

SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION: A MODEL FOR SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISORS

BY

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DECLARATION

Supportive social work supervision: A model for social work supervisors is my own work and all sources quoted are duly acknowledged and appear in the bibliography list.

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2019/03/05

Date

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand.”

(Isaiah 41:10)

DEDICATION

To all the children born in rural KwaNdebele, particularly in Madlayedwa, Pieterskraal A:
know that in life, possibilities are infinite.

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To God be the Glory.

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SUMMARY

Social work practice is extremely demanding on the practitioner. Social workers, especially in the public domain, handle high caseloads whilst simultaneously conducting group and community work amidst the demands of administration associated with their jobs. The ever-changing landscapes of social contexts, political contexts, local governments, and health aspects of countries brought forth by globalisation and technological ties exerts increased challenges on social work practice. To deal with these challenges, the profession has commissioned supportive social work supervision to help social workers deal with work-related pressure and stress coupled with their emotional, psychological, and familial problems. Consequently, the study was intended to explore and describe the nature and the extent of supportive supervision amongst social workers and to develop a model for supportive social work supervision.

This study was conducted within the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development. The Mpumalanga Province was well-suited for the study because it offered an opportunity to undertake the study in rural and peri-urban areas, which in turn ensured that the outcomes catered for the needs of social workers in both the rural and urban contexts.

In establishing the nature and the extent of supportive social work supervision, a mixed methods research approach, i.e. the QUAN-qual sequential dominant status-design was adopted. The mixed method approach catered for two categories of participants who are social workers and social work supervisors. To collect quantitative data a self-developed questionnaire was administered to social workers. Within the qualitative section of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with social work supervisors. The data from the social workers was analysed by means of univariate data analysis, while the qualitative data was analysed by integrating Creswell's analytic spiral data analysis process and the process described by Marshall and Rossman, with additional comments by Gibbs as discussed in Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:403). From the findings, it was established that although some social workers are supported, there are pockets of social workers who were not supported. It was also evident in this regard that of those social workers who were supported, the support was inadequate. The supervisors revealed that their most critical challenge was inadequate support for social workers principally because they are over worked. The data captured was subsequently subjected to verification.

Following the establishment of the nature of supportive supervision offered to social workers, the supportive model for use by social work supervisors to assist their social work subordinates

was developed using the intervention design and development (D&D) methodology. Also, throughout the study the following ethical issues were also adhered to: informed consent, violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality, harm to participants, voluntary participation and informed consent.

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ACRONYMS

AU: African Union

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

CHE: Council for Higher Education

DSD: Department of Social Development

ELOs: Exit Level Outcomes

IFSW: International Federation of Social Work

IASSW: International Association of Schools of Social Work

ISDM: Integrated Service Delivery Model

NASW: National Association of Social Work

NQF: National Qualification Framework

NRF: National Research Fund

NPO: Non-profit organisation

OAU: Organisation of African Unity

PHSDSBC: Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council

RSA: Republic of South Africa

SACSSP: South African Council for Social Service Professions

SAQA: South African Qualification Authority

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Historically, supervision has always been an integral element in social work (Kadushin, 1992:32). According to Tsui and Ho (1998:181) “social work supervision is almost as old as social work itself.” Two key factors, the development of social welfare and the professionalization process of social work, have influenced the development of supervision over the past 120 years (Tsui, 1997:191). Scott, Harkness and Poertner (in Gibleman & Schervish, 1997:3) concur that the professionalism of social work was built on the foundation of supervision and that as a result social work has been defined as a profession of and about supervision.

In social work, supervision is a middle-management position. According to Mudau (1990:1) “the supervisor’s chief function is to minimize activity and maximise practice.” The supervisor’s ultimate objective is to deliver to agency clients the best possible service, both qualitatively and quantitatively (Kadushin, 1992:23; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:23). The policy document, “Recruitment and Retention Strategy”, by the Department of Social Development in South Africa adds that the supervisor’s functions are also evaluative, extend over time, and have the simultaneous purpose of enhancing the professional functioning of a social worker through skills transfer, mentoring, and professional support (Department of Social Development, 2007:33). This policy document adds that supervision monitors the quality of professional services offered to service recipients and motivates social workers to achieve their full potential in line with client and organisational goals.

Social work supervision also mirrors the helping relationship. The supervisory relationship, like the helping relationship, is conducted within the dyadic relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee with the most critical element being the confidentiality of the supervisory session (Tsui, 1997:193). Gibleman and Schervish (1997:4) also contend that in supervision the central focus is frequently negotiated between the supervisor and supervisee. Noble and Irwin (2009:346) concur with the view that social work supervision is built on a trusting, caring, confidential, supportive and empathetic experience, which sets the atmosphere for the ‘professional work’ to be undertaken. In tandem, Gibleman and Schervish (1997:4) suggest that supervision may differ based on the agency context, supervisor style, supervisee needs, and the specificity of problems presented by the clients.

Because social work supervision depends on the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, Munson (2002:2) concludes that the actions of a supervisor have a ripple effect for the supervisee, the supervisee's clients, the client's family, and the colleagues of the supervisees. In addition, the current study advances that by default, the aforementioned ripple effect also extends to the management structures of the employing organisations as well as to other stakeholders and role players in the social welfare sector. Consequently, for supervision to be effective, Munson (2002:12) advises that it must be structured, regular, consistent, case-oriented, and evaluated constantly.

Social work supervision is also extremely important in South Africa and in the rest of the world. According to Belardi (2002:40), because of higher demands of quality and efficiency in Germany, the need for supervision has increased tremendously during the last couple of years. In Hong Kong, Tsui (2005:491) established that there was an overall general agreement between supervisors and supervisees regarding the need for, and the overall purpose of supervision. Social work supervision has been recognized as an essential part of the field in China (Hung, Lai Ng & Fung, 2010:1). In South Africa, in February 2012, the National Department of Social Development promulgated the "Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa." The rationale of the supervision framework was derived from the perceived need for effective supervision within the social work profession in order to improve quality social work services offered to service users (Department of Social Development, 2012:12). Later the same year, i.e. in October 2012, the Ministry of Social Development also established the National Social Work Veterans' Forum (NSWVF) aimed at addressing amongst other issues, the need for coaching, mentoring, and the supervision of newly-qualified social workers (Department of Social Development, 2013a). All these efforts illustrate the crucial role played by social work supervision in the process of ensuring efficient social work services to clients and their families.

The question is "why is supervision important to the social work practitioner?" Kadushin and Harkness (2002:20) postulate that it is because its objective is defined by efficient and effective social work services to clients. Tsui (2005:491) adds that it is because social work has a mandate to ensure the professional development and job satisfaction of frontline social workers. Payne (in Noble & Irwin, 2009:375) concurs and points that supervision is undertaken, firstly to ensure that clients are protected; secondly, to provide support for practitioners; thirdly, to ensure that practitioners maintain professional standards and good principles of professional practice and finally, that work expected from the organization is interpreted through a professional lens and delivered by professionally competent workers.

Supervision is instituted very early in the lives of the social work practitioner. In South Africa, social work practitioners are introduced to supervision from their second year of practicum training at the university. O'Donoghue (2002:5), in a conference paper presented to the Aotearoa New Zealand Association for Social Workers held in Christchurch in 2002, reported that social work supervision was still generally being carried out through the supervision of social work students deployed on field placements. Skidmore (1990:205) also noted this trend when he states that, "since formal social work education began at the turn of the nineteenth century, supervision has been a basic component of both the educational process and social work practice."

The practice of supervision in social work has been marked by developments in the last century. O'Donogue (2002:6) terms these developments the "postmodernisms" in the current terrain of social work supervision. The emergence of the postmodernism in the current terrain of social work supervision, according to O'Donogue (2002:6), is particularly obvious in the development of a plurality of forms, modes, kinds, and types of supervision. Longhofer and Floursch (2013:500) also noted the developments, arguing that social work, like sociology, is a "crisis science" brought forth by the history of modernity and that it continues to experience the recurring crisis of modernity.

The traditional functions of social work supervision are administrative, educative, and supportive (Kadushin, 1992:19; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:19; Tsui, 2005:485-486). The administrative function emerged first, and the educational and emotional support soon followed (Tsui, 1997:193). This study thus focuses on the supportive function of social work supervision. The earliest version of supportive supervision in the history of social work dates back to the Charity Organization Societies (COS) Movement, which began in 1878 in Buffalo, USA (Tsui, 1997:193). At that time, supervisors provided emotional support to those visitors (volunteers) who felt frustrated in their work because they did not know how to offer help to the needy (Tsui, 1997:193).

Similarly, to the other two traditional functions of supervision which are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, supportive social work supervision is conducted within the dyadic relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee with the most critical element being the confidentiality of the supervisory session (Tsui, 1997:193). According to Young (in Hoffmann, 1990:218-219), supportive supervision undergirds the process of the other two principal functions of administration and education because it builds differential relationships which allow each individual worker to function well with the supervisor in both the administrative and learning aspects of their shared tasks.

It is thus the view of the researcher that supportive supervision is characterised by therapeutic support. The concept of therapeutic support evolves into the notion of a parallel process whereby a worker's ability to understand and support the client is similar to the supervisor's ability to understand and support the supervisee (Bruce & Austin, 2008:88). There are also themes related to therapeutic support which include (1) the confidentiality of the content of the supervisory session, (2) the importance of self-awareness and self-understanding as a precondition for understanding and helping others, and (3) the supervisor's role in facilitating a worker's ability to handle stressful work situations (Bruce & Austin, 2008:88).

Various authors are in agreement regarding the goals and objectives of supportive supervision. According to Gibleman and Schervish (1997:3), supportive supervision is intended to enhance staff morale, while Hoffmann (1990: 220) adds that its goal is to promote the psychological well-being of the worker. Supportive supervision, according to Newsome and Pillari; Rauktis and Koekse (in Bruce & Austin, 2000:86), has direct and positive association with high-level worker job satisfaction and morale. Coulshed, Mullender, Jones, and Thompson (2006:164) add that supportive supervision may be accomplished by providing emotional support to supervisees, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job. Engelbrecht (2006:259) is also in agreement with this, and states that the support function of supervision is aimed at helping social workers deal with stress and blockages. More practically, Coulshed et al. (2006:161) add that organisations offer supervision services to employees and staff because an organisation's employees are its major assets; this is because the organisation's whole reputation and future success depends on them. Consequently, Hawkins and Shohet (2006:5) warn that supervision is not a straight-forward process, but that it is more complex than working with clients. Hawkins and Shohet (2006:5) further warn that "lack of supervision can contribute to feelings of staleness, rigidity and defensiveness" and that, in extremes, the rigidity and staleness contribute to the syndrome that many writers have termed "burn-out."

From the above discussion, it is evident that supervision is an important component of social work practice. This discussion also demonstrated that at the core of social work supervision is supportive supervision because this component undergirds the processes of the administrative and educative functions of supervision hence the study was initiated. The study focuses on supportive supervision because in a work environment, there are interactions between people, and where people interact there are bound to be emotional encounters, hence Tsui (2008:349) writes, "the supervisory relationship is both personal and professional." The complexity of the supervisory relationship, according to Cousins (2004:183), is a

relationship of unequal power in which the supervisor could be a source of support and growth for the workers or could induce fear and dependence. These complex observations stimulated the seminal ideas of undertaking this study. Against this backdrop, the study investigates the nature of supportive supervision and subsequently constructs a model to assist social workers in their endeavour to support social work practitioners. It is hoped that the outcome of the study could lead to social workers being supported in an enriching manner, a situation, which in turn would also lead to positive service delivery for the social work service users.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Various authors offer similar reasons as to why a research problem should be formulated. According to Creswell (2014:109), a research problem must discuss the issue that leads to a need for a study such as a real life problem that needs to be addressed or it may indicate a deficiency in the literature review. Fouché and Delport (2011:108) add that researchers must explicitly delimit the focus of a study and articulate the specific problem they intend to investigate. Babbie (2011:94) adds that a research problem statement should answer the following questions: what exactly do you want to study? Why is it worth studying? Does the proposed study have practical significance? Does it contribute to the construction of social theories?

Similar to the views of Creswell (2014:109) and Babbie (2011:94), the proposed study emanated from the gap identified by the researcher in South African literature with regard to supportive supervision. Convinced that her interest lies in social work supervision, the researcher conducted an extensive literature review on social work supervision in general, specifically focussed on supportive supervision, reviewing both the international and national sources. It is during this process that the literature gap was identified. The search engines utilized include, amongst others, EBSCOhost, infotrac, google scholar, NRF database, master's dissertations and doctoral theses (ePublications) from various South African Universities including the University of South Africa, University of Pretoria, and the North-West University.

Through the literature search and review, the researcher discovered that most literature on the subject in South Africa is contained in research dissertations and theses. Amongst others, the following were reviewed; "*The effectiveness of social work supervision in Lebowa*" (Legodi,1993); "*Social work services in the Northern Province: A social work guideline*" (Mudau,1996); "*The development of participatory management in supervision: An evaluative*

study” (Booley, 1996); “*Support systems for social work supervisors in the department of welfare*” (Harmse, 1999); “*Multicultural supervision in the workplace: A social work perspective*” (Litheko, 2000); “*Supportive supervision in the far Northern Region of Department of Health and Welfare in the Limpopo Province*” (Malima, 2003). Other dissertations included “*The need for formal training in social work supervision*” (Moss, 2001); “*The educational function of social work supervision in the Department of Health and Welfare in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province*” (Mbau, 2005) “*Contracting in social work supervision*” (Sokhela, 2007); “*The nature of social work supervision in the Sedibeng Region*” (Deonarain, 2012); “*The experiences of social work supervisees in relation to supervision within the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region*” (Mokoka, 2016); and “*The significance of social work supervision in the Department of Health, Western Cape: Social workers’ experiences*” (Silence, 2017).

