CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Motivation of employees remains an ongoing problem for managers because most people are never fully motivated. The general level of motivation in most organisations or businesses is such that usually less than half of the reasonable potential of workers for productive effort is ever obtained. Managers should therefore expect only a limited degree of success in motivating workers.

In order to differentiate itself from other organisations and to ensure survival, effectiveness and competitiveness, the organisation must render services of high quality. For Werner (2001:342-343) quality cannot be separated from motivation. An organisation cannot compete successfully without a motivated workforce. By building motivation into the job content and job environment, employees are enabled to produce quality products and services. Motivating employees should not be the isolated initiative of one or a few managers. Intervention to motivate should be well-planned and carefully directed by both the human resources department or consultant and management. First-line managers and supervisors can empower their employees only if they themselves are empowered by their managers. An organisational culture of achievement, self-actualisation and continuous learning is conducive to quality products and service.

In the South African welfare system the effectiveness of organisations is determined through programme evaluation, which is based on the accomplishment of intervention objectives, number of clients being served and costs of services rendered. Managers often come across workers who are willing to work hard in order to achieve the organisation’s goals, while others care nothing about the organisation but are only interested in what they can get for themselves. The attitudes of workers are directly linked to their performance in the organisation. Extensive research (for example Banks 1997; De Klerk 1999; Hadebe 2001; Ninow 2001; Spector 1997) has been conducted on the importance of motivation in organisational success and delivery.

To achieve their mission, organisations are dependent upon employee productivity and performance. Individual performance is the result of two interacting factors – ability and motivation. Employees
enter the organisation with some level of ability. The organisation can utilise managers to increase that level through training and the efficient organising of tasks and supplies. Employees also enter the organisation with some level of motivation or willingness and desire to perform. Organisations can also influence employee motivation (Rawlins, 1992:141).

Performance and motivation are linked. For Conradie, Dunn, Durand, Hollis-Turner, König, Pillay and Ellinckhuijzen (1999:261) motivation can be defined as the factors that influence and give direction to one’s behaviour. They state that it is necessary for managers to gain an understanding of motivation and its influence on individuals. Evans (1993:134) believes that motivation is important as it influences the behaviour of an individual. This behaviour plays a vital role in enabling an organisation to function properly and effectively. Employees who enter an organisation must remain within the system. Appointed employees must do their jobs in a dependable fashion and be innovative and contribute to achieving organisational objectives.

As far back as 1971, Dowling and Sayles (1971:4) mentioned that the motivated worker is also the most productive worker who equals or excels organisational standards and service delivery. It has been confirmed by Hollis-Turner (1999:266) that organisational success and service delivery are directed by the motivation of employees towards achieving the goals of an organisation.

The way in which a manager carries out his management function and the way in which he manages his subordinates have an important influence on the efficiency, effectiveness and ultimate success of the organisation. The ideal is that the manager should also be a good leader, so that in addition to his leadership qualities as a manager, he is able to encourage his subordinates to co-operate voluntarily (Du Plessis, 1993:297).

According to the arguments, findings and recommendations of authors like Du Plessis (1993:297), Evans (1993:134), Hollis-Turner (1999:266) and Rawlins (1992:141) investigations with regard to the motivation of social workers should be of significant value to social work theory and practice. The need for clear guidelines for motivating employees is what encouraged the researcher to undertake this study and to explore the influence of motivation as a management function of the social work manager.
Throughout this study the researcher has presumed that “… the reading public” is social work managers (Strydom, 2002b:251). This study, which centres on the motivational function of the social work manager is self-inspired, since the researcher herself is a middle-level manager who manages a team comprised of a number of social workers.

1.2 ETHICAL ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

Strydom (1998:24-35) discussed a few important issues with regard to ethics in professional research. In this study the researcher abides by the ethical research principles by means of the following:

- A research proposal was submitted to the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) clarifying the reasons for the study and to acquire permission to conduct research within the DCS (see Annexure 1);
- Prior to the investigation written permission was obtained from the DCS to involve human resources in the study (see Annexure 2);
- The area managers, social work heads and respondents (social workers and social work managers) from the prisons/comcor offices in DCS, Western Cape that were selected were informed beforehand of the pending research project (see Annexure 3);
- Respondents were informed about the “… potential impact of the investigation” by means of a covering letter attached to the questionnaire (Strydom, 1998:25) (see Annexure 4a and 4b); and
- The covering letter contained information about the investigation, the objectives of the measuring instrument, the voluntary participation of respondents, assurances regarding confidentiality and anonymity, the contribution of respondents, the intention to reveal research findings upon completion of this study, as well as the contact details of the researcher.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/PROCESS

De Vos, Schurink and Strydom (1998:19) define research, as “a structured enquiry that utilises acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and create new knowledge that is generally acceptable”. Methodology relates to the steps taken to solve the research problem. Strydom (1998b:425) refers to Reid (1993:336-337) who suggested that the research methodology indicates
the type of research approach, the sampling techniques, data collection method and measuring instruments that will be utilised.

