekenaar is gesteel, toe verloor sy haar data. Daar ... sy ... was op 'n stadium werkloos gewees."* [It does not matter where he comes from and it does not matter what held him back. It can be language ... poverty has an impact on your students. This student of mine, that one, I mean, her computer was stolen and she lost all her data. There ... she ... was without a job at one stage.]

Additional comments regarding the dynamics of students were made by the respondents, and these comments emphasised the uniqueness of each supervision relationship:

Interviewee 1: *"Ek dink dit hang ook af van studente. Daar's party maklike studente, of makliker studente ... dit hang van mense se persoonlikhede ook af ... ek vat eerder ses doktorsgraadstudente as wat ek ses M-studente vat. Dis vir my baie makliker om met die doktorsgraadstudente ... dis moeiliker, maar makliker. Daar's 'n paradoks daar."* [I think it also depends on the students. There are easy students, or easier students ... it also depends on people's personalities ... I would rather take six doctoral students than six M-students. I find it much easier to work with doctoral students ... it's harder, but it's easier. There is a paradox there.]

As mentioned earlier by Interviewee 3, each supervision relationship develops as the process progresses. Dynamics such as language, gender and race can have an effect (but this was not specifically explored for the purpose of this study). One of

these issues, namely language, was specifically mentioned earlier in the study – it cropped up when discussing students' writing of their dissertations or theses. Personality is another factor that was mentioned as influencing the dynamics of a supervision relationship.

#### 4.5.1.3 Caring

As mentioned before, the role of a postgraduate supervisor sometimes includes an element of caring for the student. However, it is up to the postgraduate supervisor to decide how deeply he or she becomes involved with a student.

Interviewee 8: *"Ek dink jy weet die studente het ook daai ondersteuning nodig want baie van die mense wat 'swot' of wat hulle studies doen ... hulle werk. Jy weet en jy't net bietjie daai klankbord nodig, so vir my is dit belangrik ... hoekom dit vir my lekker werk is dat dit so half van ... kom ons hou mekaar op ons tone en kom ons gee konkrete terugvoer vir ander."* [I think the students also need that support because many of those who study or do their studies ... they have a job. You know and you need that sounding board, so I think it is important ... the reason I enjoy it is that it is sort of ... let us keep each other on our toes and let us give concrete feedback to each other.]

As mentioned by Interviewee 8, support in the supervision relationship is essential. The postgraduate supervision relationship grows as the supervisor and student get to know each other and work together. However, contact sessions and feedback are required in order for this relationship to grow and function well in this specific environment. One of the respondents gave the caring role of a supervisor a specific name:

Interviewee 5: *"I call it the mother role. Where you have to be almost like ... taking care of their psychological well-being".*

When describing the role of the postgraduate supervisor, the aspect of caring was identified as part of the relationship between a supervisor and a student. The amount

of engagement from the supervisor's side will depend on the individual's preference and what he or she feels comfortable with. Furthermore, it will depend on the situation of the students.

As Interviewee 1 stated: *"Ek dink dit hang ook af van studente."* [I think it also depends on the students.]

Therefore, the amount of caring a postgraduate supervisor gives will depend on the parties' personalities and it will vary from one situation to another. In essence, the postgraduate supervisor should be able to judge the amount of support required in the relationship.

#### **4.5.1.4 Career and work**

Both supervisor and student usually have responsibilities other than those associated with the postgraduate supervision process. On the supervisor's side this includes lecturing, supervising, researching and consulting. In turn, most postgraduate students have a full-time job in a corporate or other environment. As stated by one of the interviewees, this has an impact on the academic process:

Interviewee 3: *"En, ja, natuurlik werkverwante goed van die kandidaat wat onvoorspelbaar is en wat 'n invloed begin uitoefen op die hele proses en die vordering kan ook baie frustrerend ... frustrerend raak."* [And, yes, naturally work-related things of the candidate that are unpredictable and have an influence on the process, and the progress can also become very frustrating.]

Interviewee 5: *"... you know what I mean, they're having money problems, their boss at work ... 'restraining' them in terms of saying why did you enrol for that programme, it's not important, you know, won't give them time ... I can't really pick up the phone and say to the boss ... I'd like to ... you know, why are you doing this to this person. You agreed at the beginning and now you're not giving them the time."*

The frustration in South Africa, as mentioned before by the respondents, is that most of the students have to have a full-time job while studying, and this affects their studies. Therefore, both the supervisor and student have to manage multiple roles in their work lives, and also possibly in their personal lives. Furthermore, it is not the place of the postgraduate supervisor to interfere with other parties in the student's life, just as the postgraduate supervisor does not want the student's relatives to interfere in the academic relationship.

Ultimately, a supervisor and a student can control only some aspects of this postgraduate supervision relationship, and they have to work around those aspects they cannot change. As stated by Interviewee 8: "life happens". The interviewee went on to say:

Interviewee 8: *"Baie van my studente is top direkteure en goed, en jy weet dit beteken vir hulle niks om 'n artikel te skryf nie."* [Many of my students are top directors and so forth, and you know it means nothing to them to write an article.]

Interviewee 1: *"... want die studente is nie gefokus op hulle navorsing nie. Dis 'n groot probleem. Hulle is nie net besig met hulle navorsing nie, dis 'n bysaak."* [... because the students are not focused on their research. It is a big problem. Research is not the only thing they are busy with, it is a side issue.]

It seems that a student doing a postgraduate degree has to give account of two domains in his or her life: the academic world and the outside world. On the other hand, many supervisors also do private, non-academic work after work hours. Interviewee 3 provided an example:

Interviewee 3: *"So, ek het die konneksie gemaak tussen die opleiding, waarvoor ons betaal word, dis die een voordeel hier ... om bietjie op te maak in die salaris, maar ook om 'n navorsingsuitset daar te sit."* [So, I made that connection between the training, for which we are paid, that is one advantage

here ... to make up somewhat for the salary, but also to contribute a research outcome.]

Considering the above, the lives of a supervisor and a student can be quite similar. However, the interviewees were of the opinion that the job of a postgraduate student did have a big influence on the relationship. It can further be conjectured that the more responsibility a student has at work, the less time the student spends on his or her research.

#### 4.5.2 Theme 7: Timeline

It is essential to explore the aspect of the timeline as it featured prominently in the interviews. Theme 7 directly links with Objective 3 of this study, which is 'To determine **where** in the supervision process postgraduate supervisors experience emotional labour'. This theme will probably shed some light on what supervisors experience during the postgraduate supervision process. Table 4.7 summarises the codes obtained to form the timeline theme.

*Table 4.7: Postgraduate research supervision timeline*

| Interviewee 1          | Interviewee 2         | Interviewee 3 | Interviewee 4 | Interviewee 5 | Interviewee 6         | Interviewee 7 | Interviewee 8  |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Timeline               | Not a quick thing     | Period        | Period        | Invest time   | Time schedule         | December      | Pipeline       |
| Move deadline          | Time                  | Deadlines     | Time          | Time          | Quality work          | Time          | Time Framework |
| Period in supervision  | Deadlines             | Exam periods  | Pipeline      | Good quality  | Period in supervision |               | Timelines      |
| Throughput             | Quality of thesis     | Time          | Early stages  | Period        |                       |               |                |
| Time                   | Period of supervision |               |               | Part-time     |                       |               |                |
| Wasting time           | Contact sessions      |               |               | Full-time     |                       |               |                |
| Time consuming process | D-dates               |               |               |               |                       |               |                |
| Part-time              |                       |               |               |               |                       |               |                |
| Phases                 |                       |               |               |               |                       |               |                |
| Quality                |                       |               |               |               |                       |               |                |
| Full time students     |                       |               |               |               |                       |               |                |

The supervision process will be described in three phases, namely: starting phase, middle phase and end phase.

#### 4.5.2.1 Starting phase

It is standard practice to start off the postgraduate supervision process by matching a student and a supervisor for the purpose of completing a research project. Various factors might have an impact on how these students are chosen or allocated. In most cases, the student is allocated to a supervisor according to the topic chosen by the student and the field of expertise of the postgraduate supervisor (Ives & Rowley, 2007). The supervisor therefore takes on the student based on his or her expertise in and knowledge of the particular field and the specific topic (Yew *et al.*, 2011).

The topic that is chosen when a supervisor and a student enter this postgraduate supervision process forms the foundation of their relationship. It is therefore essential that the topic chosen is one that generates interest both with the student and the supervisor, and that taps into the knowledge framework of the supervisor. A method used is described by one of the respondents:

Interviewee 4: "... wat ek deesdae ook doen is ... 'mm ... ek soek eerder 'n student ... wat ... ek weet werk op 'n ding wat ek dink is belangrik, maar hulle moet daarvan hou. So, ek het 'n boek ... my swart boekie. As ek aan 'n ding dink, dan skryf ek dit hier in en dan kom die student na my toe en dan ... sê hy hy wil op so en so en so werk en dan gooi ek vir hom idees, want ek weet daai is die relevante goed ... as die student nie hou waarvan hy doen nie, dan maak hy nie sy PhD klaar nie. So, ek soek passie." [... these days, what I do is ... I prefer to look for a student who, I know, is working on something that is important, but they have to like it. So, I have a book ... my little black book. When I think of something important, I write it down, and then when the student comes to me and says he wants to work on this and this and this, I throw ideas at him, because I know those are the relevant things ... if the student does not like what he is doing, he does not complete his PhD. Therefore, I look for passion.]