The researcher also conducted a literature review of scientific journals to identify and scrutinise what has been published regarding social work supervision. The researcher found that journal articles depicting the South African context are also far apart and too few in between. The researcher could only source the following: “*Cultural friendliness as a foundation for the support function in the supervision of social work students in South Africa*” (Engelbrecht, 2006); “*Multicultural aspects of supervision: Considerations for South African supervisors in the helping professions*” (Kagee, 2007); “*Supervision: a force for change? Three stories told*” (Bradley, Engelbrecht & Höjer, 2010); “*A strength perspective on supervision of social workers: An alternative management paradigm within a social development context*” (Engelbrecht, 2010); “*Yesterday, today and tomorrow: is social work supervision in South Africa keeping up?*” (Engelbrecht, 2010); and “*Social work supervision policies and frameworks: Playing notes or making music?*” (Engelbrecht, 2013). With regard to a supervision model, only one journal article could be sourced i.e. “*Operationalizing a competence model of supervision to empower social workers and students in South Africa*” (Engelbrecht, 2004). Furthermore, the researcher could only source one scientific textbook on the subject entitled “*Management and supervision of social workers: issues and challenges within a social development paradigm*” by Engelbrecht (2014).

Through the scientific literature search, the following was discovered: firstly, that there were a lot of scientific studies (journal articles and text books) conducted on the subject ‘social work supervision’; secondly, that, of the available scientific literature, the majority focused on the three primary functions of social work supervision. Thirdly, it was established that the majority of literature available is internationally based and that a paltry few publications specifically

examined the South African context; and lastly, of the available scientific literature on supportive supervision in South Africa, none was focused on formulating a model for social work supervision. In 2002, Botha (quoted by Bradley et al., 2010:780), also found that research on supervision in South Africa was not comprehensive.

In addition to the scientific literature search, the researcher also sought for, and reviewed, South African policies pertaining to social work supervision. The outcome in the search for policies on the subject revealed three policies, i.e. the Norms and Standards for Development of Social Welfare Services (2013); the Policy for Social Service Practitioners (2013) and the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (2012). Similar to the findings established in the scientific literature, the policies give an overview of all three primary functions of social work supervision: the policies did not articulate comprehensively to social workers how they should conduct the functions and none of the information was packaged in a model format. Consequently, the research problem for this study was formulated as follows:

There is lack of scientific literature regarding supportive supervision in South Africa, and of the available literature and policies, none has provided a model for supportive supervision for use by social work supervisors.

1.3. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

When attending profession-specific gatherings, such as meetings, training workshops, conferences, and others, the researcher witnessed, over the course of her professional social work career, social work practitioners utilising such platforms to vent their frustrations with regard to challenges they experience in their different work settings. During these sessions what struck the researcher the most each time was that participants mentioned poor relations between social workers and their supervisors, whilst some social workers reported not being supervised at all. In most cases, supervisors were identified as the major source of problems and/or stress, with the result that most social workers declined to share their frustrations regarding work and personal stress during supervision sessions, fearing victimization and sometimes even being ostracized.

The researcher also took part in these sessions because she could identify with 'burnt-out' colleagues. As a practising social worker, having worked in the non-governmental sector (Child Welfare) as well as in the public sector (hospital-based), the researcher also internalised and refused to share any concerns, frustrations, and dissatisfactions experienced in her personal or work life with supervisors. Ultimately, the researcher was significantly exposed to

educational and administrative supervision. The researcher wondered how supportive supervision would be offered in working environments such as the ones described and also where or to whom social workers could turn for such support.

Over the years, the researcher wondered how many other social workers were in a similar predicament, and she often posed these questions to herself: “Do social workers receive supportive supervision and, if so, how is it conducted? “When is it provided?” “By whom is it provided?” The researcher has also further battled with conceptualizing what supportive supervision consists of, leading to this study. It was thus hoped that the study would contribute to a pool of knowledge regarding supportive supervision so as to advance and aid social work supervisors in their quest to render effective and efficient supportive supervision services.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the most important factors in research, according to Creswell (2009: 206), is to consider whether a theoretical perspective will guide the entire design and whether that theory will be made implicit or explicit. For the purposes of this study, a theoretical baseline was adopted to guide the study and that theoretical framework has been made explicit because the study followed the ecosystems theoretical framework.

The ecosystems approach is composed of general systems theory and the ecological perspective. Through the use of ecological concepts, *“the ecosystems perspective identifies adaptive possibilities between persons and their environments. It attempts to examine the environmental context in which people live, thereby addressing the essential focus of social work practice. It also promotes an empowerment-based social work practice wherein social work practitioners are able to consider actions that will create favourable changes in the client’s social and physical environment in order to enhance their ability to function more effectively”* (DuBois & Miley, 2010:64).

The ecosystems approach also emphasises “the relationship and reciprocal and adaptive transactions amongst ‘organisms’ (i.e. individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations) and between these organisms and their bio-psycho-socio-cultural-economic-political-physical environment” termed the person-in-environment construct (PIE) (Weyers, 2011:20). The resultant PIE construct is thus especially important because of its focus on individuals, their environment, and the transactions (Weyers, 2011:20).

The approach was applicable to the study because it provided a framework within which the researcher was able to investigate and understand supervision, particularly supportive supervision, in the context of social work service delivery. Utilising the approach enabled the researcher to examine and understand the diversity of the phenomenon within an organisation and also how the working environments influence the supervision process. The approach also became an overarching lens that influenced the type of questions asked, who participated in the study, how data was collected and the conclusions made in the study as suggested by Creswell (2009:206). Having the above knowledge in mind further assisted the researcher in ensuring that, when she formulated the data collection instruments and when she analysed data, the different subsystems and the environment in which social workers worked were considered.

Consequently, similar to the ecological component of the approach, this study also focused on the person-in-environment (PIE), i.e. the study was conducted with social work practitioners (persons) and social work supervisors (persons) in their work environment (i.e. within the Department of Social Development [DSD] in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The study explored their experiences regarding the phenomenon under study. With this approach in mind, the study submits that the social work profession is, in itself, a system that exists amongst other systems within the social welfare sector, i.e. the sector includes other fraternities such as health care, the education sector, and the economic sector. The study also recognises that social workers are located in various settings within the welfare sector. In addition, the study established that the social work profession as a system consists of various subsystems which include the different levels of practice and that there are other role players working alongside social workers, such as social auxiliary workers and child and/or youth care workers. As the researcher utilised this theory, she also began to understand that the different subsystems of social work as specified are interlinked. Secondly, the study admits that the subsystems, in one way or another, always interact together in the supportive supervision endeavour.

The researcher further developed a deeper understanding of supportive social work supervision as a subsystem of social work supervision. The dimensions of supportive supervision, its principles and the qualities needed from a supportive supervisor are some of the components of supportive supervision clarified in this study. Furthermore, the researcher examined the relationship between supervisors and supervisees using the ecosystems approach. Through the examination of the relationship, the study established that the provision of supportive supervision is influenced to a large extent by the actions of supervisors and supervisees alike and that the supervisor-supervisee relationship is not a linear process but a

complex one, which can only be untangled by the individuals involved. Lastly, in developing the “supportive supervision model” the researcher formulated it from the frame of reference of the ecosystems approach.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, RESEARCH GOALS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section presents the research questions, goals, and objectives of the study.

1.5.1 Research questions

Before one can conduct a research study, one must clarify the direction of the study, which can be refined in the form of a research question (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:74). According to Grinnell, Williams and Unrau (2011:28), a good research question must be relevant, researchable, feasible, and ethical. Grinnell et al. (2011:28) also contend that a relevant research question to social workers is one whose answers have an impact on policies, theories, and practices related to the profession. With the preceding information in mind and against the preceding literature review on the subject, the researcher had two questions she needed to answer. Consequently, the study was aimed at answering the following research questions:

- What is the nature of supportive supervision provided to social workers within the Department of Social Development in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa?
- What needs to be contained in a supportive supervision model for social work supervisors?

1.5.2. Research goals

An important step in developing a research strategy involves deciding on the focus of the research. This often takes the shape of a statement of purpose (Vithal & Johnson in Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007:25). The terms “goal”, “purpose”, and “aim”, as was the case in this study, are often used interchangeably and the meaning of the terms implies the broader, more abstract, conception of the end towards which effort is directed (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94). Owing to the research questions set in this study, the research objectives set are to:

- Develop an in-depth understanding of the nature of supportive supervision provided to social workers employed by the Department of Social Development in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa; and
- Develop a model for supportive social work supervision.

1.5.3 Research objectives

Research objectives “denotes the steps one has to take, one by one, realistically at grass-roots level, within a certain time span, in order to attain the goal” (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94). To ensure that the aforementioned goals were achieved, the following objectives were subsequently constructed and undertaken:

- To theoretically conceptualize the phenomenon of supportive supervision in social work;
- To explore empirically the nature of supportive supervision provided to social workers within Mpumalanga Province;
- To describe the nature of supportive supervision provided by social work supervisors within the Mpumalanga Province;
- To develop a model for supportive social work supervision based on the findings obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data, and
- To draw conclusions regarding the nature of supportive supervision and to make recommendations to improve practice, policies and for future research.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Various authors provide descriptions of the concept ‘ethics’. Yegedis and Weinbach (2009:30) state that the term ‘ethics’ is derived from the Greek word *ethos* (which comes closest to the English word *character*) and that it refers to principles within a society that reflect what is viewed as right or wrong behaviour. Rubin and Babbie (2010:256) associate ‘ethics’ with morality, and also argue that it deals with matters of right or wrong. Strydom (2011:114) provides a rather comprehensive description of research ethics: he refers to ethics as a set of moral principles suggested by an individual or group, which are subsequently widely accepted, and which offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects, respondents, employers, other researchers, assistants, and students. Owing to the advice offered by these scholars, ethical issues were seriously considered and adhered to in this study.

To ensure that the study was ethical, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance to conduct the study from the Social Work Departmental Research and Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (Unisa) (Addendum A). The process of obtaining the ethical clearance certificate commenced by compiling a research proposal. The research proposal specified the reasons why the study was important in social work, the research methodology followed in conducting the study and also highlighted the contribution the study makes to the profession as a whole, as well as highlighting how the different ethical aspects were adhered to.

It was indicated in the proposal that the study was conducted within the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development. Consequently, the researcher also needed permission to conduct the study from the said department. Likewise, she also approached the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development and was subsequently granted permission to conduct the study (Addendum B).

Over and above obtaining ethical clearance certificate to conduct the study, it was also critical in this study to ensure that when data is collected from study subjects, the researcher considers and abides by the research ethical standards. The ethical standards served as a guideline upon which each researcher evaluated her own conduct as advised by Strydom (2011:114). Because the aim of the study was two-fold, the researcher was also obliged to make sure that the ethical standards considered covered the first and the second aims of the study. For the purpose of this study, the first such aspect was to make sure that she obtained informed consent to participate in the study from each and every study subject.

1.6.1 Voluntary participation and informed consent

A major tenet of research is that participation must be voluntary, i.e. no one should be coerced to participate in a study. Those participating in a research effort should decide freely to do so (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:257; Royse, 2004:52). This requires that study subjects be made aware that they are participating in a study, be informed of all the consequences of the study, and their consent to participate must be obtained in writing (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:257).

The researcher upheld this ethical aspect. The researcher compiled two informed consent forms connected to the quantitative and the qualitative nature of the study. The informed consent forms were intended to give the participants a concise and yet comprehensive information on what the study entailed. Some of the information that was articulated in the informed consent forms included the purpose of the study, the expected duration of the study,

the procedure followed, the use of an audio recorder, possible harm to study subjects and the benefits for participating in the study. The informed consent forms were written in English because all the participants were at home with the language, as they were all qualified social workers. In the quantitative component of the study, all the respondents received the informed consent form and were given time to go through it individually and thereafter the researcher clarified any concerns they had in a group context, before the data collection session commenced. This was also the case with the individual interviews for the qualitative part of the study; each participant was given the form to read through and to ask questions, which were clarified accordingly. All the participants in the study signed the informed consent form before data collection commenced. To ensure voluntary participation in the study, the right to withdraw from the study was stressed in the informed consent forms. The researcher also communicated the right to withdraw from the study at any time participants felt unable to continue. The informed consent forms for the two categories of the sample are attached as Addendum C and D respectively in this report.

As indicated, one critical issue addressed in the informed consent form was possible harm that may be incurred by participating in the study.

1.6.2 Harm to participants

In social work research, participants may be harmed psychologically in the course of a study and the researcher must be aware of the subtle dangers and guard against them (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:258; Babbie, 2008:68). Over and above the psychological risks, Royse (2010:54) adds that other types of risks that may result from social work research may include physical, legal, and economic risks. Royse (2010:54) adds that physical injury may occur, for example, if questionnaires were mailed to the homes of women who had surreptitiously attended a support group for battered spouses and their violent partners were to discover this; legal risks are those associated with illegal behaviour and also he argues that the onus is always on the researcher to report illegal activities, such as child abuse reported by participants and that economic risks may result if subjects reveal sensitive matters or criticize their supervisors/bread winners (Royse, 2010:54).