The direction of the research methodology/process can be quantitative or qualitative, or a combination of quantitative-qualitative research. Quantitative research is conducted using a range of methods, which use measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:156). The main objective of a qualitative study is to describe the variation in a phenomenon, situation or attitude (Kumar, 1999:13).

This study was conducted within the quantitative paradigm and is based on positivism. The quantitative approach was implemented by the researcher because of its characteristics such as 1) its range is more exactly defined, 2) the focus is on specific research statements, 3) data collection procedures and types of measurement are constructed in advance (Fouché, 2002a:105).

The researcher based her research process on the nine steps of a quantitative research study discussed by Grinnell (1997:80-97). For the purpose of this research study Grinnell’s version was modified as follows: 1) selecting a problem area, 2) definitions of concepts and operationalising variables, 3) formulating research statements, 4) developing a sampling plan, 5) selecting a data collection method, 6) analysing the data, and 7) writing the report. Each step is part of the research process and will be discussed individually.

1.3.1 Selecting a problem area
A research study presented by Gray and Van Rooyen (2000:189) that focused on “Social work political participation: A South African study” states that most social workers are frustrated and demotivated in their field. Social workers revealed that their low status and poor salaries relative to other professions was the primary cause. A study conducted by De Klerk (1999) placed the emphasis on literature concerning motivation and theories of motivation, as well as factors that have a demotivational effect on employees in the helping professions. The researcher refers to De Klerk’s (1999:58-73) study, which states that specific de-motivators such as the work environment, the job content, the management (top management and social work managers) of the organisation and organisational structures influence the motivation of social workers in the workplace. The researcher
is also of the opinion that social work managers have a vital role to play in managing “… friction on the job, high turnover, absenteeism and tardiness” (Dowling & Sayles: 1971:4).

This research study was generated by problems identified by social workers in practice such as work-related stressors, tensions and frustrations that affect their motivation. According to Botha (2000:197) the tension experienced by social workers, in the execution of their various tasks has its origin in the organisational policy and processes and in the organisation itself; the social worker’s area of operation; the specific tasks of the social worker; the supervisor-social worker relationship and the personality of the social worker and consequently the influence that this has on motivation. These stressors, tensions and frustrations could threaten the productivity of social workers and their job performance. The researcher agrees with the view held by Botha (2000:196) that productivity is to a large extent determined by the motivation and dedication of the social workers. The unsatisfactory performance of social workers could negatively affect the organisation if there are no resources to assist in eliminating stressors, tensions and frustrations.

According to Compton and Galaway (1999:507) social workers are at risk for burnout by virtue of “… who they are, the work they do and the environment in which they work”. Burnout puts a strain on the client, the practitioner (social worker) and the organisation. Research done in 1994 by Haynes and Holmes refers to burnout as a form of depression and apathy resulting from on-the-job stress and frustration. For Haynes and Holmes (1994:356) burnout leaves the social worker unmotivated, uncreative and unresponsive.

Management literature by researchers such as Cronje, Du Toit and Motlatla (2000), Hellriegel and Slocum (1996), Kroon (1995), Rawlins (1992) and Robbins and Coulter (1996), identifies a variety of strategies to address motivational issues, including incentive systems, job enlargement, job enrichment, internal and external motivators and management styles.

The goal of this study was to present scientific based guidelines to managers in supervisory positions so as to motivate social work professionals in practice. To reach this goal the following objectives were formulated:

- To explore motivation as a sub or additional management function of the social work manager.
To identify factors that influence motivation of social workers in the workplace.
To provide recommendations regarding motivational strategies for the social work manager.
To identify and describe motivational guidelines to be applied by the social work manager.

1.3.2 Definitions of concepts and operationalising variables
A comprehensive study was undertaken of the available literature on motivation as management function in Social Work and related fields of human resource management. A number of professional disciplines such as Social Psychology, Business Economics, Business Administration and Human Resource Management have given considerable attention to motivating employees (Baron & Byrne 1997; Cheminais, Bayat, Van der Waldt & Fox 1998; Clarke 1998; Craythorne 1997; Degenaar 1994; Du Plessis 1993; Kolb, Rubin & Osland 1991; Kroon 1995; Luthans 1998; Martin & Pear 1996; Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn 2000; Smit & Cronje 1997; Stander 1996; Steenkamp 1989; Van Dyk 1998; Werner 2001). A limitation was that only a few useful sources in the social work field were available (for example Botha 2000; De Klerk 1999; Kadushin 1992; Weinbach 1994, 1998, 2003).