Another respondent was of the opinion that it was not always the supervisor's responsibility to choose a topic for the student:

Interviewee 5: *"I never pick a topic for them. Whatever they start with, my role is to help them get clarity on what they want to do ... .... So if you're trying to do my topic and not your topic, I have enough experience to know that that doesn't work."*

It seems that the selection of a topic is not always that easy for a student. The role of the supervisor here is to determine if the chosen topic is relevant and workable. However, it may sometimes be a good idea to allow the student to pick a topic simply because he or she is interested in it.

### **Structuring**

The next step is to ensure that the student and the supervisor are on the same page as far as the research process is concerned. A respondent shared her view on the process:

Interviewee 2: *"So, ek dink die proses vir my is om in die eerste plek met iemand 'n gesprek te hê om 'n logiese .... ek wil amper sê in daai volgorde van daai templaar te praat ... .. as ek aan die begin net by jou ... die groter prentjie kon geskep het."* [So, I think for me the process is to firstly have a discussion with someone to get a logical ... I almost want to say sequence of the template ... .. if I can only create the bigger picture to show where you are going."]

Depending on how much the student already knows about the topic, the supervisor and student should plan the way forward. The expectations should also be clarified in this initial phase. Some of the respondents had the following views:

Interviewee 3: *"Ek dink dis belangrik, daai aanvanklike ... 'mm... hoe sal ek dit amper sê ... passing – dis nou 'supervisor' en kandidaat ... en van daar af moet, in my opinie, die 'supervisor' en die kandidaat besluit oor hoe die proses sal verloop."* [I think it is important, that initial ... how shall I say ... matching – of the supervisor and candidate ... and from there, in my opinion, the

supervisor and the candidate should decide on how the process should continue.]

Interviewee 2: *"Wat 'n ou moet doen, is om daadwerklik vir 'n student daai D-datums daar te stel, is om 'n sekere tyd te stel ...."* [What one should do, is to really set up deadlines to set a specific time.]

It appears as if the postgraduate supervisor prefers an initial outline that gives the student the structure of how the process will progress. The next section discusses one of these deadlines as mentioned by the respondents.

### ***Proposal***

One of the important deadlines during the initial phase of the postgraduate supervision process, is to do the proposal. The proposal process usually involves a panel of people who are knowledgeable in the particular field and who attend the student's research presentation. Questions are asked of the student, and the supervisor of the student supports the student throughout this process. A respondent gave her view on the proposal process as part of the starting phase:

Interviewee 1: *"Dit is nogal 'n spanningsvolle proses ... daai beginproses en, soos ek sê, by aanvang ... as daar duidelikheid is, jy weet dan moet die ouens die 'proposal' ... die voorlegging doen en dis nogal 'n angstige proses hoor."* [It is a stressful process ... the starting process, and, like I said, at the beginning ... when there is clarity, the guys must do the proposal and it is a anxious process.]

Supervisors feel that the proposed topic should be one that suits the interests of the student. In reality, however, supervisors would prefer a topic that falls in their scope as they are responsible for approving the proposal. The starting phase places pressure on the supervisor as he or she needs to initiate a research project that the supervisor and student will work on for a long period of time.

As the respondents indicated, the student becomes the supervisor's client, and it is not always possible to choose with whom you work. According to the respondents, some of the pressure can be reduced if deadlines are planned ahead. Furthermore, some respondents referred to a module at a specific university that taught students about the format and content requirements of research documents. This module is presented to students doing their first master's year. However, for a PhD student this may not necessarily be the case.

#### 4.5.2.2 Middle phase

During the middle phase of the postgraduate research supervision process, the contact between the supervisor and the student is considerably less than during the starting phase and the end phase.] Throughout the middle phase, there are fewer contact sessions and meetings about the dissertation or the thesis, and a student and supervisor might not see each other for months at a time. There are a variety of reasons for this. A comment was made in this regard by one of the respondents:

Interviewee 2: *"... maar ek dink die probleem is wat vir my sleg is, is dat ... jy het met my 'n gesprek, maar weet jy wat, en dan verdwyn jy vir vyf maande."* [... but I think the problem is, what is not nice, is that ... you have a discussion with me, but you know what, then you disappear for five months.]

Interviewee 4: *"... 'mind you', ek het een so 'n geval gehad ... bring vir jou die hele PhD ... hier by my aan ... my ... nooit met my gepraat nie ... sommer 'n klomp data gaan vat en dit ontleed en by niks van die reëls en die regulasies van 'n D gehou nie."* [... mind you, I had one case ... brought me the whole PhD ... never spoke to me ... went and took a bunch of data and analysed it and ignored all the rules and regulations of a doctorate.]

The responses indicate that students often disappear for long periods of time. Some of the students lose track of their progress, whereas others complete their studies without any further contact with the supervisor. One frustration that supervisors

experience during the middle phase has to do with their sending reading material to students. An interviewee commented on this:

Interviewee 1: *"Dan sê hulle, o, hulle weet nie waar's dit nie. Hulle het dit nooit gekry nie of hulle weet hulle het dit gekry, maar hulle weet nie wat het hulle daarmee gemaak nie. Hulle het dit nog nooit gelees nie. Nou hoekom doen ek dit? Verstaan jy dis daai tipe van goed wat my de hel uit frustreer."* [Then they say, oh, they do not know where it is. They never received it or they have received it, but they do not know what they did with it. They have never read it. Now why do I do it? You know, it is those kinds of things that frustrate the hell out of me.]

The majority of the interviewees emphasised the importance of keeping to deadlines as this keeps the student and the supervisor engaged to a certain extent. Furthermore, shorter forms of communication, such as emails, social group interaction and cellular telephone calls become more important as both parties have to perform other roles in their everyday lives. It seems that during the middle phase of the postgraduate supervision process, the pressure or strain which is experienced by the supervisor originates more in the relationship aspect than in the requirements of the process. However, other factors also cause strain, for instance the pressure on supervisors to write articles for the university due to financial reasons. A respondent explains as follows:

Interviewee 1: *"So, enige student wat verby sy subsidiëringstydperk is, beteken niks vir die universiteit nie, maar dit beteken vir my nog iets want van daai studente het waardevolle navorsing en hulle vat miskien partykeer langer."* ["So, any student that exceeds his subsidy timeline, means nothing to the university, but it still means something to me because that student has valuable research and they may take longer sometimes.]

During the interviews it became evident that supervisors have to engage in multiple roles while supervising the postgraduate students due to the requirements of universities. Further pressure is placed on the supervisor as far as subsidies are

concerned. However, the middle phase is characterised by unique and different steps for each postgraduate supervision relationship and no uniform timeline or series of events can be predicted or pinpointed.

#### 4.5.2.3 End phase

In the final phase of the postgraduate supervision process, the supervisor has to see the process through. The supervisor has a big role to play here as the external examiners start to get involved in the process. The following excerpts indicated the supervisors' experience regarding the end phase of the process:

Interviewee 5: *"Until those examiner reports come back I don't know if I've done a good enough job. I think I have, but I won't know exactly. So we have a lot of uncertainty and anxiety about that. So anybody who tells you they don't, they're lying".*

Interviewee 6: *"Wat gaan gebeur as ek slegter as dit vat ... die ekstern gaan haar dop. So ek moet sorg dat my 'benchmark', moet ... 'm ... nasionaal aanvaarde 'benchmark' wees ... en jy moet sorg dat daai student daar kom."*  
[What will happen if I take worse than that ... the external will fail her. So I have to see to it that my benchmark is ... uh ... nationally acceptable ... and you have to see to it that the student gets there.]

A lot of feelings and emotions emerged regarding this last phase of the postgraduate supervision process. Emotions such as uncertainty, anxiety and relief were mentioned throughout these discussions. Most of the postgraduate supervisors who were interviewed felt that they were directly affected by the outcome of the study, in other words by the evaluation of the external examiner. There is still an indirect effect on the student as well, as it is the student's study and he or she is dependent on the result. However, from a supervisor's perspective there is their reputation to maintain as well:

Interviewee 2: *"... ek dink wat belangrik is om te beseef ... dis nie net vir ons as studieleiers daar ... ons naam is ook op die spel,"* [I think what is important to realise is ... that it is not only for us as supervisors ... our name is also on the line.]

Another interesting comment came from one of the respondents about how the process had changed over the years.

Interviewee 3: *"... in die ou bedeling ... want jy kan dit nie meer vandag doen nie, dit word nie meer toegelaat nie, maar in die ou bedeling kon ek darem 'n eksterne eksaminator kontak en vir hom sê die produk wat ek stuur is regtig die beste wat ek uit hierdie kandidaat kon haal ... .... Ek dink dit was nogal 'n goeie sisteem want die eksternes waardeer nogal 'n bietjie terugvoer en so aan, maar op daai manier het ons darem ... kon ek darem daarin slaag om die mense ten minste te laat deurkom. 'Mm ... so ... maar vandag is dit nie meer moontlik nie ... 'm ... daar is geen kontak met jou eksterne eksaminatore nie."*  
[... in the previous regime, because you cannot do it today as it is not allowed anymore, but in the previous regime you could contact the external examiner and tell him the product you sent was really the best you could get from the candidate ... .... I think it was a good system because the external examiners appreciated some feedback and so forth, but by doing that I could at least have a hand in the passing of the candidates. Uh ... so ... but today this is no longer possible ... uh ... there is no contact with your external examiners.]