In this study, it was anticipated that the risks that participants were likely to encounter included psychological and economic risks. It was anticipated that psychological risks could occur in the sense that the participants, especially during interviews, could share information that may evoke emotional distress. To ensure that psychological harm did not occur, the participants were comprehensively briefed about the study during the discussion of the informed consent

form. The participants were also involved in debriefing after data collection. In debriefing the participants, as emphasized by Babbie (2010:73), the researcher enquired how they felt about the discussion. No participants exhibited any emotionally charged responses to data collection. However, had there been someone who might have required further counselling, the researcher would have referred the individual to the Employee Wellness Programme of the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development with whom verbal arrangements were made for this purpose. The researcher had also anticipated that there could have been a possibility that respondents could have refused to be referred to the arranged service and in that case, participants would have been given leeway to consult a practitioner of their choice provided the researcher liaised with the identified practitioner and referred the participant accordingly.

It was anticipated in the study that economic risks may also result whereby the jobs of research participants could have been threatened if, for instance, some participants, especially during group briefing and debriefing, criticized their employers and the employers accidentally heard of the criticism through their counterparts (i.e. respondents in the groups who did not criticise the employers). To guard against this, the researcher communicated the envisaged economic risks and warned the respondents against criticising their supervisors, managers and the organisation at large. To further minimise economic harm to the participants, the managers of prospective respondents were all informed about the study prior to data collection

1.6.3 Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality

Confidentiality is considered one of the cornerstones of ethical research (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011:28), and it is closely linked to anonymity and privacy. Confidentiality means that the information provided by the participant is used anonymously (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011:28). With regard to confidentiality, Rubin and Babbie (2010:259) state that the researcher is able to identify a given person's response but never publicly divulge whose responses in the study. Anonymity disallows the identification of participants by name, organization, position, or any other identifying factors (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011:29). According to Rubin and Babbie (2010:259) and Babbie (2010:69), participants may be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot link a given response with a given participant. Strydom (2011:119) agrees with the preceding authors and offers the following summary: "Privacy implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner and that information given anonymously ensures the privacy of subjects."

In this study, the aspects of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were also addressed. During the discussion of the informed consent form with all participants an assurance was given that during data transcriptions, data analysis and the production of the research thesis their identity would not be divulged, i.e. they would not be identified by name, position, or any other identifiable aspect. Further, the anonymity of participants has been ensured in that symbols are used in the study to refer to the interviewed participants. It was also clearly articulated in the informed consent form that the information participants shared would be handled only by the researcher and her research supervisor.

Another critical effort made by the researcher in ensuring the anonymity of participants who participated in the qualitative study is that, unlike in the presentation of the quantitative data, the DSD sub-district offices involved in the interviews has been omitted from the report. This is because there are not a lot of social work supervisors per district in the province and articulating the offices would have led to their identification thus comprising their anonymity.

Furthermore, part of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of respondents and participants also involved keeping the information (i.e. raw data) shared in a secure location (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011:29) and a detailed discussion of management of information follows next.

1.6.4 Management of information

This ethical aspect requires researchers to state how and where the data will be kept and who will have access to it (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011:29). Bouma and Ling (2004:194) concur with this, because, according to them, researchers must ensure that the personal information of participants is protected by reasonable security to prevent unauthorized access.

In the study, the participants were made aware of the fact that the information that they shared would be kept for 5 years before it could be destroyed as per institutional (Unisa) guidelines. The participants were also made aware of the fact that the information that they shared would be kept in two formats, i.e. electronically and in paper format. In keeping with this ethical aspect, the study subjects have been assured that the electronic data would be encrypted with passwords as advised by van de Sande and Schwartz (2011:29), and this was done throughout the whole study process. The study subjects have also been assured that the printed transcriptions, their informed consent forms, and the audio-recording would be kept in a safe and lockable cabinet. Because the informed consent forms contained identifying particulars of study subjects, they were also assured that the informed consent forms will be kept separate from the transcriptions.

1.6.5 Action and competence of the researcher

Researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (Walliman in Strydom, 2011:123). According to the author, this factor is of paramount importance because the entire research project must run its course in an ethically correct manner. The researcher, as a social worker, has been guided by the code of ethics of the profession and has also been guided by the said research ethics when conducting the study. The researcher's competency is also backed by the fact that she has successfully completed a master's degree wherein she received theoretical training on research methodology and also successfully completed a mini dissertation. This study was also conducted under the guidance of a supervisor, ensuring that the study subjects are protected at all times.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

For the purpose of this study, the following terminologies are regarded as key concepts and are described:

Supervision

The term refers to a process whereby a supervisor performs educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote the efficient and professional rendering of services (Pierson & Thomas, 2010: 64). Hawkins and Shoheit (2012:60) define supervision as "a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor attends to their clients and themselves and by so doing, improve the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develop themselves, their practice, and the wider profession". From the preceding sources, the following description of supervision is offered for this study: Supervision is a process whereby a supervisor renders educational, supportive, and administrative supervision to a supervisee in an effort to empower the supervisee to provide effective and efficient services to clients while caring for their own well-being in the process.

Supportive supervision

The goal of supportive supervision is to promote the psychological well-being of supervisees (Hoffmann, 1990:220); it is also to enhance staff morale (Gibleman & Schervish, 1997:3) by providing emotional support, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job (Coulshed et al., 2006:164). Supportive supervision in this study is considered to be a supervision method

used by supervisors to provide bio-psycho-social-cultural-economic-political-religious-familial support to supervisees.

Supervisor

A supervisor is considered to be 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 (The New Dictionary of Social Work, 2005:64). Kadushin, Berger, Gilbert and Aubin (2009:180) define the term in a similar manner, that a supervisor is an agency manager who has been delegated authority to maintain the job performance of supervisees. In this study, a supervisor is an individual who holds a middle management position tasked with overseeing the job performance of a supervisee through the planning, organising, coordination, leading, controlling, delegation, coaching and mentoring of supervisees.

A model

Dechert, Galt and mith (in Tsui, 2005:17) define a model as a simplified picture that acts as an idea for understanding reality. Gomm (2009:206) defines a model as a simplified representation of some phenomenon. In the Oxford Dictionary the term is described as (i) a particular design or type of product, (ii) a simple description of a system used for explaining how something works or calculating what might happen, and (iii) that which can be copied by other people (Hornby, Wehmeier, & Ashby, 2000:755). The term 'model' in this study is described as a simplified schematic representation of a phenomenon and the explanation of the processes to be followed when utilising the schema.

Social work

The primary mission of social work is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and impoverished (SACSSP, [Sa]:1). According to the International Federation of Social Work (2014), social work is "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures in addressing life challenges and enhancing wellbeing". The latter description of the term social work was adopted in this study.

Social worker

A social worker is defined by Ambrosino, Heffernan, Shuttleworth and Ambrosino (2012:483) as a member of a social work profession who works with individuals, families, groups, organisations, communities, or societies to improve social functioning. The Department of Social Development (2013b:13) defines a social worker as a person registered or deemed to be registered as a social worker in terms of the Social Service Profession Act, Act 110 of 1978. A social worker in this study is regarded as an individual who holds a social work qualification, registered as a social worker in terms of the Social Service Profession Act, Act 110 of 1978 and who is employed in a social work post where she/he works with individuals, families, groups, organisations, communities, and societies to improve their social functioning.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This research report is divided into eight (8) chapters. The chapters are constituted as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem formulation

This chapter contains the general introduction of the study. It also articulates the problem formulation; rationale for the study; research questions, goals and objectives of the study; theoretical framework of the study as well as the ethical considerations and clarification of key concepts used in the study. The limitations of the study are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Theoretical overview of social work supervision with special reference to supportive supervision

In this chapter, the phenomenon of supportive supervision is expounded globally and nationally.

Chapter 3: Regulatory frameworks governing social work supervision

This chapter highlights the international, i.e. the United Nations (UN) declarations, conventions, covenants and treaties; the regional, i.e. the African Union (AU) declarations, conventions, covenants, and treaties as well as the South African legal frameworks, which have an impact on social work supervision in general and supportive supervision specifically.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

In chapter 4 the detailed research methodological procedures followed in the study are described. The discussion includes, amongst others procedures, the research approach adopted in the study; the research design used, the population and sampling issues are

delineated and the data collection, analysis and verification procedures employed are discussed.

Chapter 5: Quantitative data analysis and results

In this chapter, the quantitative data collected from the respondents is analysed and the results thereof are presented accordingly.

Chapter 6: Qualitative Data presentation, analyses and interpretation

In this chapter, the qualitative data collected from participants is presented, analysed and the findings are presented in words.

Chapter 7: The social work supportive supervision model

This chapter explicates existing models and programmes regarding supportive social work supervision, globally as well as in South Africa. Following that, the newly developed supportive supervision model is presented including guidelines on how to use the model.

Chapter 8: The summary, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter collates, corroborates, interrogates, and contrasts the quantitative results and the qualitative findings where possible and then highlights the conclusions reached and presents recommendations for the improvement of social work practice, recommendations for improvement of policies and for future research.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As indicated by Fouché and Delport (2011:111) potential limitations are often numerous even in a carefully planned research study. This study was no exception, numerous limitations cropped up in the study and included the following:

The study was primarily intended to be focused solely on supportive social work supervision. Upon conducting extensive literature review on the topic, the researcher discovered that there was minimal scientific literature that encapsulates solely what supportive social work supervision entailed and how it should be rendered. Consequently, the study had to borrow from generic social work supervision literature to coin all that, which encapsulates supportive social work supervision. In the same token, to avoid using a lot of secondary sources, the researcher made use of primary sources to encapsulate what supportive supervision entails and by so doing meant that she quoted references which were older than 10 years. For

instance, during literature review, to appropriately trace the development of social work supervision, the researcher needed to use dated sources.

Similar to the above, it was a challenge in this study to converse about the legal framework, which regulates supportive social work supervision. The South African legal frameworks give an overview of the frameworks applicable to generic social work supervision and there were also minimal accounts on how UN and AU treaties and conventions affect social work supervision in general and supportive supervision specifically.

With regard to preparation for the study, the researcher had indicated in the proposal of the study that she would embark on the direct recruitment of social work practitioners and supervisors for inclusion in the quantitative and qualitative studies respectively. The researcher envisaged that she would hold information sessions in all the sampled DSD offices. However, due to the number of DSD sites, which were involved in the study, the number of prospective respondents and due to logistical difficulties the planned direct recruitment could not be feasible. Instead, the researcher presented the study at the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development Supervisors Forum meeting. During the presentation, the supervisors were recruited for the qualitative leg of the study and simultaneously they were requested to sell the study to social workers in their respective offices. This paved the way for the researcher to recruit respondents from these offices.

In the proposal, the researcher had planned to analyse the quantitative data by using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Scientists (IBM SPSS). Using the software thus meant that the quantitative data collection instrument, i.e. the questionnaire, needed to be also constructed from the same statistical software. Because the researcher has no background or training in the software, she thought that she would procure the services of a statistician to assist with both the development of the questionnaire and the subsequent analysis. Unfortunately, because the researcher would have used bursary funds to remunerate the statistician, the bureaucratic red tape within the institution in procuring the said services frustrated the researcher in that she never understood exactly how to procure the services and when consulting officials for assistance some did not get back to her. This went on for months, leading to the delay. Subsequently, due to time constraints because a PhD study has to be completed within a specified time, the researcher abandoned the plan and constructed and analysed the questionnaire herself.

During the proposal stage of the study, the researcher had indicated that one of her sampling criteria was that "the social work supervisors who would participate in the study should have

professional experience of five years in providing supervision". During interviews, the researcher deviated from this specific criterion. This is because the researcher did not have the luxury of hand picking the supervisors but included all those who were willing to take part in the study, irrespective of their years of experience. This allowed the researcher to obtain information from those experienced and inexperienced supervisors, which could also be seen as an advantage.

In the proposal the researcher planned to use the guidelines for sampling as articulated by Stoker (in Strydom, 2011:225) to determine the number of respondents to be included in the quantitative leg of the study. According to Stoker's model if for instance the number of social workers employed by DSD Mpumalanga was sitting at 321 in 2015 then the quantitative sample of this study should have been 26% of the total prospective respondents, which would have translated to 83 social workers. After the difficulties she experienced during her attempts of recruiting social workers the researcher quickly realised that she might struggle to meet the 83 social work mark. Consequently, the researcher abandoned Stoker's guidelines and used the steps in drawing a random sample as articulated by Strydom (2011:226-228). A comprehensive discussion on how Strydom's guidelines were used is presented in chapter 4 of this research thesis.

It is also critical to note herein that during the quantitative data collection in some occasions, although very few, some respondents did not answer some of the questions that were contained in the questionnaire. The respondents had between an hour and an hour and a half for the whole process and because the questionnaire was administered during working hours it meant that after completing the questionnaire social workers needed to get back to work. The time constraint therefore meant that there were times that the researcher could not peruse each and every completed questionnaire in the presence of the respondent hence the slip up.