The researcher made use of the computerised Nexus Database system, available through the Internet and retrieved 200 records of current and completed research projects on motivation in Industrial Psychology, Business Administration, Human Resource Management, Psychology, Education and Educational Science, and Information Science. In the field of Social Work 200 records dealing with motivation (current and completed research projects) were retrieved. South African journals such as “Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk” (for example volumes 2000:36(2); 1999:35(4); 1998:34(1); 1994:30(1)) and “SAM Advanced Management Journal” (for example volume 66 (2) Spring 2001) that contain the most recent information were utilised.

The Cape Technikon Library, Huguenot College Library in Wellington, Waterloo Library in Worcester, Erica Theron Reading Room of the Department of Social Work at the University of Stellenbosch and the Library of the Management School at the Bellville Campus Park were utilised for selecting relevant sources. Specialised literature from abroad, especially the USA, as well as South African literature were explored.

Babbie (2001:52) defines concepts as “… abstract elements representing classes of phenomena
within the field of study”. The following concepts relevant to motivation in the field of social work management were identified:

**Human resources**
According to Swanepoel (Ed), Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (2003:3) personnel or human resources refers to adults engaging in some form of work activity within the context of an organisation in which they are employed. Swanepoel, et al. (2003:33) refer to Stone (2000:5) who states that managers (human resource managers, functionaries or specialists such as social workers) manage people and the management of human resources is primarily a line management or operating management responsibility.

**Human resource management**
Human resource management, according to De Cenzo and Robbins (1999:8) is concerned with the “people” dimension and is considered to be a function of every manager’s job. According to Swanepoel et al. (2003:62) human resource management from a holistic perspective include aspects such as staffing, compensation, training, conditions of work and labour relations.

**Management**
According to Robbins and Coulter (1999:8-9) management is the process of coordinating and integrating work activities so that they are completed efficiently and effectively with and through people.

**Management functions**
Management is an integral part of social work practice. It refers to a specific group of important functions performed by social work managers at all administrative levels (Weinbach, 1998:19). Authors like Cronje et al. (2000:105); De Cenzo and Robbins (1999:5); Kroon (1995:8); Le Roux, Venter, Jansen van Vuren, Jacobs, Labuschagne, Kritzinger, Ferreira, de Beer and Hübner (1996:106) and Smit and Cronje (1997:9) acknowledge planning, organising, leading/activating and controlling as the four fundamental functions of the manager. Operating simultaneously these functions lead to achievement of goals and objectives of the organisation. Coordinating and staffing are also regarded by some authors as basic management functions (De Villiers & Crous, 1998:356; Weinbach, 1998:75).
Motivation
Smit and Cronje (1997:306) state that motivation is derived from the Latin word movere, which means to move. Motivation is commonly defined as “an inner state that energises or moves (hence motivation) and that directs or channels behaviour toward goals”.

For purpose of this study, the researcher identifies and defines the following social work terminology:

• Social worker
Person registered and authorised in accordance with the Social Work Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978) to practice SOCIAL WORK (New SW Dictionary 1995:60). The concept social worker in this study refers to both male and female social workers.

• Social work manager
The social work manager has the legitimate authority for task completion, project results and formal control over group members. The manager’s primary focus and responsibility is to see that the job be completed and/or the work be accomplished (Reddy, 1994:18,19).

• Supervision
Supervision is a process whereby the SUPERVISOR (educated for social work) performs educational, supportive and administrative functions/roles in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of services (Botha, 2000:10,11).

• Supervisor
A “SUPERVISOR” is defined as a “SOCIAL WORKER” to whom authority has been delegated to coordinate, promote and evaluate the professional service rendering of social workers through the process of SUPERVISION” (New SW Dictionary 1995:64).

In this study the following terms will be used interchangeable.

• “Social work manager” and “supervisor”. Social work managers refer to both male and female social workers in a management/supervisory capacity.
• “Management” and “supervision”.
• “Management” and “top management”. Within the context of this study management refers to the top management of DCS.