According to the supervisors that were interviewed for the purpose of this study, contradictory requirements regarding the timeline for a study and the quality of the final product are set by the Higher Education Framework and the University. The supervisors suggested that sometimes students were not given enough time for research to produce top quality dissertations or theses.

## Quality inclosure

As a rule of thumb, a quality outcome of something and the time spent on it is positively correlated with each other. From a project perspective; time, cost and quality are considered to be constraints according to the theory of constraints, coined by Eli Goldratt in 1986 (Rahman, 1998). It can be said that time and quality are constraints in the postgraduate supervision process. This is evident from the following comments by interviewees:

Interviewee 3: *"Dis nie 'n 'quick fixy'-ding hierdie nie en ek dink wat my frustrer is dat ouens tot op die laaste minuut wag."* [This is not a quick fix thing. I think what frustrates me is that students wait until the last minute.]

Interviewee 2: *"Wel, ek dink wat 'n rol kan speel is die tyd van die jaar. Weet jy wat dink ek is nou sleg ... 'm ... studente wil baie keer ingee hier na die einde van die jaar se kant toe, so ons sit baie keer self met artikels wat moet in wees ... of ons in daai jaar kry ... ons self moet sit met eksamen vraestelle en daai tipe van goed ... 'n groot frustrasie... ...daai studente wil nie weer registreer die volgende jaar nie."* [Well, I think, what can play a role is the time of the year. Do you know what I think is bad ... students often want to hand in towards the end of the year, and we ourselves sometimes have articles that need to be in ... or that we get that year ... we ourselves have to do exam papers and those kinds of things. A big frustration... ...those students do not want to register again the next year.]

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

The interview data collected sufficiently addressed the three study objectives by means of the themes that were identified through data analysis. How exactly these objectives are fulfilled is further addressed in Chapter 5.

The **context** of the postgraduate research supervision process and the role of the supervisor in it, were defined by the data collected. Furthermore, the various

expectations of the postgraduate research supervisor were addressed by means of the qualitative interview data. Input from the respondents regarding the various **emotions** a supervisor experienced during the supervision process was of great value. There seemed to be uniformity with regard to the types of emotion that were experienced, as could be seen from the themes.

The postgraduate research supervision **process** itself consists of themes and sub-themes which could be classified according to three phases within the postgraduate research supervision process. The interview data indicated that the starting phase as well as the end phase of the postgraduate supervision process caused much frustration, stress, anxiety and uncertainty among postgraduate supervisors. The reasons for these emotions were often the deadlines or other important stages in the overall supervision process.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION – LINKING THE POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION PROCESS TO EMOTIONAL LABOUR**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the theory of emotional labour and postgraduate supervision, as well as the methodology used in this study, in order to make accurate and trustworthy conclusions and recommendations regarding EL in the postgraduate research supervision process. The themes that were explored in Chapter 4 will be linked to the emotional labour process as depicted in the data and explored in the postgraduate research supervision context. The study will conclude by discussing the achievement of the study objectives set out in Chapter 1, by addressing the limitations of the study, and by making recommendations for further studies.

### **5.2 REVISITING EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE LITERATURE**

The core aspects of emotional labour discussed in the literature review will be revisited in this section.

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 the various elements of EL were discussed, and this discussion is concluded in this chapter within the context of the postgraduate research supervision process. Figure 5.1 shows the emotional labour process as described by Holman, Chissick & Totterdell (2002) and is the chosen structure to explore the essence of emotional labour.

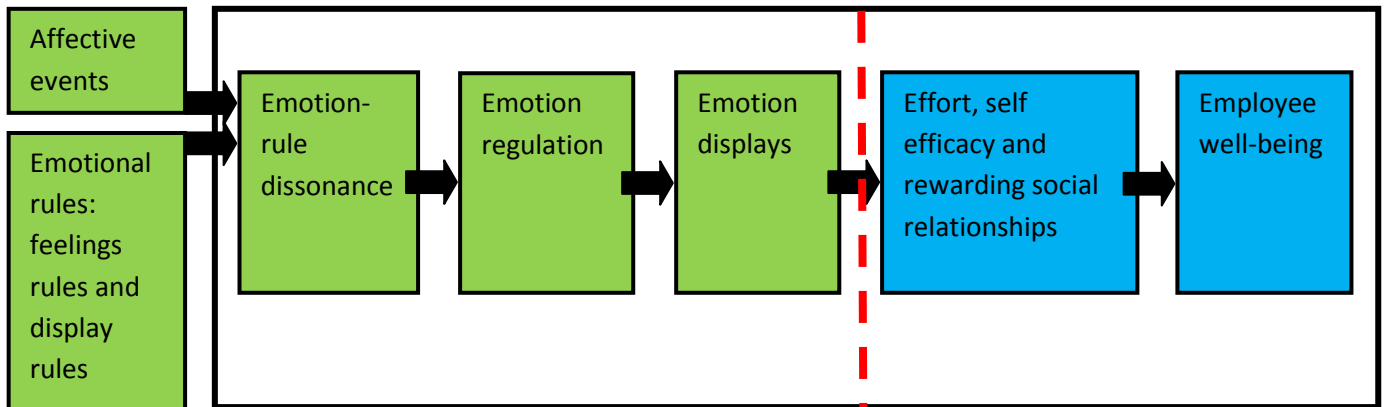


Figure 5.1: The emotional labour process adapted from Holman, Chissick & Totterdell, 2002.

As displayed in Figure 5.1, affective events take place during the emotional labour process. By following feelings rules and display rules, a person either goes through what is known as emotional dissonance, or adapts naturally to the desired behaviour. Emotional dissonance occurs when the felt feelings of a person are not in line with the feelings that have to be displayed according to a situation or a position. In other words, emotions sometimes have to be displayed that are not necessarily felt by the person but are expected in his or her role in the workplace (Holman *et al.*, 2002; Pugh, Groth & Henning-Thurau, 2010). When emotional dissonance *does not* occur, a person displays his or her emotions naturally, but when emotional dissonance does exist, a person uses strategies to adjust his or her emotions before emotional display takes place. These strategies are known as emotional regulation. According to Pugh *et al.* (2010) emotional regulation is perceived and, in most cases, requires extra emotional resources from a person.

This study has mainly focused on the process up to the stage where emotional display takes place. The remaining part of the EL process will require further study. However, for the purpose of possible future research certain predictions will be made later in the study regarding the final two stages in the emotional labour process.

### 5.3 THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR PROCESS WITHIN THE POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION PROCESS

This section describes EL within the postgraduate supervision process, and the exploration is based on the data obtained from the interviews.

#### 5.3.1 Affective events

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, affective events are explained as happenings at work that have an impact on the emotions of individuals (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Weiss and Cropanzano's affective events theory proposes that environmental conditions in the workplace result in 'hassles and uplifts' for employees (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The affective events, or emotional events as Grandey (2000) refers to them, in the postgraduate supervision relationship can be described as the interpersonal events between the supervisor and student that have an impact on the two individuals' emotions. Literature refers to interpersonal events between co-workers, in the context of this study the supervisor and the customer or student (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003).

Contact sessions between a supervisor and a student resemble these interpersonal events and usually bring forth evaluations of the relationship between the two parties. According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), the accumulation of positive or negative affective events can lead to positive or negative affective states. Furthermore, affective events can be described as structured, social interactions between two people (Guy *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, affective events from an external source can also have an impact on the postgraduate supervisor.

Figure 5.2 indicates the three phases of the postgraduate research supervision process as indicated in the interview data.

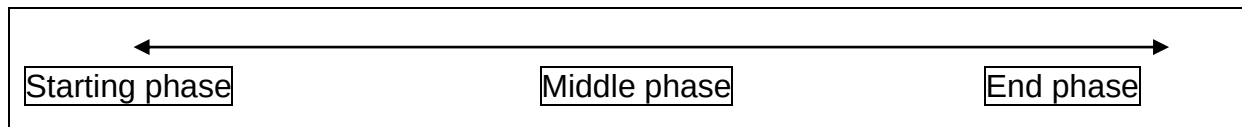


Figure 5.2: The postgraduate research supervision timeline.

The first phase can be referred to as the *starting phase*. During this phase, the postgraduate supervisor and the student meet and enter into the supervision relationship. The second phase can be called the *middle phase*, during which the supervisor and the student maintain the relationship without definite 'checkpoints'. The third phase is the *end phase*, which marks the final stages of the supervision process. This process, as displayed in Figure 5.2, will be integrated with the discussion of the EL process as experienced by postgraduate supervisors, starting with affective events.

### Starting phase

The selection of postgraduate students is an essential step in the starting phase of the supervision process. According to Blunt (2009), a key criterion for selecting postgraduate students is that they must be able to work autonomously. This criterion was pointed out specifically during the interviews:

Interviewee 4: "So, een van my frustrasies is dat ons nie behoorlike keuring het van die student wat toegelaat is nie." [So, one of my frustrations is that there is no proper selection of students who are admitted.]

Interviewee 8: "Jy weet, en dis 'n verskriklike frustrasie, as mens 'n student het wat regtig nie aan die vereistes voldoen nie." [You know, and that is a big frustration, when you have a student who really does not meet the requirements.]

During the starting phase of the postgraduate supervision process, the student and the supervisor have to gauge their feelings about how to approach the supervision process because they are two individuals with different psychosocial relations within the supervision relationship (Grant, 2003). According to the respondents the starting

phase is very important and involves numerous strategies, as described in their own words:

Interviewee 2: *"... as ek aan die begin net by jou ... die groter prentjie kon geskep het na waarnatoe is jy oppad ...."* [... if I could have created the bigger picture at the beginning to show where you were headed....]