Lastly, in the proposal the researcher had intended to subject the constructed model for supportive social work supervision to pilot testing. At the time, the researcher could not foresee possible danger in pilot testing the model. After the construction of the model was completed the researcher made arrangements to have the model pilot tested. The plan was to present the model at one of the Mpumalanga DSD Supervisors' Sub-District Forum Meetings to recruit supervisors for participation in the pilot testing. However, soon thereafter, the supervisor alerted the researcher of the possible danger in pilot testing the model because it would have meant that the model would have been disseminated, making it difficult for the researcher to safe guard her intellectual property. This is because even though confidentiality would have been expressed and the supervisors would have been expected to sign an informed consent

form, the supervisor would not have been able to control its disseminations to any other persons, organisations and business entities, which may have led to the possibility of it being stolen, making it difficult if not impossible for the university to claim intellectual property on it. As such a decision was made that pilot testing the model should constitute a post-doctoral research study, which the researcher plans to undertake.

The following chapter provides a comprehensive theoretical discussion of supportive social work supervision.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Social work practice is very demanding on the practitioner. Social workers, especially in the public domain, handle very high caseloads whilst simultaneously conducting group work and community work amidst the demands of administration associated with their jobs. The ever-changing landscapes of social contexts, political contexts, local governments, and health aspects of countries brought forth by globalisation and technological ties exerts increased challenges on social work practice. Authors such as Ingersoll-Dayton and Jayarante (1996); Dominelli (2010); and Garret (2012), have documented the impact of globalization on the social work profession. They report, amongst other views, that the increasing complexity of the world came with social ills not known to traditional social work. Gibleman and Schervish (1997); Hensely (2002); and Sewpaul and Hölscher (2004), recognised as early as 1997 that the worldwide global economic market model was strained, resulting in the profession being grossly underfunded and understaffed. As a result, Hawkins and Shoet (2006: ix-x) state that the social work profession faces increased demands made on the workers often with shrinking resources. According to Hughes and Pengelly (1997:6) the situation further creates challenges in managing the tension between needs and resources, commodities which are at the heart of the provisioning of health and welfare services.

Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008:288) concur. In their comparative study on the professional features of social work in ten countries found that in the majority of countries surveyed social work salaries were lower than salaries in other helping professions. Amongst other reasons the low salaries were attributed to poor social work self-advocacy; the fact that most social workers are employed in the public sector and the lack of state-salary directives for social workers (2008:288). NG and Sim (2012:280) also emphasises the fact that jobs in social services are marked with low remuneration and high uncertainty.

In recent times the fiscal restraints were further exacerbated following the 2007 economic recession that plunged the world into an economic meltdown and the social welfare sector, with the social work profession at the core, felt the greatest plunge. As a result, the whole welfare sector, including social work, has had to adopt, often to survive, the business philosophies of 'value for money', and concerns for budgets and 'bottom lines', where private organizations and out-sourcing and employer-driven competencies have become the new foci

for service delivery rather than social justice priorities (Noble & Irwin, 2009:345). Welfare organisations have followed suit; they search for ways to cut costs while workloads and clients increase (Munson, 2002:81). According to NG and Sim (2012:280) the situation is further been worsened by the fact that nonprofit organizations are dependent on donor or government funding, with funding often based on goodwill or a particular program structure and that the srisk of funding being cut have sky rocketed decreasing resources for payroll .

Over and above managing the 'business component' of the organization, practitioners must also manage the "emotional dimensions of their work and make judgments and decisions, often in light of conflicting information and beliefs (Wonnacott, 2012:13). Consequently, social work practitioners worldwide are stressed out (Munson, 2002:81). The stressed out practitioner subsequently cannot effectively counsel the client who is experiencing emotional turmoil (Munson, 2002:81). In an open letter she wrote to theformer Minister of the Department of Social Development in South Afirca, Nokuthula Dlamini reported that she and other social workers are subjected to depression and anxiety due to financial distress and that they are admitted to hospitals for metal distress due to their inability to find balance and to afford basic day to day living (Dlamini, 2017).

Hawkins and Shohet (2012:7) warn that greater demands, higher expectations of quality services, fewer resources and the greater disruptions (i.e. the growing world population, migration, poverty and the ecological crisis) are four incontrovertible forces that are and will continue to shape the context of the helping professions for decades to come. The researcher is convinced that wars, whether civil or economic and globalization need to be added onto the list because they too are incontrovertible forces, which will continue to shape the context of the helping professions, now and in the future.

To help ease the pressure, the profession has, over decades, recommended the provision of supervision services because "*supervision is seen as a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves and the wider systematic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develop themselves, their practice and the wider profession*" (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:5).

Traditionally there are three major components of social work supervision i.e. educational, administrative and supportive components. The focus of this study, as indicated in its title, is on the supportive component because supportive supervision is aimed at helping social

workers deal with stress and blockages (Engelbrecht, (2006:259). And for supervision to be effective, Wonnacott (2012:9) states that it must be regular, of high quality and well organised.

There is a lack of literature based solely on supportive supervision. As a result this chapter commences with a comprehensive yet concise discussion of the historical development of social work supervision, followed by a discussion of the functions of supervision, the objectives of supervision and the significance of supervision. The status quo of social work supervision in South Africa is also unravelled in the comprehensive discussion of the archaeological makeup of supportive social work supervision.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

The historical developments of social work supervision are discussed here to facilitate comprehensive understanding of supervision in social work and to clarify the position of supportive supervision in social work. The discussion commences with international developments, followed by developments in South Africa. As alluded to in the discussion of the limitations of this study, it was imperative to use dated sources to appropriately trace the development of social work supervision.

2.2.1 The international developments

It is not known for certain where, when, or how the traditional model of supervision originated (Munson, 2002:50). The development of social work supervision is however traceable back to the Charity Organisation Society (COS) movement of the nineteenth century (Kadushin, 1976:4; Munson, 1979:2; Leiby, 1984:524; Rabinowitz: 1987:80; Tsui, 1997:192; Tsui, 2005:1; Bruce & Austin, 2009:87; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:1). Authors differ in the views of where the COS movement began. According to Kadushin (1976:4; 1985:3) the COS movement started in Buffalo, New York in 1878. Rabinowitz (1987:80); Bradley, Engelbrecht and Höjer (2010:778), however, contend that the movement was founded when the London Charity Organisation Society (COS) was established in 1869 and that by 1877 the movement had spread to the United States of America establishing itself in Buffalo. Leiby (1984:524-525) as well as White and Winstanley (2014:7) confirm that Charity Organization Society was an enthusiasm in England and the United States in the years 1870 to 1900.

The COS movement was established to consolidate the existing relief organisations and was staffed by “friendly visitors”, volunteers who were assigned to families to offer personal support and influence behaviour in a socially acceptable way (Kadushin, 1976:5). The volunteers were

directed by one secretary called an agent (Kadushin, 1985:4; Rabinowitz, 1987:81). The COS movement was also established to address the negative aspects of the economic depression of the 1930s and the devastating effects of World War II. It was guided by a philosophy known as “scientific charity” grounded in respect for human nature that strove to remove social and economic distress and inaugurate a science taught to philanthropic agents (Rabinowitz, 1987:80-83).

Originally, the term supervision applied to the inspection and review of programmes and institutions rather than overseeing the work of individual workers within programmes (Munson, 1979:2; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:1). Initially, the paid agents were responsible for a sizeable number of visitors and they shared the supervision responsibility with the district committee, which was the local executive committee of the COS district office (Munson, 1979:2; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:2). This supervision was carried out as follows: “when a family requested help, the initial study was done by the agent, who then reported the findings at a weekly district committee conference; the committee discussed the case and decided its disposition” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:2).

Responsibility for decision-making on cases moved gradually from the committee to the paid agents. This saw the development of individual supervision, when it became increasingly clear that effective case treatment could only be achieved by full-time workers through systematic education, experience and discipline (Munson, 1979:2). The agents then took on the role of supervisor. The volunteers and the paid workers who subsequently replaced them discussed cases with the agent-supervisor who was responsible for the decision and its subsequent implementation by the volunteers (Kadushin, 1976:6). The agent supervisor became an active channel of communication and needed to represent the committee faithfully to the visitors and the visitors faithfully to the committee (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:2).

The agents provided a dependable administrative point of contact for the volunteer visitor (Kadushin, 1976:6; 1985:5). The agents were charged with the responsibility of investigating and the preparation of cases for the volunteer visitors and advising the visitors in their work (Kadushin, 1976:6-7; 1985:5). This meant that a large part of the agent’s day consisted of consultation with the volunteer visitors hence “the paid agents became a model for casework practice” (Munson, 2002:51).

In their work, the visitors needed administrative direction and training from the agent supervisor. Over and above the fact that the nature of the work that the visitors undertook was emotionally draining, they also needed support from the agent supervisor on how to deal with

the depressing feeling in their work. These pressures made it difficult to recruit and easy to lose the visitors. Initially, group meetings of visitors were frequently the context for instructions and individual supervision; later the use of visitor's case records as the text for training gained momentum and was employed more and more frequently (Kadushin, 1985:7).

While the paid agent acted as a supervisor to the volunteer visitor, the paid agent supervisor was supervised by the district committee, which had ultimate authority over cases (Kadushin, 1985:7). The paid agent supervisor was then in a middle management position, as is true of supervisors today.

Supervision had a change in orientation over time. Middlemen and Rhodes (1985:6) identified coaching, counselling and conferee as descriptors characteristic of the changing orientations of supervisors. According to these authors, the *coach* was a master of specific tasks to be accomplished who closely monitored the performance of tasks through a master-novice relationship between supervisor and supervisee; the *counsellor* was a master of personality dynamics, self-awareness, and the elements of a relationship that were needed for the process of giving and receiving help; while the *conferee* was regarded as a collaborator, a consultant, a coordinator, a delegator, and a negotiator who mastered many roles including those of an enabler, planner, advocate, mediator and broker. The conferee contextualised his roles; he used roles appropriate for a specific occasion with the supervisee.

From the year 1887 a body of practice wisdom was developed, codified and made explicit for communication through published channels made up of the following: the 1892 Annual Report of the Charity Organisation Society of Baltimore; the first National Conference of Charities and Corrections held in Chicago in 1879; the Wisconsin State Conference of Charities and Corrections in 1882; Mary Richmond, then General Secretary of the COS of Baltimore's publication "*Friendly Visiting among the Poor: A Handbook for Charity Workers*" in 1899 and "*The Practice of Charity*" in 1901 by Edward Devine, General Secretary of the New York COS (Kadushin, 1985:8-10). The first social work text that used the word supervision in the title – "*Supervision and Education in Charity*" by Jeffrey R Bracket (1903) - was published and was concerned with the supervision of welfare agencies and institutions by public boards and commissions (Kadushin, 1976:4; 1985:3; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:1).

Around the development of the knowledge base the need for trained and skilled workers was realised hence the views by Rabinowitz (1987:81) that acknowledged "the next phase in the history of supervision and the beginning of student supervision [had begun]." According to Kadushin (1985:10) this knowledge base made it possible to offer courses on social work in

colleges and universities under the disciplines of sociology and economics. Social work was at the time thought to be applied sociology. Professional social work training began in June 1898 with a six-week summer training programme that was offered to 27 students by the New York Charity Organization Society (Kadushin, 1985:11). Classroom instruction was initially considered supplementary to rounding out of agency-based learning by doing (Hollis & Taylor cited by Munson, 2002:52). In 1904, the New York School of Philanthropy was formed as a one-year expanded version of the New York Summer Course (Rabinowitz, 1987:81). By 1910, five schools of social work had been established in the United States (Kadushin, 1985:11) and students were given formal instruction and a course in field work under individual supervision (Rabinowitz, 1987:81).

A short course in supervision was offered for the first time in 1911 under the aegis of the Charity Organisation Department of the Russell Sage Foundation (Kadushin, 1985:12). Some schools of social work used psychological theory in training caseworkers and supervisors (Munson, 1979:3). By 1917, supervision had evolved and crucially inserted itself as part of social work practice (Rabinowitz, 1987:82).

The 1980s saw the growth of managerialism with its emphasis on accountability and performance management. This managerialism signalled a shift in the style of social work supervision to one of ensuring compliance, practice audit and task completion (Wonnacott, 2012:16). Middleman and Rhodes (1985:2) contend that supervision in the 1980s became more consultative and that in some organizations the very job title had been replaced by the more auspicious manager or director.

From the preceding discussion, it could therefore be concluded that it was indeed the development of social welfare and the professionalization process of social work that influenced the development of social work supervision over the last 120 years as articulated by Tsui (1997:191). The discussion on the development of social work supervision in South Africa follows next.

2.2.2 Developments in South Africa

It is again not known for certain where, when, or how the traditional model of social work supervision originated in South Africa. Owing to the absence of local empirical research dating back to 1800 and 1900 and a conceptual framework on the topic early scholars such as Hoffman (1987) and Botha (2002) trace the development of social work supervision in South Africa to the COS movement of Europe and North America (Engelbrecht, 2014:125-126).

Likewise, Engelbrecht (2010:326) traces the theoretical basis of social work supervision in South Africa to the pioneering works of legendary scholars such as Kadushin (1976), and Middleman and Rhodes (1985).

The supervision of social workers in South Africa grew around the sixties within both governmental and non-governmental sectors. During this period, the country's welfare system was divided into seven regions and each region functioned under the supervision of an experienced social worker or welfare officer (Du Plessis in Bopape, 1968:42). It is interesting to record that some of the welfare officers were not qualified social workers and the author unfortunately does not describe reasons they were assigned this role.