1.3.3 Formulating research statements

The research statements in this study are generated from the researcher’s interest in motivation as a management function of the social work manager. De Vos (2002:34) refers to Mouton and Marais (1990:4) who state that, research statements are “sentences in which an identifiable epistemic claim is made” (episteme is the Greek word for true knowledge). The following research statements regarding factors that influence the motivation of social workers are formulated for investigation:

- The importance of motivation as management function of the social work manager is very often ignored.
- Factors contributing to the motivation of social workers are not clearly identified.
- The social work manager does not effectively apply motivation as a management function to motivate social workers.
- Employee motivation is not a shared responsibility of the social worker, the social work manager and top management.
- Motivational guidelines as suggested in the literature are not accessible to social work managers and nor are they implemented by them.

As pointed out by Mouton (2001:55) a research design is “… a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research”. The research design is also sometimes called the strategy of investigation to answer research statements. Exploratory research was undertaken as insufficient knowledge of motivation is available (see page 6). Exploratory studies are typically done to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for better understanding, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study and to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study (Babbie, 2001:92). Descriptive research, according to Fouché (2002a:109) presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship and focuses on the “how” and “what” questions. The researcher opted to investigate how motivation as a function of the social work manager is implemented and what is necessary for the social work manager to maintain efficient levels of motivation of social workers (descriptive research). The quantitative-descriptive or survey design that requires a questionnaire was used.
Basic research, according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:153) contribute to the development of human knowledge and understanding of a specific aspect of social reality. Basic research was undertaken whereby the researcher gathered data regarding motivation so as to understand the role of motivator that social work managers’ fulfill. The researcher was interested in motivational guidelines suggested in the literature whereby social work managers can motivate social workers.

1.3.4 Developing a sampling plan

Strydom and Venter (2002:198) refer to Kerlinger (1986) who states that sampling means taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population or universe. Sampling is used for its “feasibility to obtain more accurate information” rather than studying the entire population (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198).

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 164-203) distinguish between two types of sampling methods, namely non-probability sampling (such as purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling) and probability sampling (such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling). The researcher selected cluster sampling that is classified under “probability sampling” (i.e. those methods based on randomisation). Cluster sampling was promptly selected due to the availability of social workers and social work managers employed by one large organisation. According to Fouché and Delport (2002:89) the size and representativeness are the most basic considerations in sampling. Strydom and Venter (2002:203) refer to Seaberg (1988:244) who states that cluster sampling is one in which each person or sampling unit has the same known probability of being selected. Cluster sampling has the advantage of focusing the field study on a specific section of the greater geographical area, and thus saving time and costs.

The target universum of this study were the social workers (production, senior, chief social workers) and social work managers within specific zones/regions that could be easily reached.

Within each geographical zone/region, the prisons where social workers are stationed, were selected. Thirty-five social workers, employed on a permanent as well as a part-time basis, were selected from the Worcester, Dwarsrivier, Warmbokkeveld, Brandvlei, Caledon, Helderstroom, Buffelsjag, Swellendam and Robertson prisons. These social workers, like those employed by government departments, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, are registered
with the South African Council for Social Service Professions, render services to a client system and rely on support and motivation from their incumbents.

1.3.5 Selecting a data-collection method

De Vos and Fouché (1998b:89-90) mention two types of data collection methods. These involve 1) data collection methods relevant to the quantitative approach such as questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales and 2) data collection methods relevant to the qualitative approach such as participant observation, interpretation of documents, focus group interviewing, audio-visual material and in-depth, face-to-face interviewing.

The researcher selected the self-administered questionnaire as the method for collecting data. A questionnaire can be defined as “an instrument specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis”(Babbie, 2001:239). The researcher “… without direct personal contact” distributed the questionnaire by mail and “… collected it once it was filled out” (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 105,106). The mailed questionnaire (see Annexure 5) was accompanied by a covering letter (see Annexure 4a and 4b) that explained the nature of the research (Kumar, 1999:113).

The questionnaire contained clear instructions and introduced the respondents to the purpose of this study as well as the purpose of the questionnaire. The researcher included some contingency questions that were only to be answered by some respondents. Other types of questions included in the questionnaire were completion questions, scaled questions, structured questions such as multiple-choice, fill-in questions, semantic differential questioning, etcetera (Fouché, 1998:162-173). Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were utilised in the research study in order to obtain the necessary information. The researcher also included statements so as to determine the views of respondents (social workers as well as social work managers) regarding motivation. Babbie (2001:240) argues that using both questions and statements in a questionnaire gives the researcher more flexibility in the design of the items and can also make the questionnaire more interesting.

The researcher was able to explore the manner in which the human resource department of DCS functions prior to the main investigation. Through this preliminary explorative study she gained insight and practical knowledge about the prospective research area by studying DCS’s human
resource policy, acts, regulations and information relevant to their human resources (Strydom, 2002a:214).