Interviewee 8: *"... ek skep vir hulle raamwerke, jy weet die hoofstukke ...."* [... I create a framework for them, you know, the chapters ....]

The respondents also mentioned the importance of structuring the supervision relationship and the process by meeting with the students and working out a structure or a time frame. A respondent emphasised the importance of the initial match between a student and a supervisor:

Interviewee 3: *"Ek dink dis belangrik, daai aanvanklike ... 'm ... hoe sal ek dit amper sê ... passing – dis nou 'supervisor' en kandidaat."* [I think it is important, that initial ... how shall I put it ... matching – that is, supervisor and candidate.]

The social interaction, or matching as the respondent referred to it, is very important during the starting phase of the postgraduate supervision process. The starting phase seems to be a stressful process according to the supervisors, as the initial structuring of this process is critical. Another respondent referred to an event that might engender positive or negative emotions:

Interviewee 1: *"... moet die ouens die 'proposal' ... die voorlegging doen en dis nogal 'n angstige proses hoor."* [... the student has to do the proposal ... and that is kind of an anxious process I must tell you.]

The proposal of the research can either be accepted or rejected and if process and decision is done incorrectly at the beginning, the process has to start all over again. This is an anxious event from the supervisor's perspective and, therefore, the starting phase can be seen as critical (Blunt, 2009).

### Middle phase

The middle phase of the postgraduate supervision process focuses on the setting of deadlines according to each student's time frame for completion. The deadlines set out in the process might, however, give rise to certain affective emotions. Respondents had the following to share:

Interviewee 8: *"Ek skep 'n raamwerk vir die hoofstukke... en dit maak my baie vies as hulle nie volgens die raamwerk altyd gaan nie ...."* [I create a framework for the chapters... and it makes me very angry when they do not keep to the framework.]

Interviewee 4: *"'n Student raak hier weg ... vir ... enigiets tussen nege en vyftien maande."* [A student disappears here ... for anything between nine and fifteen months.]

Interviewee 5: *"Okay, well, sometimes the students disappear. I do get angry with that because I have invested a lot of time already and then they disappear."*

Some anger and frustration are experienced by postgraduate supervisors during the middle phase of the supervision process when the agreed structure is not followed or when the student disappears without communicating with the supervisor. However, positive affective events also came to light:

Interviewee 2: *"Mm ... en dan kom jy by bronne wat hulle gesoek het wat ek dink ... jig, ek wonder waar de duiwel het jy dit gekry."* [Um ... and then you get to the sources that they have searched and I think ... ugh, where the devil did you get that.]

The response refers to the positive revelations that supervisors sometimes experience when a student does a good job.

## End phase

In the end phase of the postgraduate supervision process, the occurrences that have an impact on the supervisor's emotions are on the increase. According to the respondents there are positive as well as negative affective events, which can lead to positive or negative emotional states (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The positive affective events during the end phase were described by the respondents as follows:

Interviewee 4: *"... as van daai twintig ouens, net een ou hoef vir jou sê: 'jys, jy weet jy't my kop oopgemaak, ek dink nou anders oor goed'."* [... if only one of those twenty guys tells you ... 'wow, you opened my mind ... I now think differently about things'.]

Interviewee 8: *"... die gevoel van jy't 'n bydrae gemaak, jy weet, in iemand se lewe."* [... the feeling that you have made a contribution, you know, to someone's life.]

The above responses are examples of satisfying and rewarding experiences for supervisors towards the end of the postgraduate supervision process. However, negative affective events towards the end seem to be generated by internal and external expectations:

Interviewee 2: *"Dis nie 'n 'quick fixy'-ding hierdie nie en ek dink wat my frustreer is dat ouens tot op die laaste minuut wag."* [This is not a quick fix thing and I think what frustrates me is that students wait until the last minute.]

Interviewee 5: *"Until those examiner reports come back I don't know if I've done a good enough job."*

Internal expectations are those set by the student, whereas external expectations are the anticipation of the final result from the external examiner and the expectation of the university about this result.

The affective events experienced by the postgraduate supervisor seem to take place more often at the start and towards the end of the supervision process. The middle phase engenders fewer affective events because there are fewer deadlines and formal events. However, the study recognises that, although the start and end phases are heavily emphasised, the middle phase does contain positive affective events but that these seem to be forgotten more easily because the phase is spread out over an extended period of time. Positive affective events were experienced which led to satisfaction and positive revelations. Negative affective events were also experienced by the respondents in the form of stress, anxiety and frustration. The feelings that emanated from the study, correlated positively with some of the emotions that were proposed by the emotions matrix of affective events in a study conducted by Basch and Fisher (1998). Examples of these emotions include happiness, pleasure, frustration and anger.

The affective events may cause divergence between the feelings rules of a supervisor and the display rules required by the role (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Therefore, the next step in the discussion of the emotional labour process is the exploration of the emotional rules.

### **5.3.2 Emotional rules**

The affective events that have been discussed are measured against the emotional rules which can be divided into *feelings rules* and *display rules*. Feelings rules are referred to as the type and degree of emotional feeling, and display rules refer to norms or expectations that all individuals should express in their emotions (Grandey, Rafaeli, Ravid, Wirtz, & Steiner, 2010; Holman *et al.*, 2008). Although the postgraduate relationship and process are guided by the rules of the university (Grant, 2003) and their specific departments, emotional rules in this context refer to the rules of the relationship between the student and the supervisor (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). These rules or norms are formed and implemented by society and mostly consist of being considerate of other people's feelings (Wharton, 1999). The respondents shared their viewpoints on this as follows:

Interviewee 3: *"... alhoewel ons tog soms so voel ... maar jy sê dit nie want dis nie reg nie. Jy lewer 'n kliëntediens of jy nou hou van jou kliënt of nie."* [... although we feel like that sometimes ... but you do not say it because it is not right. You deliver a customer service whether you like your customer or not.]

Interviewee 8: *"Die universiteit het sy vaste reëls en regulasies van hoe goed gedoen moet word en ek meen, jy as dosent ... wat kan jy nou maak...."* [The university has its rules and regulations of how things should be done and I mean, you as a lecturer ... what can you do ....]

Supervisors should set the example and keep to the rules and regulations of external bodies, and also to the internal rules between the supervisor and the student. The memorandum of understanding that is signed provides some form of regulation, however, respondents feel that there should be additional contact between the parties involved to clarify their expectations of each other:

Interviewee 1: *"... dat jy en die student 'n goeie verhouding het, dat julle presies weet waar julle staan met mekaar en dat die student weet wat is sy of haar verwagtinge ...."* [... that you and the student have a good relationship, so that you know exactly where you stand with each other, and so that the student knows what his or her expectations are ....]

Emotional rules are present at all times during the postgraduate supervision process and they cannot necessarily be plotted to apply at specific times. In the starting phase, the expectations of the parties involved in the postgraduate supervision process should be stated clearly to allow for a smoother process. During the middle phase, communication is essential, and one of the respondents referred to this point as follows:

Interviewee 8: *"... en ek kommunikeer gereeld met my studente ...."* [... and I frequently communicate with my students ....]

Towards the end of the supervision process, the feeling rules may not always be aligned with the display rules as the supervisor experiences stress and anxiety about the external examiner's feedback on the thesis or dissertation.

Interviewee 6: "*Wat gaan gebeur as ek slegter as dit vat ... die ekstern gaan haar dop.*" [What will happen if I take worse than that ... the external will fail her.]

Interviewee 3: "*Jy weet jy's altyd maar bly as die eksterne darem net die kandidaat laat slaag.*" [You know you are always happy when the external at least passes the candidate.]

From the discussion it can be concluded that there are affective events during the supervision process which create discrepancies between the feeling rules and the display rules that a postgraduate supervisor has to adhere to. This conclusion sets the scene for the next section's discussion of emotional dissonance.

### **5.3.3 Emotion-rule dissonance**

The affective events and the emotional rule both determine whether there is emotional dissonance or not. Emotional dissonance comes into play when there is a discrepancy between the felt feelings of a person and the emotions they express or are required to express. Emotional dissonance is regarded by researchers as a source of strain that can possibly threaten the well-being of an employee (Pugh *et al.*, 2010). Depending on the type of job or the type of clients, certain display rules are expected of the employee. Emotional dissonance experiences are occasionally also referred to as 'surface acting' (Tschan, Rochat, & Zapf, 2005), and the reason is that deep acting might lead to the resolution of a dissonance experience (Wegge, Van Dick & Von Bernstorff, 2010).

When the feelings rules and the display rules are aligned, natural behaviour will be displayed and therefore no emotional dissonance occurs (Holman *et al.*, 2002). If these feelings rules and display rules do not align, one has to implement strategies

to align them. Therefore, when the emotions are positive, the emotion rules are expansive, but as soon as the emotions are negative, the emotion rules become restrictive (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). As soon as a person has to constantly make use of emotional regulation strategies, emotional dissonance increases. A respondent explained the circumstances under which emotional dissonance occurred:

Interviewee 2: *"Verstaan, ek wil amper sê daai polisieman ding om te sê, weet jy wat ... ek moet ... en dit is vir my sleg."* [You know, I almost want to say that policeman ... to say, you know what ... I must ... and that I do not enjoy.]

It is clear that emotional dissonance is present in this response, and, in terms of her feelings rules, the postgraduate supervisor does not feel comfortable to act as a 'policeman'. This occurrence specifically refers to the requirement of tracking a student's progress.