During the period 1965 and 1969, Bopape conducted observational visits to 10 municipalities that rendered social services to black people. All the municipalities had qualified social workers on their staff offering social work supervision (Bopape, 1968:43). The content of staff supervision included: screening cases, correct use of community resources, correct recording and allocation of cases, consultation and case discussions (Bopape, 1968:43). Bopape also visited 37 private welfare agencies but could only report on the 32 that returned his schedule. Within the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) he could only locate three full-time staff supervisors and that, where there were no full-time supervisors, social workers were supervised by the executive of the agency (Bopape, 1968:44). He, however, does not share his findings on the same issue within the municipalities nor does he elaborate on the qualification of those executives.

Bopape (1968:45) further found varying styles of staff supervision within the NGOs and that supervision was provided on the basis of need and demand of the individual staff member, and the nature of welfare work done by the agency concerned. Stewart (1969:223) shares a similar view, stating that in some agencies supervision was only provided when a worker specifically requested help.

In the 1960s the Department of Social Welfare and Pensions put in place an in-service training scheme (Bopape, 1968:42). In 1963, a conference was held in Pretoria wherein a decision was made that a manual for in-service training should be compiled. The manual was commissioned in 1965; it employed teaching and administrative components of supervision and could only be feasible in organisations where supervision was available (Bopape, 1968:42). Bopape does not distinctly mention, on both accounts, for whom the training scheme and the in-service training were intended but because the context of his discussion is on staff

supervision of social workers, it is assumed he is referring to the in-service training of social work supervisors.

To further aid the development of supervision in social work, in June 1971 some 150 delegates attended a conference in Pretoria to discuss fieldwork training of social work students. During this conference, there was an overall outcry that senior social workers who could undertake supervision of students were scarce and as a result, it was generally agreed that training centres should offer specialised courses in supervision (Muller, 1971:174). By implication, the scarcity of senior social workers to supervise students implied the scarcity of senior social workers to supervise social workers in general.

According to Hoffman (1987:207) in South Africa, the development of social work supervision was rooted on the one hand, on the practitioners' need for administrative practices along hierarchical lines in formal welfare organisations and, on the other hand, in education. Over time, Hoffman (1987:207) states that the status of supervision became formalised by a state in partnership with community based organisations, in that the former would remunerate organisations for supervisory posts for every 4-7 social workers.

The development of social work supervision in South Africa is also traced back to the emergence of literature on the subject. According to Engelbrecht (2010:325), Pieterse (1961) published the first article on supervision in South Africa and that the article referred to supervision as field guidance. Thereafter a combination of literature in the form of articles and dissertations followed including those by De Jager, (1962); Du Plessis (1965); Perlman (1967); Hatting (1968); Bopape (1968); Barrete (1968a; 1968b); Botha (1971; 1972); Smit (1972); Derksen (1972) and Hoffman (1976), which articulated the state of social work supervision in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2010:325-326). Other earlier texts on the subject which could be traced in this study also include Smit (1971); Shaw (1978); Botha (1980; 1984); and Collins (1985). It is significant to note in this regard that most of the aforementioned scholarly studies explored supervision in the context of student-field work supervision.

Further, Engelbrecht (2010:325-327) notes the following milestones in the development of social work supervision in South Africa:

- That at the beginning of the 1970s the defining dictionary of social work provided the first official definition of supervision in South Africa;
- That Botha's 1985 seminal work on the educational model for efficient supervision laid the ground work for the practice and training of supervisors in South Africa;

- That in 1985 supervision postgraduate courses were offered at only two out of 20 universities in South Africa;
- That while providing supervision courses gained momentum with universities instituting formal theoretical courses at Honours' and Master's levels, supervision as a research topic became less favourable; and
- That a plethora of academic theses focused on supervision mushroomed in the 1990s and beyond.

Other milestones include the first ever comprehensive text book on supervision entitled "*Supervision and consultation in social work*" which was published in 2002 by Botha NJ. The latest publication, which is also the second exclusive literature on the subject in South Africa is entitled "*Management and supervision of social workers: Issues and challenges within a social development paradigm*" by Engelbrecht (2014).

It has been established from the literature that the international developments of social work supervision had an impact on the state of social work supervision in South Africa. Further, strides have been made by scholars to close the vacuum of literature tracing the historical developments of social work supervision in South Africa. A discussion of the functions of social work supervision follows next.

2.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

The functions of social work supervision vary with societies and cultures (Hung, Ng & Fung, 2010:375) but the traditional functions are administrative, educative and supportive supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:19; 2014:8; Tsui, 2005:485-486). The administrative functions emerged first, and the educational and emotional support soon followed (Tsui, 1997:193).

2.3.1 The administrative function of social work supervision

The administrative function of social work supervision was documented by Robinson in the first social work text on the subject "*Supervision in case work*", and it was also documented in the first, second, and third editions of the *Encyclopaedia of Social Work* (Kadushin, 1992:19, Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:8). According to Kadushin (1992:19) the two sources defined supervision as an educational process in which a person, with a certain fund of knowledge and skill, takes responsibility for training a person with less knowledge and skills. According

to Miller (in Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:19), the sixth (1971) and the seventeenth (1977) editions of the *Encyclopaedia for Social Work* continued to emphasize the administrative function of social work supervision.

The administrative function of social work supervision describes the practitioner and supervisor's accountability to policies, protocols, ethics and standards, which are prescribed by legislation, regulatory bodies and organisational policies (Davys & Beddoe, 2010:25). In agreement, Pecora, Cherin, Bruce and Arguello (2010:15) refer to these aspects as administrative skills, which entail having a thorough grounding in legislation, ethics and policies. Reid and Westegard (2006:36) also concur and are of the opinion that administrative supervision involves ensuring that ethical behaviour and procedures are upheld including accountability and quality assurance dimensions on the part of the supervisor. If that is the goal, Potter and Brittain (2009:25) are of the opinion that, then the primary issue that ought to be addressed in administrative supervision is the lack of adherence to agency policy and procedure.

According to Hoffman (1987:209) planning, directing, organising and controlling are tasks performed during administrative supervision. Cherin, Bruce and Arguello (2010:16) add programme planning, guidelines development and addressing performance problems of staff relative to the tasks associated with administrative supervision. Kadushin and Harkness (2014:28) provide a detailed list of tasks, which include:

- Staff recruitment and selection
- Inducting and placement of new recruits
- Work planning
- Work assignments
- Work delegation
- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating work done
- Coordinating work
- Advocacy
- Supervisor as administrative buffer
- Supervisor as a change agent and community liaison

The expectation of administrative supervision with regard to the aforementioned tasks is that the social work supervisor should continuously determine what needs to be learned, improved, adapted or relearned in order to enhance efficient service delivery on the part of the

supervisee. For supervisees to adequately undertake administrative tasks associated with their post, they ought to be taught some of the administrative duties hence the subsequent discussion on educational supervision.

2.3.2 The educational function of social work supervision

The developments of the educational roots of supervision date back to 1911 when the first course in supervision was offered under the Charity Organization Department in the USA (Tsui, 1997:193). This accompanied the shift of training of social workers from the agency to the university in the 1920s, which saw the development of supervision as an educational process for learning the requisite values, knowledge, and skills for social work practice (Tsui, 1997:193). When student supervision became an integral part of social work education, it was no longer enough simply to teach “how”; the teacher also had to explain “why” to students (Tsui, 1997:193). The learning process of the social work novice was one of gradual insight development encapsulated in an increased insight of self (Middleman & Rhodes, 1985:5). Through self-awareness, it was held that the novice worker learned new actions and behaviours in the service of clients. Leddick and Bernard (1980:193) also contend that supervision was perceived as a learning environment.

The primary goal of educational supervision is to teach workers knowledge and skills, and attitudes necessary to perform their job and to help them integrate these factors into daily practice (Potter & Brittain, 2009:25). According to Reid and Westegard (2006:37) educational supervision must enable the practitioner to learn about theory, skills, attitudes, procedures, themselves, as well as about the client. Consequently, activities undertaken by managers in educational supervision are staff development, in-service training, mentoring, assessment of growth needs and supervision on how to use intervention techniques and theories when working with individuals, groups and communities (Suraj-Narayan, 2010:193). Other tasks include teaching, facilitating learning, training, sharing experience and knowledge, informing, clarifying, guiding, advising and suggesting (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:90). Brittain, cited by Potter and Brittain (2009:26) adds one-on-one coaching, and mentoring staff. Engelbrecht (2014:129) also cites staff development, coaching and mentoring as tasks associated with educational supervision.

Perlman (in Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:96) classify the content covered in educational supervision into *P*'s, i.e. what every worker needs to know and learn in educational supervision is about people, problems, place, process and personnel.

The workers need to learn about the organisation (*Place*) that employs them in terms of policies and protocols. The place may also refer to the geographical surroundings where the organisation is located, including its resources, stakeholders and competitors and the regional location in relation to international communities. Workers also need to continuously get acquainted with new employees (*People*) in the organisation, including profiling their clientele to stay abreast with professional developments as well as social *problems* in the communities they serve. Knowledge of social issues in the communities enables the social worker and the organisation to offer programmes that will effect needed change within communities. The *process* involves knowledge of protocols and policies on how to intervene in different cases, including the professional theory underpinning service delivery in the organisation as well as legislations and treaties governing welfare services. Knowledge of *personnel* may entail knowing who a worker will be working with, including the specialists in the field. Knowledge of specialists will enable the worker to define themselves and discover a niche in which to specialize.

There are conditions for effective teaching and learning during supervision. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014:127) people learn best when:

- they are highly motivated to learn;
- they can devote most of their energies to learning;
- they are actively involved in the learning process;
- the content to be learned is meaningfully presented; and
- the supervisor takes into consideration the supervisee's uniqueness as a learner.

In addition, people also learn best if there are incentives, such as promotion. Therefore, it is critical that supervisors identify the growth needs and potential of supervisees so that learning is not only beneficial to their current work context but that it paves way for professional growth.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, social work is rendered largely through an organisational context, therefore the question is how educational supervision differs from in-service training and staff development. Kadushin and Harkness (2014:91) offer the following differentiation: that staff development refers to all of the procedures an agency might employ to enhance the job related knowledge, skills and attitudes of its staff, and includes in-service training and educational supervision. In-service training, on the other hand, refers to planned, formal training planned on a prior basis in terms of the educational needs of agency personnel with the same job responsibilities while educational supervision supplements in-service training by

individualizing general learning in application to the specific performance of the individual worker. Tsui (2005:77) echoes the former sentiment; that the educational responsibility is a mechanism for staff development.

Supervisees thus need enormous support to undertake their day-to-day duties and to use administrative and educational supervision constructively. The discussion of supportive supervision, which is the third and final function of social work supervision, follows hereunder.

2.3.3 The supportive function of social work supervision

The focus of the study is, as proclaimed in the title, on this supportive component of social work supervision. The earliest version of supportive supervision in the history of social work dates back to the Charity Organization Societies (COS) Movement in 1878 in Buffalo, USA (Tsui, 1997:193). At that time, supervisors provided emotional support to those visitors (volunteers) who felt frustrated in their work because they did not know how to offer help to the needy (Tsui, 1997:193). Because of their supervision status, the paid agents had to provide a steady hand and guide new visitors through their first shock of discovering the deplorable conditions of the people they ought to serve (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:3).

According to Schmidt (in Rabinowitz, 1987:85), 1930 witnessed a marriage of psychoanalysis and social work. This coming together had a great impact on the development of supervision because supervisors turned supervision into “primarily a therapeutic process.” Supervisees were led into discussing their personal problems and there were no limits and the supervisors used their new found skills of psychoanalysis in treating them (Rabinowitz, 1987:85). The critics of the supervision-treatment model however argued that supervision no longer had any reference to the workers’ assignments and that it was wrong for supervisors to treat workers and deprive them of learning (Rabinowitz, 1987:85). Following this period, a clear distinction was made between therapy and supervision; the role of therapy was seen as helping the client while of the supervisor was to help the worker develop a professional self (Kauffman in Rabinowitz, 1987:85).

From the dawn of time, supportive supervision was regarded as a mechanism to deal with job-related tensions clouded by personal problems. The supervisor’s job, contends Munson (1979:147), is to help the practitioner develop self-awareness about his own inputs and responses to his work with clients, the community, and the agency. The goal of supportive supervision, according to Hoffman (1987:220), is to promote the psychological well-being of

the worker, which the supervisor endeavours to do through the administrative and educational functions.

The 20th and 21st century scholars continue to re-emphasise the goal of supportive supervision. According to Gibleman and Schervish (1997:3) supportive supervision is intended to enhance staff morale. Its goal is psychological and interpersonal support to supervisees (Engelbrecht, 2014:129) and it also has direct and positive association with high level worker job satisfaction and morale (Newsome, Pillari, Rauktis & Koekse cited by Bruce & Austin, 2000:86). Supportive supervision may be accomplished through providing emotional support to supervisees, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job (Coulshed, Mullender, Jones, & Thompson, 2006:164).

Through supportive supervision, supervisees are supported in dealing with the following job-related tension alluded to by Kadishin (1976:205): administrative supervision as a source of tension; educational supervision as a source of tension; the supervisor-supervisee relationship; the clients as a source of tension; and the nature and context of tasks as a source of stress. In his later publications, Kadushin added “the organization as a source of tension; community attitudes towards social work as a source of tension; and the worker’s personality as a factor in burnout” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:2014). The ‘supervisee-colleague relationship’ and ‘relationships with significant others’ as sources of tension ought to be included in the mix because a good relationship with colleagues and significant others enhances performance while hostile relationships negatively affect one’s performance.