A measuring instrument should be reliable and valid. Herbert (1990:51) refers to the reliability of good measurement in respect of the stability, dependability and predictability of the tests/methods used, in other words their precision or accuracy. A test is valid when the measuring instrument actually measures the things that it is supposed to measure (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:130). The piloting or pre-testing of the questionnaire was considered essential because of the diversity of the respondents (in terms of language, position and post level). The entire questionnaire was pretested on individuals who are representative of the target population. This pilot study ensured that the researcher could identify deficiencies in the measuring instrument and could increase or decrease the number of questions and statements as required.

1.3.6 Analysing the data

The data was analysed using nominal scales so as to simply classify information into categories or groups. Mouton (2001:108) states that “… analysis involves ‘breaking up’ the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. The aim of the analysis is to understand various constitutive elements of the data through an inspection of the relationship between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data”. Analysis of research data does not in itself provide answers to the research statements. Analysis means categorising, ordering, manipulating and summarising data to obtain answers to research statements. Kerlinger (1986:125-126) as quoted by De Vos, Fouché and Venter (2002:223) and De Vos and Fouché (1998a:203) elaborates further about the necessity of interpreting data.

A researcher who interprets data searches for the meaning and implications thereof. The researcher 1) links the research statements with the data to reach meaningful conclusions and 2) compares results with the demands and expectations of theory (De Vos & Fouché, 1998a:203-204). In this study the researcher organised, summarised and visually displayed the collected data numerically in the form of statistics by means of frequency distribution tables, or graphically in bar graphs, doughnut graphs, histograms and pie charts. Statistics can be descriptive or inferential. Descriptive statistics present data in manageable forms. Inferential statistics assists in drawing conclusions from
observations (Babbie, 2001:435). The researcher made use of descriptive statistics as the method for presenting quantitative descriptions to describe single variables but also to describe the associations that connect one variable to another. Data reduction using partial raw data matrix and measures of association using hypothetical raw data was incorporated in the selected data collection instrument. The data obtained was then processed with the aid of correlation statistics and Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Limitations of this research study are as follows:

- As mentioned before, only a few literature sources in the social work field were useful.
- Although the questionnaire was pre-tested, it was still possible that respondents did not understand and interpret the questions in the way that was intended.
- By using mailed questionnaires the researcher had no control over whether all questions were answered fully and could not probe for further clarification of answers that were vague.
- Using mailed questionnaires enabled respondents to think about their responses but without necessarily taking sufficient time to complete the questionnaire with the result that well thought responses might not have been given.
- In answering questions, social workers and social work managers may have been reluctant to be totally honest, as this may have portrayed them in a poor light.
- Despite assurances of confidentiality, some respondents may have been fearful of being too critical while others might have used the opportunity to protest against certain issues without necessarily giving reasoned comments.
- The target group of respondents may not have been representative of the total population of social workers and social work managers in the DCS, Western Cape, South Africa.
- The target universum is limited to social workers and social work managers of the DCS hence the recommendations are not applicable to all organisations.
- Findings related to the respondents’ data on their experience of motivation, is limited to the DCS but findings on the needs and proposals of social workers and social work managers on the implementation of motivation contributes to the management of human resources.

1.5 CONTENT OF THE STUDY
The research report consists of six chapters.
Chapter one serves as an introduction and highlights the motivation for the study. The research methodology/process is described in detail and includes selecting a problem area, definitions of concepts, formulating research hypotheses, developing a sampling plan, selecting a data-collection method and analysing the data.

Chapter two is comprised of a review of the literature on motivation in the workplace. The following aspects are presented: defining motives and motivation, motivation cycle/process, motivation theories, the strengths and weaknesses of motivation theories and a model of motivation.

Chapter three presents motivation as a human resource function of the social work manager. Motivation as sub or additional management function, motivation as component of human resource maintenance, the responsibility of the social work manager in motivating social workers followed by factors related to organisational structures that influence motivation are all discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four embarks on describing different motivational strategies for social work managers, which contribute to the motivation of social work personnel. Motivational guidelines as suggested in the literature are presented as follows: guidelines for permanent employed social workers, guidelines for part time social workers and guidelines for dealing with unmotivated social workers.

Chapter five gives an exposition of the empirical study. Information on the sample profile, the measurement instrument and its validity and the analysis and interpretation of the data with reference to applicable literature are presented.

Chapter six contains the conclusions and recommendations based on the literature and empirical study. Recommendations are made concerning the motivating role of social work managers in the motivation of social workers.

In the following chapter, a review of the literature on motivation in the workplace is presented.