Another instance of emotional dissonance was displayed during the interviews:

Interviewee 1: *"... so, enige student wat verby sy subsidiëringstydperk is, beteken niks vir die universiteit nie ... maar dit beteken vir my nog iets, want van daai studente het waardevolle navorsing ...."* [... so, any student that is past their subsidy time period means nothing to the university, but it still means something to me, because that student has valuable research ....]

Pressure from the external environment sometimes requires the supervisor to let a student go. However, the postgraduate supervisor might feel different about it because the student possesses good research skills but takes a little longer than usual to deliver.

Judging from the results, emotional dissonance exists in the postgraduate supervision process; therefore, emotional regulation is the next aspect of the emotional labour process that requires investigation.

### 5.3.4 Emotional regulation

Emotional regulation refers to the use of strategies to regulate one's emotions to reduce discrepancy (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). According to Barber *et al.*, (2010), emotional regulation is the effort one applies to monitor and alter the expression of emotional states. More specific to the study, a postgraduate supervisor needs to regulate his or her emotional state when engaging with the students in the supervisor-student relationship. During the face-to-face interviews, occurrences of emotional regulation were revealed when the postgraduate supervisor engaged with the student in the relationship. A respondent acknowledged the regulation of his emotions as follows:

Interviewee 3: *"Jy moet maar baie op jou tande byt en geduldig wees."* [At times you have to grit your teeth and be patient.]

It seems as if some of the postgraduate supervisors have certain strategies or adapting mechanisms which they use to consciously adapt their behavioural approach towards the students. The following are additional responses in this regard:

Interviewee 8: *"... so, mens moet maar diplomaties wees, jy weet."* [... so, you know, one must be diplomatic ....]

Interviewee 4: *"... maar ek het dit nie gestuur nie en toe nou na 'n uur toe gaan ek weer terug ...."* [... but I did not send it ... and then after an hour I went back ....]

From the above it is clear that postgraduate supervisors are aware of the need to regulate their emotions.

Interviewee 8: *"... maar ek is nie iemand vir maskers nie, jy weet, ek's 'n 'straightforward' mens ... maar ek hou dit professioneel, jy weet ...."* [... but I

am not someone who wears masks, you know, I am a straightforward person ... but I keep it professional, you know....]

Experienced postgraduate supervisors might be able to handle affective events better as they could have developed ways of dealing with stress, anxiety and frustration. Responses indicate this might be the case, although there is a strong focus on the process:

Interviewee 4: "*... ek weet oor die laaste tien jaar het ek 'n sekere 'skill' ontwikkel om ... om navorsing te struktureer.*" [... I know I have developed a certain skill over the past ten years to structure research.]

Interviewee 8: "*Jy weet, na al die jare van studieleiding weet mens teen hierdie tyd wat kan werk en wat nie.*" [You know, after all the years of supervision, one knows at this stage what can work and what not.]

When one considers whether there are specific times at which regulation takes place, it seems that the starting phase contains evidence of emotional regulation because the affective event of the proposal can be a stressful stage. The supervisor might need to regulate this stress and either display fake feelings in the form of surface acting, or apply deep acting and display genuine controlled behaviour. During the middle phase there is also a moderate degree of emotional regulation depending on the affective events that might occur. These events differ and are more unstructured than those encountered during the start and end phases.

During the end phase, when the workload increases towards the end of the year, slight regulations of emotions also occur, as indicated by the respondents:

Interviewee 3: "*... maar, jy weet nie, dis maar 'n baie onvoorspelbare saak ... watter reaksie jy van die eksterne eksaminator gaan kry ... maar, jy hoop altyd vir die beste ....*" [... but, you know, it is a very unpredictable matter ... what reaction you are going to get from the external examiner ... but you always hope for the best ....]

Interviewee 2: "... 'mm ... studente wil baie keer ingee hier na die einde van die jaar se kant toe, so ons sit baie keer self met artikels wat moet in wees ... of ons in daai jaar kry ... ons self moet sit met eksamen vraestelle en daai tipe van goed ...." [...uh ... students often want to hand in towards the end of the year, and we ourselves sometimes have articles that need to be in ... or that we get that year ... we ourselves have exam papers and those kinds of things.]

Uncertainty, fear and stress are some of the emotions that supervisors experience in the end phase. The supervisor should regulate his or her emotions when feelings rules and display rules are required. In addition, supervisors must show students acknowledgement and motivate them as they approach the end of their study periods. The next section will explore the emotional displays after emotional regulation has taken place.

### 5.3.5 Emotion display

What has been described as acting in the literature is in practice, the display of emotions. The emotions that are displayed by the supervisor during the postgraduate supervision process can either be authentic or false depending on the felt feelings of the supervisor. Regulating these emotions before acting on them is known as emotional regulation. When the supervisor restrains the felt feelings and displays the 'fake' feelings, it can be referred to as surface acting (Pugh *et al.*, 2010). However, when the supervisor makes an attempt to genuinely alter his or her emotions towards the student, 'deep' acting takes place (Holman *et al.*, 2002).

A slight distinction can be made between these two 'acting styles' based on the emotions that emerged during the interviews. The following responses are evidence of surface acting where the supervisor displays emotions which are not necessarily felt by the postgraduate supervisor:

Interviewee 5: *"... so sometimes you have to be mean. Sorry, you have to be, like a wake-up call ... .... How do you tell somebody: 'You know what, this is not for you'. I have done it, but the person will always get angry."*

Interviewee 2: *"... weet jy, ek laat jou ding gaan, maar weet jy, in my wese voel ek ... weet jy wat, ek dink nie dis nie 'n goeie stuk werk nie ... en ek haat daai gevoel."* [... you know what, I am letting your thing go, but you know what, deep down I feel ... you know what, I do not think it is a good piece of work ... and I hate that feeling.]

In contrast to the above response, another respondent had the following to say:

Interviewee 6: *"Ek het nie daai probleem gehad nie want ek is heeltemal eerlik met my studente."* [I have not had that problem because I give students my honest opinion.]

To judge from the interviews, surface acting was employed most often when negative emotions were experienced and the person was required to play a role with which he or she was not necessarily comfortable. However, for the sake of the relationship, surface acting might be required in order to maintain the relationship between the supervisor and the student. A specific situation was mentioned by one of the supervisors regarding an email which he had typed but had not sent. He explained it as follows:

Interviewee 4: *"Eers het ek vir hom geskryf dis 'n bol !#\*&, ... maar ek het dit nie gestuur nie, en toe, nou na 'n uur toe gaan ek weer terug, toe sê ek hierdie, jy weet, toe sê ek, is ... m'm ... 'non-substance', toe haal ek die woord !#\*& uit ... 'non-substance'. Dis nie 'n goeie vertaling nie, maar, jy weet, dis 'n 'down tone' ..."* [First I wrote him this is a bunch of !#\*&, but then I did not send it, and then, after an hour I went back and I said, this is ... uh ... non-substance, and I took out the word !#\*&. It is not a good translation but you know it is a down tone.]

Regulation of emotions took place that prevented the supervisor from sending the email as it had been typed initially. After the emotional regulation had been practised, the respondent displayed his emotions in a more subtle manner.

Deep acting was also evident from the data that was collected from the face-to-face interviews. The data indicated that some of the supervisors consciously altered their way of thinking when supervising postgraduate students. Interviewee 4 said the following:

Interviewee 4: *"Ek maak nie 'judgement' nie ... ek probeer om nie te 'judge' nie. Dis baie moeilik ... dis baie, baie moeilik, maar dis deel van my nuwe lewensfilosofie, in die laaste vier of so jaar wat ek aangeneem het, is om 'non-judgemental' te wees."* [I do not judge ... I try not to judge. It is very difficult ... it is very, very difficult, but it is part of my new life philosophy ... that I have adopted for the last four years or so ... is not to be judgemental.]

In this case, the interviewee initiated deep acting. Initially it was only a case of surface acting, but as the conversation proceeded it became clear that deep acting was at play.

### **5.3.6 Effort, self efficacy, rewarding social relationships and employee well-being**

Hochschild suggests that people who perform emotional labour may find themselves in dangerous situations when engaging in high levels of job involvement (Hochschild, 1983). In contrast, non-performers of emotional labour may experience higher levels of satisfaction, according to Oyamot *et al.*, 2010). Wharton (1999) emphasises that being too involved in one's work may lead to burnout.

According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002), emotional labour has been conceptualised in a job-focused manner which indicates the emotional demands of an occupation, and the employee-focused approach is where the focus is on the person when dealing with emotions and expressions to meet work demands.

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) go on to say that both the characteristics of the job and of the individual contribute to the levels of stress. People in occupations in areas such as social service work, health care and teaching tend to stand a bigger chance of suffering from burnout (Cherniss, 1993). However, studies conducted by Morris and Feldman (1996), Rafaeli and Sutton (1990) and Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) produce no significant evidence that emotional labour leads to burnout in the job-focused arena. Furthermore, showing empathy and having variety in a work situation seem to be rewarding experiences (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

The employee-focused expectations of a person cause that person to engage in surface acting and deep acting. Research has indicated that surface acting causes emotional strain and feelings of exhaustion, whereas deep acting often creates feelings of personal accomplishment (Barber *et al.*, 2010; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Whether the postgraduate supervisors experience these feelings in such a manner that it leads to burnout will have to be determined by research in the future.