The practical implementation of supportive supervision includes procedures such as: scheduling regular standing times for supervision, communicating staff concerns and ideas, respecting the confidentiality of personal information of supervisees, ensuring that direct line staff receive necessary resources for them to do their jobs, providing regular feedback about performance through coaching and setting clear expectations regarding the job (Pecora et al., 2010:18). Supportive supervision also involves “reassurance, encouragement, recognition of achievements, approval and commendations, and attentive listening that communicates interest and concern (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:161). Furthermore, according to Suraj-Narajan (2010:192) support also entails debriefing of social workers who experience burnout and stress; referring supervisees to Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) for assistance, facilitating stress management programmes; enhancing team work from colleagues and management, and facilitating family-friendly policies to help social workers balance work and family life.

Overall, the discussion of the historical developments of the functions of social work supervision quickly coalesced into the discussion of the current practices undertaken to fulfil the functions. This demonstrates the relevance of this history today. For all the functions of supervision to be carried out successfully, they need to be consciously and purposefully practised (Weekes, 1989:195). For the functions to be carried out successfully, they should also be objectively undertaken. The functions of social work supervision are closely linked and aligned to the objectives, justifying therefore the subsequent discussion.

2.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

There are short-range objectives of supervision according to their functions. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2002:20; 2014:9) the objectives of *educational supervision* include an improvement of the worker's capacity to do their job more effectively, to help the worker grow and develop professionally, and to maximize their clinical knowledge and skills to a point where they can perform independently from supervision. The objectives of *administrative supervision* are to provide the worker with a work context that permits him/her to do his/her job effectively by ensuring effective implementation of agency policies (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:20; 2014:9). It also involves ensuring implementation and consideration of national legislations, regional legislations and international treaties according to need. The short range objective of *supportive supervision* is to help the worker feel good about doing his/her job (Kadushin & Harkness (2002:20; 2014:9). According to Tsui (2005:491), the latter objective is achieved by sustaining worker morale, helping with job-related discouragement and discontentment, and giving the supervisees a sense of worth as professionals, developing a sense of belonging in the agency and a sense of security in their performance.

Payne (in Tsui, 2005:15) categorized the objectives of social work supervision into three groups: those intended for clients, for supervisees and for supervisors. The first category implies that supervision should ensure that clients receive maximum benefits and prohibits inappropriate staff responses to clients. The second category implies that supervision should enable supervisees to deliver more effective care, get a second opinion, raise concerns about their own intervention, pursue professional development, receive feedback, deal with their own feelings, and enhance their own self-management. From the supervisor's perspective, supervision entails the planning and review of interventions by frontline workers, providing critical analysis, ensuring statutory requirements, monitoring of workloads, boosting morale in service units; maintaining objectivity; monitoring standards and keeping senior staff informed about the performance of frontline staff. The supervisor's chief function is also to minimize activity and maximise practice (Mudau, 1990:1). The supervisor's ultimate objective is to

deliver to agency clients the best possible service, both qualitatively and quantitatively (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:23). The supervisor's functions are also evaluative: they have the simultaneous purpose of enhancing the professional functioning of a social worker through skills transfer, mentoring, and professional support; monitoring the quality of professional services offered to clients; motivating social workers to achieve their full potential; and most pivotal is that it extends over time (Department of Social Development, 2007:33).

The quandary for the supervisor with regard to supervision is that he/she may engage in one or more of these objectives simultaneously or interchangeably in interacting with different supervisees at different intervals during the day. This means that the supervisor must shift from one objective to another as needs arise. In that regard, supervisors go through so much trouble because social work supervision is significant to social work.

2.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

There is consensus amongst social workers that supervision is critical to social work practice. This support dates back to decades. During the late 1920s supervision was perceived as important because of the lack of good educational programmes (Kadushin, 1975:4). According to Middleman and Rhodes (1985:1) and Hoffman (1987:208), there was a staggering need for supervision in social work. Middleman and Rhodes (1985:1) also contended that supervision in social work was special. Rabinowitz (1987:88) cemented the argument by contending that social work supervision was perceived as a source of on-going professional development, and a forum for workers to clarify their thinking about casework practice.

According to Hoffman (1987:208) supervision is critical to social work because this profession is largely organizationally based, and that by default, there needs to be some bureaucratic structure in order to coordinate and integrate effectively the functions of employees. Secondly, because through supervision organisations are able to account for expenditure in their community, private and state donors; and lastly because professional social work boards use supervision to protect consumers. Tsui (2005:491) adds that supervision is important because its mandate is to ensure the professional development and job satisfaction of frontline social workers. Payne (in Noble & Irwin, 2009:375) concurs, and points to the fact that supervision is firstly undertaken to ensure that clients are protected; secondly, it provides support for practitioners; thirdly, it ensures that practitioners maintain professional standards and good principles of professional practice and that work expected from the organization is interpreted through professional lens and delivered by professionally competent workers.

Findings in the study by Turner (2000) proclaimed that the need for ongoing supervision was unquestionable. In agreement, Kadushin and Harkness (2014: 20-26) offer the following arguments as to why there is a continuous need for supervision in social work:

- That although professionals such as doctors and lawyers also perform their functions privately similar to social work, the outcomes of their work are more objective and observable whereas social workers tend to base their practice decisions on personal experiences, on their professional values and empathetic understanding of their clients.
- That supervision is one of the regulatory tools that professional boards of social workers use to protect the public.
- Social workers in organisational contexts also do not face penalties that would alert them to the need for examining and correcting their practice hence the need for supervision.
- A significant component of social work agency activity is concerned with the distribution services and supplies that the agency does not own. Political bodies also create policies for public social welfare services. Therefore, donors and government entities funding the agencies feel entitled to know that decisions are made with some oversight and procedural safeguards.
- The agency provides the workers with their clientele and the clients are often involuntary, dictated by organs of state such as courts and schools and in such instances, oversight is necessary to ensure that services provided and reports offered back to the referring organisations comprehensively address the needs of the referred.
- The distinctive nature of the problems encountered by social workers are sometimes those that a social worker struggles with in one way or another in his or her own life situation. As a result, social workers may feel discouraged and run the danger of having their own personal problems cloud their service delivery. Supervision is thus one avenue to counteract personal problems from clouding client situations.

Whilst there is overwhelming consensus amongst practitioners and scholars regarding the significance of supervision in social work, the issue of how long supervision should be carried out for has been contentious for decades. There are categories of practitioners who are of the opinion that rigorous supervision should be offered early in a person's career and that established practitioners should not receive any more supervision. Rabinowitz (1985:86) documented that the long years of supervision were resented by some workers in the middle 1950s and 1960s, because they saw it as an insult to their professional status. Epstein (in

Munson, 1979) wrote a chapter to this effect entitled “Is autonomous practice possible?” Scholars such as H (1959); Indelman cited by Applleby, Berkman, Blazejack and Gorter (1958); Hoffman (1987); Wilmot (2008) also support the notion of autonomous practice for social workers in the light of other professionals such as doctors and lawyers.

The duration of supervision for social workers has thus been difficult to determine. According to Rabinowitz (1985:86), it appears social workers were previously supervised for five years. Wallace (1957:96) contends that close supervision is needed in the earlier years but that there must be a tapering off as one becomes more surefooted with practice. More recently, respondents in the study by Hair (2012:21) collectively endorsed the need for supervision for up to three years for new graduates and employees entering a new field. Suggestions from respondents encouraged the development of consultation relationships between workplace colleagues for practitioners with experience of more than three years. In South Africa, the recently developed Supervision Framework for Social Work Practice in South Africa (2014) supports rigorous supervision for up to three years for new graduates and employees entering a new field but it is not prescriptive as to when practitioners could advance from rigorous supervision to consultation or any other form of supervision.

The preceding discussion cements the importance of supervision in the social work profession. The discussion also demonstrates that consensus with regard to the number of years for rigorous supervision before migrating to consultation cannot be determined as a standing rule because it depends on a number of factors, which include assessing the level of professional maturity of each individual social worker. Such a decision may also be influenced by a combination of factors ranging from the organisational policies; policies of regulatory bodies; the nature of services provided and the experience of practitioner within a particular field. Therefore, what is needed in this regard is an array of supervisors who can taper off the controls such that they could have time to do some basic research and incidentally advance their course and that of the organisation (Wallace, 1957:96) and also afford supervisees an opportunity to stand on their own.

The significance of supervision in social work has been highlighted in the preceding discussion. The discussion also amplified that the duration of supervision cannot be determined because each social worker’s work circumstances vary depending on the socio-economic and political contexts of their location. Conversely, the need to further engage robustly in the discussion regarding the duration has also been articulated. Another undertaking for this study in particular also is to delve into the status quo of social work supervision in South Africa, which takes centre stage in the next discussion.

2.6 THE STATUS QUO OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The dawn of democracy in South Africa post the 1994 democratic elections came with changes in the country's welfare policies through announcements of new welfare programmes. The seven regions of the country's welfare system alluded to by Du Plessis (in Bopape, 1968:42) were characterised by racial, gender, sectorial and geographic disparities, and post 1994 these were merged into one welfare system, which did not segregate the provision of services. This dramatic shift did not occur without mammoth challenges.

In the mid 90s, Mudau (1996:1) identified an absence of supervision in social work in region four (4) of the then Northern Province (currently known as Limpopo Province) and was thus prompted to develop guidelines for social workers on how to conduct structured supervision. Litheko (2000:2) noted another challenge; an endemic cultural myopia in South Africa, which in a supervisory relationship means that supervisors did not consider multicultural diversity, and that the supervisees' competencies and performance are measured according to the supervisor's cultural standards. In the policy titled "Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers" the Ministry of Social Development in South Africa also recognised the lack of structured supervision and poor quality of supervisors, who themselves also lacked capacity to conduct professional supervision (Department of Social Development, 2007:33). According to the former minister of the Department of Social Development, the late Dr Zola Skweyiya, the problem was exacerbated by historical practices, which assigned supervisory functions to new white social workers, the perpetual supervision of black supervisors, and the perception that trained supervisors were not necessary.

Twelve years later, after the study by Litheko (2000), in his concluding remarks on the study titled "*Cultural friendliness as a foundation for the support function in the supervision of social work students in South Africa*" Engelbrecht (2013: 264) emphasised the need for cultural awareness in supervision by stating that the South African context makes it essential that supervisors are equipped to accommodate a culturally diverse student population. To improve cultural tolerance, both the supervisor and supervisee should engage rigorously and continuously in identifying own cultural biasness against others; they should seek reasons for and remedies to resolve them. They should also confront bias exerted on them by others, with the singular goal of sensitising others to end such bias.

On a generic level, social work supervision in South Africa is located within middle management positions. A supervisor usually holds a senior position to that of his/her supervisees. In some instances, managers also provide supervision services. And the

purpose of supervision is to promote and protect the interests of beneficiaries, to promote active recognition of cultural systems that shape practice, to ensure professional development of supervisors and supervisees and also promote safe and accountable social work practice (Department of Social Development, 2013:105).

Engelbrecht in 2010 produced a joint article with Bradley and Höjer entitled “Supervision: A force for change? Three stories told”. In writing the article, the authors profiled Child Welfare agencies in their respective countries and from the article, Engelbrecht came to the following conclusions about the state of supervision in South Africa:

- That a social work supervisor in South Africa is normally a woman with a professional social work qualification;
- That she is aged 30 years or over, and has at least five years’ experience of front line work practice;
- That she is registered with the SACSSP;
- That she probably lacks formal training in supervision, but has undergone in-service training as a supervisor;
- That her post of supervisor is a middle management position within the organization, to which she would have applied or been promoted;
- That supervision of social workers is an internal concern of the agency and consists of diverse management tasks for which the supervisor accepts responsibility; and
- That supervision is focused predominantly on an administrative function and that educative and supportive supervision tend to be secondary.

From the preceding discussion it can thus be deduced that social work supervision in South Africa is standard practice. However, it can also be deduced from the discussion that supervision is plagued by several challenges, i.e. the lack of formal training for social work supervisors and that supervisors are often saddled with many other tasks, which at times may thwart the supervision function. The secondary nature of supportive supervision has also been unravelled herein and this revelation further cements the need for interrogating the archaeological makeup of supportive supervision in the next section.

2.7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAKEUP OF SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

Archaeology refers to the study of human history and prehistory (i.e. events or conditions leading up to a particular occurrence or phenomenon) through the excavation

(digging/ extracting/ removing earth carefully from an area in order to find buried/hidden remains) of sites and the analysis of artefacts (i.e. objects made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest) (Oxford Dictionary online, 2019, sv “archeology”). The word archaeology is befitting in this context because the intention of this study is to uncover historical social work supervision practices, which inaugurated supportive supervision as we know it today by ploughing out the generic literature to extract those aspects relevant to supportive supervision. The archaeological makeup of supportive supervision thus refers to the extraction of generic and exclusive social work supervision literature and relating these aspects to supportive contexts.