#### **5.4 THE JOB OF THE POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISOR LINKED TO THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR PROCESS**

As indicated in Chapter 2, the presence of emotional labour among higher-level or professional groups has not been studied sufficiently (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004). The results of the study by Ogbonna and Harris (2004) are quite close to the finding of this study that lecturers in higher education see emotional labour as an everyday occurrence. However, the postgraduate supervision process has not been under the emotional labour magnifying glass from the supervisor's perspective.

As stated in literature, a job that is believed to have emotional labour should possess the characteristics of person-to-person contact, the management of one's own emotional state, and the exercising of control over other people's emotions (Guy *et al.*, 2008). According to Wharton (1999), emotional labour can be studied across different jobs. However, Grandey (2000) states that different work roles may have dissimilar requirements or expectations for the employee when he or she interacts with a client. The job of a postgraduate supervisor will now be explored in terms of

the above-mentioned three characteristics, and the interaction with the client, namely the student, will be examined.

#### 5.4.1 Supervisor's role

At this point, the study will describe the way the job of the postgraduate supervisor links with the emotional labour process. The reason for doing this is to measure the supervisor's job against the characteristics (see section 5.4.2) of a job possessing emotional labour (Guy *et al.*, 2008).

The data collected during the interview provided a significant amount of input given by the respondents, and from this a meaningful description can be put together of what the supervisor's role consists of. However, only the essence of those descriptions will be mentioned in this section:

Interviewee 6: *"Wel, ek moet 'n bepaalde standaard stel."* [Well, I should set a specific standard.]

Interviewee 5: *"... so, one role, I call it the instrumental role, just helping that student to focus on their topic, but then there's the other role which is the mother role ... taking care of their psychological well-being."*

Interviewee 2: *"... ek kan vir jou 'guidance' gee."* [... I can give you guidance.]

Interviewee 4: *"So, ek sien my 'job' net as een van fokus."* [So, I see my job as one of focus only.]

As mentioned in Chapter 4, a possible definition for the role of a postgraduate supervisor can be formulated as follows: *The role of a postgraduate supervisor is to set a specific standard, be accountable for the end result, and keep students focused and motivated by playing a nurturing and supportive role throughout.* The extent to which a supervisor engages in these roles will depend on the individual as well as on the student who is part of that relationship. According to a study conducted by Zuber-

Skerritt and Roche (2004), an effective supervisor is one who is encouraging, resourceful, committed to the student, and highly organised, as well as one who directs the student's needs.

#### **5.4.2 Job of a postgraduate research supervisor**

As discussed by Guy *et al.* (2008), there are three distinct characteristics of a job that possesses emotional labour. In order to determine if the supervisor experiences emotional labour within the postgraduate supervision process, the role of the supervisor needs to comply with these three characteristics. The characteristics are known as *person-to-person contact*, *managing one's own emotional state*, and *exercising control over emotional activities*. Furthermore, the outcome of this match should be determined by means of the data acquired from the face-to-face interviews, and all these elements should be reflected accurately in the research objectives set out at the beginning of the study.

Additionally, Guy *et al.* (2008) indicate that four communication exchanges between worker and citizen are at play during emotional labour. By exploring face-to-face communication in the context of emotional labour, Guy *et al.* (2008) propose four phases of communication which seem to be a critical for inclusion in the research scope (Ozment & Keller, 1999) of emotional labour. These four phases include: *emotive sensing*, *analysing*, *judging* and *behaving*. Even though there are some students who only have one or two face-to-face contact sessions with their supervisor throughout their whole study period, these phases still play a role.

These communication phases will be integrated into the discussion of the three job phases, which have a very strong resemblance to the phases of the emotional labour process itself.

##### **5.4.2.1 Person-to-person contact**

The first characteristic of a job involving emotional labour is that it has person-to-person contact (Guy *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, Guy *et al.* (2008) state that the

people involved in person-to-person or face-to-face contact should have a mutual or specific goal they work towards. Throughout the postgraduate research supervision processes the supervisor and the student engage in person-to-person contact. However, the study proposes that the affective events as well as emotional rules are critically present in this characteristic (Holman *et al.*, 2002) as indicated in Figure 5.3.

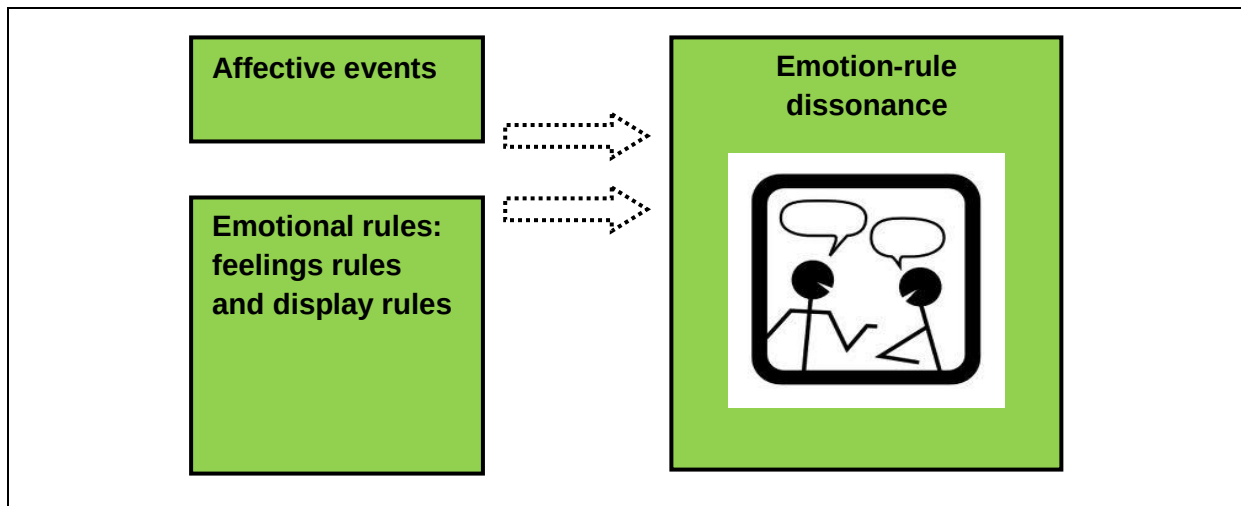


*Figure 5.3: Person-to-person contact within the EL process*

Postgraduate supervision complies with this first characteristic as there is always person-to-person contact within this process. During the contact sessions, the postgraduate supervisor and the student usually engage on a deeper level than when communicating by way of emails or telephone calls. From the interviews it was evident that the affective events normally took place during the contact sessions.

The positive and the negative affective events that were recorded will now be discussed in the light of the person-to-person contact. Some of the positive interactions between the supervisor and the student that were mentioned during the interviews with postgraduate supervisors are:

Interviewee 4: "... en ... jy weet 'n ou ... as van daai twintig ouens, net een ou hoef vir jou te sê: 'jīs, jy weet jy't my kop oopgemaak, ek dink nou anders oor goed'." [... and ... if only one of those twenty guys tells you: 'wow you opened my mind ... I now think differently about things'.]

Interviewee 5: "... when the student ... you just say one thing to them, like: 'you really ought to look at such and such', and then that student goes off and boy, they bring you back something where they take it a distance."

Negative experiences were also recorded during the interviews with postgraduate supervisors. The following responses were given by the interviewees:

Interviewee 2: "... so, *nou druk jy my in 'n blik ... verstaan jy, want eintlik is jy besig om my af te pers ook ... op die ou end word dit my probleem ook.*" [... so, now you put pressure on me ... understand ... so actually you are busy blackmailing me as well ... in the end it becomes my problem as well.]

Interviewee 8: "*Hy was 'n direkteur van 'n 'government organisation' en het my soos 'n P.A. behandel.*" [He was a director of a government organisation and treated me like a P.A.]

Interviewee 1: "*Die frustrasies wat ek beleef is dit ... dat die studente luister nie as jy met hulle praat nie.*" [The frustration I experience is that the students do not listen when you talk to them.]

From the results it is clear that affective events during person-to-person contact engender emotions such as frustration and anger. By looking at the communication, the study will discuss the probability of emotional labour. The forms of communication between the postgraduate supervisor and the student include physical presence, emails, telephone calls, SMSs and any other form of communication.

During the first phase, namely that of *emotive sensing*, a person tries to determine the affective state of the other person. This sensing links up with the application of emotional rules described in the emotional labour process. In this regard, Interviewee 3 stated as follows:

Interviewee 3: *"Jy moet eintlik 'n sielkundige kan wees vir daai kandidaat of student."* [You must actually be a psychologist to that candidate or student.]

The supervisor should, therefore, be able to detect the emotional state of the student. Sensing the student's emotional state is important as there are times when the student might experience difficulties, for example:

Interviewee 8: *"... en ek het byvoorbeeld studente gehad wat deur egskeidings is."* [... for example I have had students that have been through divorces.]

The supervisor might not be fully aware of the situation, but can pick up signs that the student is sad. Empathy and sympathy were revealed as emotions that supervisors experienced during the postgraduate supervision process. An example of that was mentioned by a respondent:

Interviewee 2: *"Ek dink wat my nou baie help is die feit dat ek met 'n student kan sit nou omdat ek dit self in my skripsie gesien het, en ek wil amper vir jou sê, ek dink ek ervaar baie keer die frustrasies beter wat die student het ... .. ek het baie begrip vir dit want, weet jy wat, ek is nou self daardeur."* [I think what helps me a lot now is the fact that I can sit with students because I saw it myself in my own dissertation, and I almost want to tell you, I think I understand the frustration better, because, you know what, I went through that process myself.]