2.7.1 Methods/types/ forms/Kinds of social work supervision

Social work supervision is carried out through various ways and means. In extant literature, there is no consistency amongst scholars on the means and ways in which such supervision is undertaken and experienced. O'Donogue (2002:6) refers to them as the pluralities of social work supervision which constitute the (i) *forms* made up of student/field work supervision, managerial supervision, clinical supervision, peer supervision and cultural supervision; (ii) *Modes* constituting individual, tandem, team and group supervision; (iii) *kinds* made up of internal and external supervision; and (iv) the *types*: made up of open door, consultative, contracted, recall and review, and observational supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (2012:64) make mention of the following types of supervision: tutorial, training, managerial and consultancy. Copeland (2005:21) echoes the views of the latter authors in their 2000 publication that the types of supervision included tutorial, training, managerial, and consultancy. Engelbrecht (2014: 151-153) alludes to methods of social work supervision as being constituted by individual and group supervision. Engelbrecht (2014) refers to peer-supervision as a technique. He also categorises consultancy as a supervision activity. Wonnacott (2012:63-66) coins the aforementioned structures of supervision that include formal and informal one-to-one supervision and group supervision.

The differing semantics of authors in this regard allow for a comprehensive discussion of these “means” and “ways”, which should not necessarily be written off as forms, kinds, types and methods. It is also critical to note that the concepts kinds, types, forms and methods are synonymous to each other. It is thus against this backdrop that in this study the types, forms and methods of social work supervision are broadly categorised into the following:

- **Individual supervision**

Individual supervision is one of the most critical forms of offering support to supervisees and it is also one of the most preferred forms of supervision amongst the helping professions (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:281; Corey, Haynes, Moulton & Muratori, 2010: 97). In individual supervision, a meeting is held with an individual supervisee that enables the supervisor to personalise the support; it allows the supervisee an opportunity to make own decisions and come up with own solutions and resolutions to obstacles; it becomes easier for the supervisor to communicate and connect with the supervisee and it promotes confidentiality (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:281). Corey et al. (2010:97) contend that the most common format of individual supportive supervision is self-reporting, in which the supervisee describes his or her clinical activities and case conceptualisation. Over and above the discussion of workload, sessions may also be used to identify the supervisee's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in the workplace and to come up with strategies for professional growth.

There may also be disadvantages to undertaking individual supportive supervision with a supervisee. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014:281) they include the economy of administrative time because the supervisor would need to repeatedly communicate administrative issues regarding policies, legislations and procedures to individual supervisees. There may also be escalation of financial costs to an agency because individual supervision may consume a chunk of supervisory personnel's time; thirdly, individual supervision denies the supervisee an opportunity to share experiences with similar problems encountered on the job and possible solutions formulated in response because the supervisee has to take own decisions. The supervisee also has limited access to diverse client populations thus denying the supervisee an opportunity to learn from fellow colleagues. A direct contrast from using individual supervision is using group supervision. A discussion on group supervision follows next.

- **Group supervision**

The term group supervision refers to the use of group settings to implement the responsibilities of supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:275). The group is structured with a task and an agenda with its ultimate aim being the same as that of all supervision: more effective and efficient service delivery to clients through the enhancement of group members' professional practice (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:275). Group supervision is also aimed to enhance learning by sharing peer knowledge and experience and by exposure to a larger number of cases and styles of work (Zeira & Schiff, 2010: 428).

There are advantages and disadvantages to using group supervision. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014:275-280) the advantages of group supervision include:

- Firstly, the economy of administrative time and effort because administrative communication regarding policies, legislations and procedures can be communicated at once;
- Secondly, there are financial savings to an agency because group supervision involves less expenditure of supervisory personnel's time.
- Thirdly, group supervision provides the opportunity for supervisees to share their experiences of similar problems encountered on the job and possible solutions that each has formulated in response, making the sources of learning richer and more varied than in an individual context.
- Group supervision provides vicarious access to a wider variety of social problems and to a more diverse client caseload than is available in individual supervision sessions.
- The group context also permits a living experience with the supportive technique of universalization and normalisation because the worker is given keen appreciation that these are "our problems" rather than "my problems".

Kadushin and Harkness (2014:280-282), further provide the following disadvantages of group supervision:

- That the group session should be directed towards a general need of all supervisees.
- Group supervision cannot easily provide specific application of learning to the worker's own case load.
- The group situation stimulates competitiveness and rivalry amongst team members.
- It becomes difficult to incorporate a new employee in a group context because groups have tendencies of developing interpersonal relationships, group roles, group identity, and interaction patterns.
- The group context permits supervisees to abdicate and accept group solutions and resolutions thus depriving members of coming up with own solutions.
- The group contexts also increase the pressure to conform to group thinking and attitudes, creating a risk of loss of control for the supervisor.
- It may be difficult for the supervisor to connect with all group members.
- An intervention that meets the needs of one person may not meet the needs of the next person.
- There is a possibility that a group may organise against a supervisor than in a one-to-one context.

- Lastly, the group context presents potential problems regarding confidentiality.

Various authors such as Sussman, Bogo and Grobleman (2007); Zeira and Schiff (2010) as well as Hawkins and Shohet (2012), also present similar pros and cons regarding group supervision.

One of the critical issues that has to be clarified before carrying out group supervision is the consideration of group membership. This is because membership may vary according to the purpose of the group. According to Schreiber and Frank (1983:31) groups may consist of members who share comparable experience, length of training and professional background, while some may consist of members with varying backgrounds and experiences. Ideally, group members should not be too diverse in terms of their levels of professional training and practice experience (Department of Social Development, 2012:27). It is therefore critical for an agency or supervisor adopting this supervision style to determine the core reason for using it. In turn, the goal will also determine the composition of group members.

Against this backdrop, the researcher submits that supportive supervision in a group context may better serve supervisees if the focus is on administrative and educational challenges instead of one's personal distress. The reason for this recommendation is that confidentiality cannot be entirely guaranteed by the supervisor. The other threat may be that the supervisees would not feel free to express their distress in the presence of their peers. They might also fear that their image might be dented if other people knew what they are going through. This perception might lead to supervisees just attending the sessions for the sake of attending but not benefiting anything, which would be not cost effective. For effective supportive supervision to take place, the supervisee needs to have confidence in the supervisor that whatever he/she shares remains confidential and this cannot be assured in a group context.

- **Team supervision**

Team supervision can be categorised into two: it involves working with teams that share similar work such as the mental health care team in a psychiatric hospital and teams which, although they work with similar approaches and in the same geographical area, have separate clients, such as general practitioners' practices or social work organisations (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:197). Teams are facilitated to resolve conflict or a difficulty; to carry out operational reviews and relations; and to enable strategic planning processes (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:202). When conducting team supervision, the facilitator or convener should consider group boundaries, i.e. the inclusion of support staff or professionals and it also needs to

address not only team members working with clients but also their collegial relationships (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:198). Consequently, a supervisor may initiate team supervision meetings when one of his/her supervisee is experiencing problems with a team member of a different professional grouping to discuss their differences and pave a way forward. Supervisors may also initiate such team meetings to discuss policies and legislations and to streamline service delivery. The involvement of supervisors would, in turn, support supervisees in their endeavours as they work with different teams.

- **Student or Field work supervision**

Student/field work supervision literally refers to the social work students being supervised when they undertake the practicum. The purpose of student supervision is to gradually introduce the student to different social work settings and to give students a platform to practice the theory that is covered in the lecture rooms, thus preparing them to enter the world of work hitting the ground running after acquiring their qualifications. In this type of supervision, students are presented with parameters, guidelines, and information in order to construct their own sense of mastery of the skills and interventions required by practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2009:932).

The responsibility for student supervision is shared between the field instructor (agency supervisor) and the training institutions' student supervisor who assigns the student to the agency (Waldfoegel in Gray, Alperin, & Wik, 1989:90). The supervisor's expectations of the student are coordinated to meet the core competencies identified by the training institution, and as a result, the traditional dyad relationship becomes a triad relationship that usually occurs between the field instructor (agency supervisor), the student (supervisee) and the training institution's student supervisor. Simultaneously, by taking on students, the field supervisor is required to carry out the mandate of her employer in the work that she does with the students. Consequently, it is imperative that the university's competency expectations are general so that they can be carried out in conjunction with the service delivery mandates of all placement agencies.

In South Africa, student supervision predominantly begins at second level of study following registration of the student with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) as a student social worker. Students are introduced to working with clients gradually at second level of study and their involvement intensifies in their fourth level of study and so does student/field work supervision.

Various factors may contribute and/or distract effective student supervision. Students, in the study by Henderson, Cawyer and Watkins (1997), identified competence, i.e. the supervisors' general levels of knowledge; competence in facilitation of learning; relationship factors; and effectiveness of evaluations as factors contributing to effective student supervision on the part of the supervisor (Wong, Wong & Ishiyama, 2013:68). In the same study, the supervisors identified the following categories that they required from students for effective supervision to occur: student's development, relationship factors, ethics and adaptability (Wong et al., 2013:68).

It is thus the opinion of the researcher that offering supportive supervision in this regard may be twofold. It involves supporting those supervisees who are student supervisors to effectively manage the triad relationship they find themselves in; supporting them to handle their own workload and managing those of students; and supporting them to ensure that the agency mandate is carried out by students in conjunction with the university one. Supportive supervision in this regard also refers to offering direct supportive supervision to students. The most critical support that students need is an environment that enables them to balance their personal life with their studies and the agency work. Group supervision may be used for administrative and educational support, while individual sessions are recommended for personal and emotionally charged issues.

- **Clinical/professional supervision**

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) defines clinical supervision as “the professional application of social work theory and methods to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunctions, disability or impairments, including emotional and mental disorders” (Barker in Potter & Brittain, 2009:297). The supervisees are graduates of accredited schools of social work who are engaged in practice that assists people to overcome physical, financial, social or psychological disruptions in functioning through individual, group or family intervention methods (Munson, 2002:10). Clinical supervision is not necessarily agency based; it does not concern practice within an agency context but focuses on the dynamics of client situation and the work of the social worker in that regard (Gibleman & Schervish, 1997:4-5).

From the preceding discussion, the following can be deduced about clinical supervision; firstly, that its focus is to assist practitioners with constructively executing social work theory, methods, ethical principles, values and ethos, intervention tools and techniques to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunctions, disabilities or impairments, including

disorders. This description leads to the second realisation that clinical supervision is profession-specific; and thirdly, if it is profession-specific it means that higher ranking social work professionals in an organisation who are managed by other professional groupings are prohibited from discussing clinical client issues with their immediate managers or supervisors. Such professionals should instead create other platforms, i.e. peer supervision or consultation, to discuss clinical issues.

Clinical supervisors also have to support their supervisees. In supporting them, supervisors should ensure that supervisees offer culturally sensitive services; they uphold the values and ethics of the profession; they have self-awareness; the profession's ethos, and they must ensure that practitioners select the best possible intervention procedures (i.e. methods, tools, techniques, theories) as they intervene in the lives of their clientele.

- **Peer supervision**

Peer supervision entails the coming together of social workers occupying the same level of employment to supervise each other. Peer supervision does not rely on a designated supervisor, rather, all members participate equally (Department of Social Development, 2012:28). Workers who opt for peer supervision are often those occupying higher level positions in organisations who report to people outside the social work fraternity. Peter Hawkins was in the same position; he was running a therapeutic community under the management of an assistant director of a large mental health charity with no direct experience of either therapeutic communities or supervision and in response Peter setup a series of peer supervision sessions with peers in the same predicament (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012:191).

Independent social work practitioners often also opt for peer supervision because the traditional supervisory dyads are unavailable to them (Schreiber & Frank, 1983:29). Independent practitioners also do not have at their disposal the hierarchical structure that comes with being in an organisation hence peer supervision becomes an obvious alternative for them. Also, social workers working in the same organisation having the traditional supervisory dyads may also undertake peer supervision. Such an arrangement, should, however, be arranged with their supervisor and the purpose of the peer supervision should also be clearly defined.

Peer supervision can take many forms. It can be either individually reciprocal or in a group of workers with similar needs, approach and/or level of expertise (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012:192). Peer supervision can also be rotational. Its form is largely dependent on the needs of those

involved in it. Peer supervision can be sought in one's immediate workplace or in similar workplaces (different units) within an organisation or externally with workers from different organisations (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:192).

Peer supervision has manifested the development of peer consultation, peer group supervision, and peer collaboration. Peer consultation is organised in the context of the individual conference (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:455). It works best among peers with approximately equal levels of competence, so that the consultee today may be a consultant tomorrow (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:455). Peer group supervision, on the other hand, is defined as a process by which a group of professionals in the same agency meets regularly to review cases and treatment approaches without a leader, share expertise and take responsibility for their own and each other's professional development and for maintaining standards of practice (Hare & Frankena in Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:329).

Peer collaboration is defined as a peer-learning situation in which two, three, or four people work together, face-to-face, in a specific setting towards a mutual goal of learning from a particular task (O'Donnell in Winters, 2009:27). The limitations of peer collaborations in social work may be related to time constraints (Barlow, Rogers & Coleman, 2003:187).

Supervisors need to be mindful of their supervisees who wish to engage in peer supervision and support them. They can recommend possible peer supervision partners if the supervisee has none. They should also assist supervisees to determine the type of peer supervision they want to be involved in. Supervisors should also support supervisees by helping them clearly describe the boundaries of peer supervision against formal supervision. Peer supervision can also be used by supervisors as vehicles for training supervisees for supervisory roles. Peers in supervisory relationships serve as supportive structures for one another.

Instead of peer supervision, practitioners may also opt for consultation. A discussion of consultation follows next.