Therefore, the overall communication between supervisor and student can be approved from the data presented, as well as the first phase of communication phase within the emotional labour realm known as emotive sensing of the affective state.

#### **5.4.2.2 Manage one's own emotional state**

The second characteristic of a job that possesses emotional labour is that a person manages his or her own emotions. Emotional regulation is the primary action that is

taken. Emotional regulation, as described by Barber *et al.* (2010), is the effort that a person applies to monitor and change the expression of their emotional state. Figure 5.4 shows the next step in the emotional labour process, that is, after emotion-rule dissonance has been identified.

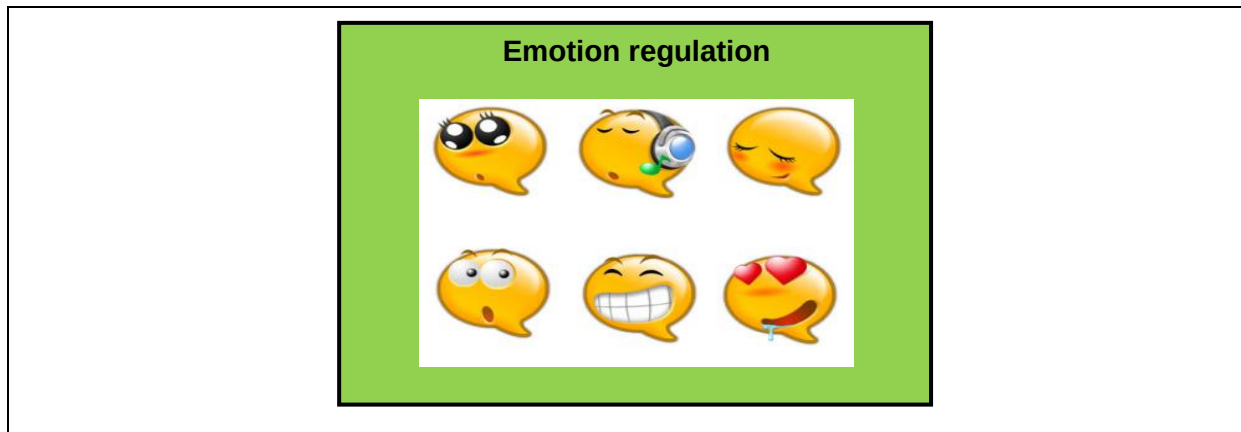


Figure 5.4: Emotion regulation as managing emotional state

The regulation of emotions was demonstrated during the interviews by the following example:

Interviewee 3: *"Jy moet maar baie op jou tande byt en geduldig wees."* [At times you have to grit your teeth and be patient.]

At this point, the study will not go into emotional regulation in depth as it was discussed earlier in the chapter.

The second phase concerns *analysing one's own affective state* and comparing it to that of the other person. During this phase the supervisor has to be introspective and reflect on his or her feelings. At times both parties will go through '*emotional highs*' and '*emotional lows*' as described by Interviewee 5, but the supervisor and the student will not necessarily feel the same emotions at the same times. They are individuals, each with their own personalities, experiences and backgrounds. Interviewee 6 told of a student whose laptop had been stolen and who had lost her job, and his experience as he described it can serve as an example of the application of the second phase.

Supervisors' feelings about the standard of research that must be maintained, and their feelings of empathy for students might cause conflict in such a situation, and therefore supervisors have to acknowledge their conflicting feelings and regulate their emotions (Pienaar & Bester, 2006; Green & Bowden, 2012).

Interviewee 7: "...Maar al hierdie goedjies impakteer op die kwaliteit van die produk wat ek kry, maar ek kan niks slegter as dit vat nie." [But all these things have an impact on the quality of the product I get, but I cannot take anything that is of a lower quality.]

The third phase requires *judging* and responding appropriately to the emotions as analysed in the previous phase. The concern with the feedback of the external supervisor is a good example of this, as Interviewee 3 stated: "... maar jy weet nie, dis maar 'n baie onvoorspelbare saak ... watter reaksie jy van die eksterne eksaminator gaan kry." [... but you know, it is a very unpredictable matter ... what reaction you are going to get from the external examiner.]

The supervisor takes ownership of and responsibility for the thesis or dissertation, and this is a stressful matter to them, as discussed in Chapter 4. However, the supervisor should try not to show this stress to the student, as the student relies on the continued guidance of the supervisor. Doubt and fear may be fostered in the student if the supervisor does not use judgement in an emotionally intelligent manner.

#### **5.4.2.3 Exercise control over emotional activities**

The supervision relationship is a fundamental link between the student, the academic community and the university system (Rau, 2004). As referred to by Interviewee 5, the supervisor sometimes has to play a caring and nurturing role. This includes keeping the student motivated and hopeful about the research. This comment indicates that the postgraduate research supervisor potentially has to exercise control over the emotions between postgraduate supervisor and student.

Figure 5.5 demonstrates emotional regulation in order to display the applicable emotions to encourage the emotional activities between supervisor and student.

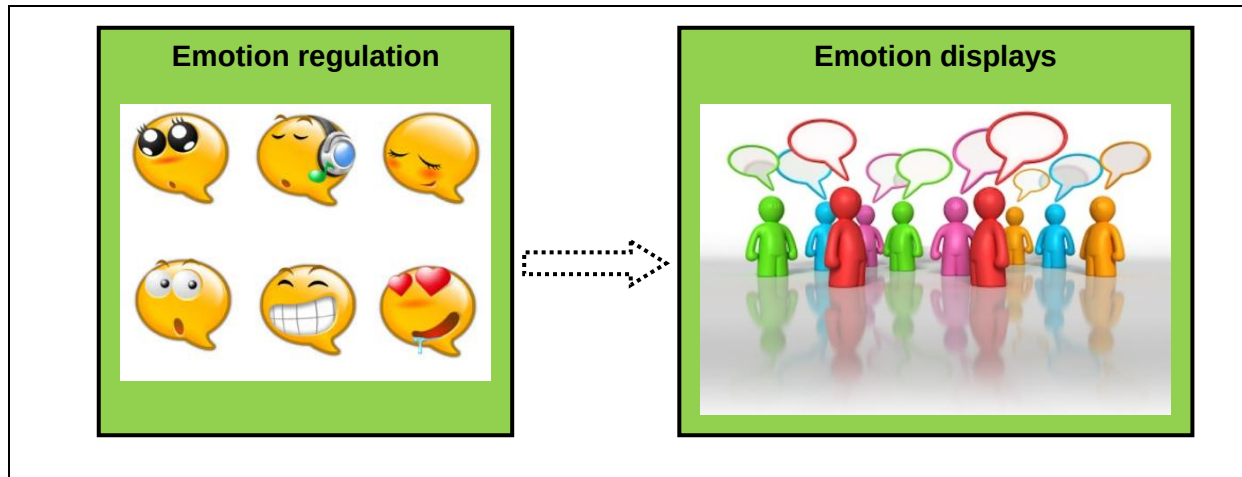


Figure 5.5: From emotional regulation to emotional displays.

Some supervisors felt that they should not be required to be students' counsellors:

Interviewee 5: "... *maar ek is nie jou 'counsellor' nie.*" [... but I am not your counsellor.]

However, other supervisors felt that they should play such a role:

Interviewee 3: "*Jy moet eintlik 'n sielkundige kan wees vir daai kandidaat of student.*" [You must actually be a psychiatrist to that candidate or student.]

It is evident that the amount of caring a postgraduate supervisor practises is a personal preference.

The final phase is where emotional *behaving* comes into play. According to literature this can be referred to as surface acting and deep acting (Guy *et al.*, 2008). As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, Hochschild (1983) argues that surface acting and deep acting are used to express the interactions in the work situation (Grandey,

2000; Brook, 2009; Rupp, McCance, Spencer & Sonntag, 2008). Interviewee 2 related an instance that could be regarded as an example of surface acting:

Interviewee 2: "*Verstaan, ek wil amper sê daai polisieman ding ....*" [You know, I almost want to say that policeman thing ....]

When one deliberately adapts one's behaviour for the purpose of expression, it is known as deep acting.

The example where Interviewee 4 referred to his life philosophy, also indicated a deliberate change in behaviour:

Interviewee 4: "*Ek maak nie 'judgement' nie ... ek probeer om nie te 'judge' nie. Dis baie moeilik ... dis baie, baie moeilik, maar dis deel van my nuwe lewensfilosofie ....*" [I do not judge ... I try not to judge. It is very difficult ... it is very, very difficult, but it is part of my new life philosophy ....]

As discussed in the previous section under emotional display, surface acting and deep acting are present in the postgraduate supervision process. Therefore, there is no need to explore it further in this section. Furthermore, the three characteristics of a job that entails emotional labour, as well as the four characteristics of communication, have been explored and linked with the emotional labour process.

## **5.5 CONFORMING TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

In Chapter 1 of the study, the main objectives were outlined in order to study whether the postgraduate supervisor experiences emotional labour within the postgraduate supervision process. Figure 5.6 displays the three objectives of this study.

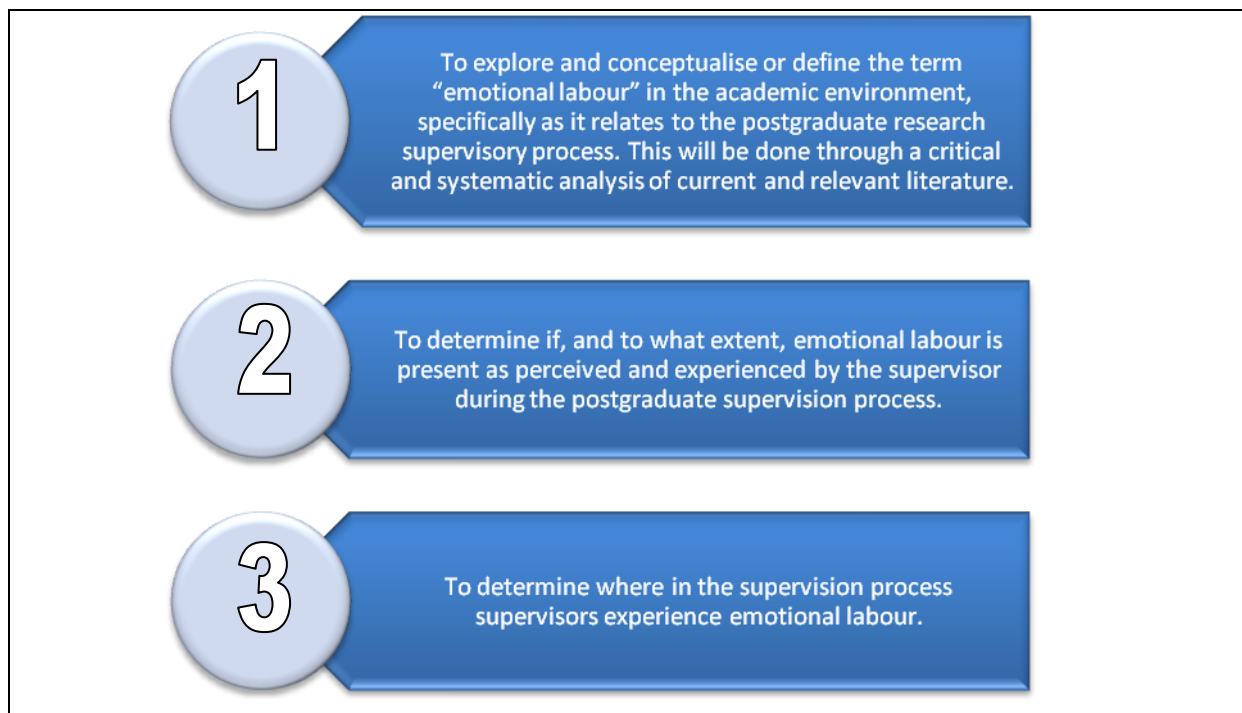


*Figure 5.6: Graphical display of the three objectives*

The first objective was to explore **if emotional labour existed** in the postgraduate research supervision process. In Chapter 2 of this study an extensive literature review was conducted to explore and critically analyse current, relevant and fundamental academic literature so as to provide a basis for the study. Furthermore, the qualitative interviews led the researcher to believe that there was indeed a form of emotional labour present in the supervision process.

The second objective of the study was to determine **to what extent** emotional labour was present, and for that purpose the views and experiences of eight postgraduate supervisors were collected. Initially only purposive and convenient samplings were used, but snowball sampling was also used to gain access to further inputs from postgraduate supervisors. The supervisors were selected from public universities in South Africa. Chapter 4 of this study discussed the results and findings as analysed from the interview data that had been collected. Emotional labour seemed to be present throughout the supervision process, and various factors contributed to the emotional strain experienced by supervisors, including the South African higher education context.

Objective 3 of the study was aimed at recognising **where** in the process of supervision supervisors experienced emotional labour. The data collected during the interviews revealed the existence of such a process, and that made the objective possible to reach. From the results and findings it could be concluded that the emotional labour process 'flourished' in the starting and ending phases due to the intensity of the affective events. These affective events were represented by occurrences at work that impacted on the emotions of the supervisor, and the said events took place during those phases. The middle phase of the postgraduate supervision process also indicated emotional labour, but to a lesser degree than the starting and the end phases.

Chapter 5 aimed at triangulating the results and findings presented in Chapter 4 back to the literature. It also aimed to determine where in the postgraduate supervision relationship the supervisor experienced emotional labour, and if any form of emotional labour did exist. It could be concluded that emotional labour did exist in the supervisory process as experienced by the supervisor and it could clearly be related to the existing body of knowledge.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Certain limitations exist which should be addressed in order to acknowledge the gaps that might remain after the study has been conducted. These gaps present opportunities for future research on the topic of emotional labour and the postgraduate supervision process.

The first limitation of this study is the purposive and convenient selections of the sample of postgraduate supervisors that were interviewed. Although snowball sampling took place at a certain stage while collecting data, the interviewees represented postgraduate supervisors with a lot of experience. However, by selecting experienced postgraduate supervisors, the study captured the qualitative data needed to oversee the whole supervision process as well as the details of

occurrences of emotional labour, which inexperienced supervisors might not have been able to provide.

The second limitation of this study is the number of supervisors interviewed. Even though data saturation was reached after the eighth face-to-face interview, the study could have derived benefit from more input.

The third limitation of the study is that only two of the eight supervisors were males. As the history of emotional labour indicates, the job roles in the postgraduate supervision process that are chosen to be studied consist mostly of representatives of the female population, and are, therefore, seen as female jobs. However, the dynamics of the supervisor were not taken into account for the purpose of the outcomes of this study.

Finally, the consequences of the emotional labour process and the effects on employee well-being were not explored in this study. The reason for not including these factors, was that the study primarily focused on the existence of emotional labour within the postgraduate supervision process. The emotional labour process as displayed in Figure 5.1 provided sufficient proof to reach the conclusion that emotional labour, up to the point of emotional display, was visible if viewed within the scope of this study.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As stated at the beginning of the study, this study, by means of qualitative research, aimed at adding value to the body of knowledge and practice of postgraduate research supervision by conceptualising the construct of emotional labour within it. It has been confirmed in this study that emotional labour is indeed present within the postgraduate research supervision process as seen from the supervisor's perspective.

Future research can, therefore, be conducted through qualitative or quantitative approaches in order to further explore the construct of EL within the postgraduate

research supervision realm. It is also proposed that the two outcomes, namely Effort, self efficacy and rewarding social relationships and Employee well-being, as displayed in Figure 5.1, should be explored subsequent to this study. The outcomes and consequences could not yet be included in this study as the consequences of emotional labour were not part of the scope of this study. Effort, self-efficacy and rewarding social relationships, as well as emotional well-being, should be the focus of future research on EL in postgraduate research supervision.

## **5.8 CLOSING CONCLUSION**

Emotional labour seems to be a construct that plays a significant role in postgraduate research supervision, as is depicted and described in the findings of this qualitative study. The postgraduate research supervision process is not only about the supervisor's job as a supervisor, but it is also about the environment and the relations that have an impact on the emotional well-being of the supervisor.

This qualitative study has provided deep insight into emotional labour as a construct that should not be ignored in the postgraduate research supervision process, specifically in the South African environment where it is a national imperative. Therefore, future research is suggested to explore the construct of emotional labour in an academic context.

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## 7. APPENDIX A: Informed Consent



Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

### Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Department of HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### TOWARDS THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION PROCESS

Research conducted by:  
Mr. S.C. Vorster (27273352)  
Cell: 074 581 3736

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Stefan Vorster, a master's student from the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to conceptualise and explore Emotional Labour within an academic research supervisory context.

Please note the following:

This study involves an anonymous interview. Your name will not appear in the interview and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.

- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions during the interview as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 45 minutes of your time
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my supervisors, Prof Y. du Plessis at yvonne.duplessis@up.ac.za or Ms Sumari O'Neil at sumari.oneil@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understood the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

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**Respondent's signature**

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**Date**

## 8. APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

The purpose of this interview is to have a discussion, in the form of a semi-structured interview, regarding the way you experience the process of postgraduate supervision. The discussion is completely confidential and voluntary, and you may at any time decide not to continue with the discussion if it puts you in an uneasy position. To give you a quick background of the study: I want to explore the emotional strain and pressure that supervisors experience during the postgraduate supervision process. I want to hear what the experiences are of various university supervisors regarding the postgraduate supervision process. I look forward to hearing your story in a role that has not yet been explored in the emotional labour context.

A series of open-ended questions will now be asked and you may at any time ask me to explain a certain concept if it is not familiar to you.

1. How long have you been involved with postgraduate supervision?
2. Do you enjoy postgraduate supervision? What do you enjoy about supervision?  
Can you recall specific incidents during your role as a supervisor?
3. Do you find supervision emotionally challenging in any way?
4. Has your perception of supervision changed over the years? Why did your perception change?
5. What does supervision mean to you in terms of your supervision role?
6. Are there things in the supervision process that you enjoy more/less? Like what?
7. What do you absolutely dislike/hate about supervision?
8. As a postgraduate research supervisor, do you experience frustration? Briefly explain your response.
9. Are there times in the supervisory process where you have to conceal your emotion? Explain.
10. Give a few examples of cases or situations where you have personally experienced emotional strain in the postgraduate supervision process.

11. What impact does the current academic environment have on the relationship between you as a supervisor and the postgraduate student?
12. Do the emotional demands of supervision have an impact on the throughput rate of postgraduate students? Why would you say that this is the case?
13. Do you find it easy to adjust your strategies for expressions of emotions?
14. Is there some form of emotional disagreement in adjusting to required expressions in the postgraduate research supervision process?
15. How does workload impact your supervision experience?