- **Consultation**

Consultation refers to sourcing the expert services of another social work practitioner with "greater expertise, greater knowledge, and greater skill in the performing of some particular, specialised function" (Kadushin, 1977:25). The types of consultation include organisational consultation, programme consultation, and case consultation with a programmatic implementation; relationships, personal and clinical focus consultation (Munson, 2002:443-

444). *Programmatic implementation* consultation focuses on what organisational participants should do and how they should do it; the *relationship focused consultation* deals with improving communication within an organisation or amongst fellow staff members; consultation with a *clinical focus* occurs when the consultant gives advice about service delivery in specific cases; and *personal consultation* occurs when an agency or departmental head is provided with specialised consultation (Munson, 2002: 444). Personal consultation can also be commissioned by a practitioner in consultation with their management team to tackle specific problematic areas in their work. This discussion on consultation highlights that consultation services can be sourced by the organisation or an individual practitioner.

Consultation has no legal/official obligation on the consultant and the consuler. The practitioner is free to decide whether to seek consultation, and whether to implement the advice and recommendations of the consultant or not (Munson, 2002:10). Likewise, the prospective consultant may agree to become a consultant or may decline. Hence these services are usually sought only when there is shortage of expertise.

Support in this regard may be aided through case consultation with a programmatic implementation; relationship focused, personal, and clinically focused consultation. A supervisor may negotiate on behalf of the supervisee with management to seek consultation according to the needs of the supervisee and supervisor's shortcomings. The supervisee may also seek the said services on their own accord according to their needs and the shortcoming of supervisors.

- **Tandem supervision**

Tandem supervision is an alternative to peer supervision. It occurs when two frontline social workers, one with professional experience and the other relatively junior occasionally consult each other to discuss work related assignments (Tsui, 20015:27). From the two, neither is a designated supervisor. Supervisors should encourage supervisees to engage in such casual supervisory relationship for added support and continued professional growth.

- **Cultural supervision**

There is considerable literature advocating for culturally relevant and culturally sensitive social work practice (Engelbrecht 2013; Sheafor & Horeji, 2012; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Cherin & Chenot, 2010; Shulman, 2009; Munson, 2002; Bimrose, 2006; Ross, 2010). Cultural sensitive practice engulfs the overall social work practice including staff supervision. Cultural sensitive

supervision thus refers to the values, beliefs, assumptions, and shared behavioural norms (Cherin & Chenot 2010:26) that influence the interpretation and execution of supervision policies and procedures by supervisors. Culturally sensitive supervision practice suggests the importance of organisational culture, the heritage of supervisors, supervisees and service users in the supervision process and relationship between the supervisor and supervisee.

Culturally sensitive supervision practice is essential. This is because employees in organisations come from different cultural backgrounds; they come together to form organisational cultures, and at times the differing cultural orientations may be in conflict leading to cultural warfare (Copeland, 2005:39) hence the need for culturally sensitive supervision. Supervision can be culturally sensitive only if the supervisor supports the supervisees fully in all their endeavours despite their different cultural backgrounds. Culturally sensitive supportive supervision can only materialise if the supervisor initiates conversations with supervisee on their biases and prejudices towards each other, against fellow team members, and against the different client systems they work with, with the ultimate aim of addressing their issues.

- **Managerial supervision**

This term is used where the supervisor is also the line manager of the supervisee, i.e. when the supervisor and the supervisee are in a manager-subordinate relationship (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:65). The two should engage in a discussion of how to separate the two roles so there is no conflict of interest. The conflict of interest may result from the fact that the manager represents the organisation at top management where strategic decisions are taken while simultaneously sitting in a middle management position as a supervisor. A conflict of interest may occur, for instance, practically when the manager is unable to give his/her supervisee a heads up in terms of disciplinary action to come against him/her due to procedures that must still unfold. Managerial supervision may thus present two predicaments for the supervisor: split in loyalties between the supervisee and his or her middle manager counterparts (some of whom may report to him or her directly). The forecasted predicaments lead to the view that managerialist environments encourage the push towards external supervision (Copper in Beddoe, 2012:200).

To minimise these predicaments the supervisor and the supervisee must engage in a discussion of the pros and cons of such supervision method very early in the supervisor-supervisee journey. Moving on, the supervisor must always engage in a discussion of conflict of interest issues impacting on the supervisory relationship. Also the supervisor must hold

formal supervision sessions with the supervisee, as such sessions set apart management duties and supervision tasks.

- **External supervision**

External supervision refers to the supervisory task being sourced outside the organisation. It takes place between a practitioner and a supervisor who do not work for the same employing organisation (Beddoe, 2012:199). External supervision may be sought if a practitioner does not have a social work practitioner on site to supervise him or her, or if the relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee is conflictual. External supervision may have or not have legal standing depending on the agreement between the supervisor and the employing organisation. Owing to their preceding descriptions, consultation and peer supervision, may be regarded as types of external supervision.

- **Internal supervision**

Internal supervision relates to supervision being provided within an organisation by fellow employees (O'Donoghue, 2002:6). By implication, clinical and managerial supervision are some of the types of internal supervision. Internal supervision may be supportive in that supervisors understand the contexts in which subordinates work and they may be able to tap into resources easily.

- **Open door supervision**

Open door supervision is an informal ad hoc type of supervision that occurs as and when required (O'Donoghue, 2002:6). By implication, open door supervision denotes that the supervisee should be able to contact the supervisor (i.e. see the supervisor in the office or contact telephonically) anytime according to need. It is thus the opinion of the researcher that having open door supervision is in the best interest of the clients and the organisation because challenges are sorted out promptly.

- **Contracted supervision**

Contracted supervision implies that there is a contract in place between the supervisor and the supervisee as well as contractual obligations between the employing organisation and the outsourced supervision service provider. This contract can come in the form of a working

agreement, which stipulates the supervisor's, employing organisation's and the supervisee's roles and responsibilities in the supervisory process. Hewson and Towler (in Copeland, 2005:84) termed this triadic contractual obligation the "three-cornered contract". The supervisor is at the centre of this triangle because he or she serves the interests of all parties in this supervisory relationship (Copeland, 2005:84).

Supervisors must thus work smart; any supervisory agreement they enter into with supervisees must go through the legal process. If possible, organisations should have a formal and standardised legal supervision contract for use by supervisors and supervisees. All categories of social work supervision covered herein must be contracted.

- **Self-supervision**

Both the supervisor and supervisee can engage in self-supervision. Self-supervision involves a process of reflecting on one's service provided to clients. It requires one to confront own ways of working (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012:44). The requirement is that the supervisee or supervisor must conduct critical introspection on own use of skills, theories, and techniques including own cultural sensitivity, relationships, and attitudes towards clients and fellow colleagues.

Stewart (1969:223) reported that it was standard practice at Johannesburg Child Guidance Clinic that the social workers make notes after each interview with a client. The notes were used by the social worker to reflect on what transpires between herself and her client.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the reflection reports by supervisees present a good starting point for one to engage in self-supervision. Supervisors should encourage supervisees to reflect on their service delivery and then facilitate the discussion around the outcomes of such introspection. In a healthy supervisor-supervisee relationship the supervisee would be honest in reflecting his/her performance, leading to freely identifying the shortcomings. This is likely to assist the supervisor in providing support to supervisees in addressing these shortcomings for the benefit of the agency, the clientele as well as the supervisee.

- **E-supervision**

Traditionally supervision has been carried out face-to-face but with the growth of technology, a good deal of supervision is delivered online in the form of telephone, video and e-mail

supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:72). The advantage of e-supervision is that the supervision is not confined to the traditional four walls; the supervisor can provide support to supervisees from anywhere in the world using various electronic platforms, i.e. telephone, e-mails, Skype, videoconferencing, social media etc. Critical to note here is that electronic evidence of the interaction between the supervisor and supervisee must also be kept. It is the opinion of the researcher that e-supervision could enhance supportive supervision because where a supervisee has an emotionally charged issue he or she can reach out to the supervisor where ever the supervisor might be, using any of the identified mechanisms and in this way resolutions can be sought quicker. By the same token, when using electronic media to provide support both the supervisor and supervisee must be aware of the fact that they cannot completely ensure the confidentiality of their conversation and the researcher advises that this aspect should be clearly articulated in the supervision contract between the supervisor and supervisee.

- **Observational supervision**

Observational supervision involves the use of methods of observation such as live observation, audio/video taping and process recording (O'Donoghue, 2002:6). For instance, a supervisee may witness how certain social work techniques/tasks are carried out. Observational supervision is supportive because the supervisor can model the required behaviour or he/she can send the supervisee to observe and learn from practices of other professionals.

- **Formal supervision**

Formal supervision is planned and agreed upon between the supervisor and supervisee. Formal supervision provides consistency, predictability and regularities; facilitates the development of positive relationships, allows on-going reviews on practice issues; maintains a focus on developmental needs (Wonnacott, 2012:64-65). The disadvantage of engaging solely in formal supervision is that the practitioner would not get assistance in case of emergency situations hence the need for informal supervision at times.

- **Informal supervision**

Informal supervision is unplanned. It may include ad hoc conversations such as speaking on the phone after a visit and corridor discussions (Wonnacott, 2012:65). According to the author,

informal supervision is not recommended as it may compromise confidentiality whilst the supportive and developmental needs of the supervisee may be lost in the conversation because supervisors are likely not to record such discussions. Open-door supervision is one such supervision practice. Although slightly true, the researcher disagrees with this complete disregard of informal supervision and is of the opinion that supervisors have an obligation to make sure that they record any critical issues which could have been discussed this way.

The various forms of supervision alluded to in this text are interconnected. They may be used solo, in conjunction with each other, or to supplement each other. For instance, a supervisor may make use of individual supervision to discuss emotionally charged issues with supervisees and use group supervision to discuss administrative and educational issues with the same supervisees. By the same token, the supervisor may encourage informal supervision and open door supervision for all urgent issues. E-mail, videoconferences and telephone conferences may also be instituted in the absence of a supervisor from the office. Again, where a supervisor feels he or she lacks knowledge on a certain technique, he or she may seek the services of an external supervisor to teach and support on its implementation. The successful execution (or failure thereof) of all the above-mentioned forms of supervision is largely dependent on the supervisor-supervisee relationship.

2.7.2 The supervisory relationship

If the premise in practice is that supervision is at the core of social work practice, it can therefore not be disputed that “the supervisory relationship is fundamental to the delivery of effective social work services and that there is a direct link between the quality of supervision and outcomes of services” (Wonnacott, 2012:13-14). Social work supervision is therefore essentially a relationship between two people (the supervisor and supervisee) with the ultimate aim of improving social work practice and outcomes for service users (Wonnacott, 2012:14). Tsui (2005:39-42) refers to the description of the supervisory relationship as relating to the supervisor-supervisee. In order to discuss the supervisory relationship in a holistic manner, the supervision relationship should be viewed as a multifaceted relationship involving the organisation, the supervisor, the supervisee and the service users (Tsui, 2005:41) and the three dimensions of this relationship are briefly discussed as follows:

- **The agency and the supervisor**

Agency policies govern the behaviour of supervisors and the process of supervision is affected by organisational goals, structures, programmes, policies and procedures, legislation, service

setting and the cultural context (Tsui, 2005:41-42). The supervisor is a middle manager. He or she mediates and liaises between the supervisee and organisational management. The supervisors' management role is to ensure that the goals of the organisation are reached by using specified policies and procedures.

- **The supervisee and the client**

Between the supervisee and the client, there is a worker-client professional working relationship which is governed by legislation, organisational policies, and the professional code of ethics. In this relationship, supervisees use knowledge from their professional training and the advice given by supervisor to achieve intervention objectives (Tsui, 2005:43).

- **The client and the agency**

The relationship between the client and the agency can be viewed as a relationship between the consumer and the service provider (Tsui, 2005:43). The aim of the agency is to provide the best service to the client and for the agency to achieve this goal it is imperative for the client to reciprocate the relationship by giving feedback to the agency on the service received.

It is therefore the opinion of the researcher that the three afore described dimensions of the supervision relationship as alluded to by Tsui do not adequately describe the multifaceted supervisory relationship. A shortcoming in this regard has been identified, i.e. the supervisor and the client relationship including the supervisor and the supervisee relationship, also need to be unpacked yet they are omitted. As such, the two proposed additional dimensions are discussed as follows, based on the researcher's view point:

- **The supervisor and the client**

The supervisor influences the intervention strategies that are carried out by the supervisee in assisting the clients. In turn, the client's psychosocial circumstances influence the practice decisions given by the supervisor to the supervisee. Another dimension of the supervisor-client relationship is that the client has the right to communicate directly with a supervisor regarding the supervisee's intervention in his/her circumstances. This communication may encompass complaints about the supervisee or compliments on a job well done.

- **The supervisor and the supervisee**

A supervisor is designated by an agency, organisation or statutes to supervise another's practice; he or she directs and guides the supervisee's practice (Munson, 2002:10). The supervisee, on the other hand, is expected to be accountable to the supervisor (Munson, 2002:10). The implication of this relationship is that a supervisor is partially accountable for the services rendered by the supervisee.

The nucleus of supervision radiates from the relationship between the agency and the supervisor, the supervisee and the client, the agency and the supervisee, and the supervisor and supervisee relationship referred to herein. These dimensions are interconnected. The agency sets out policies within which to function; the supervisor is mandated by the agency to guide the supervisee on the implementation of these policies; both the supervisor and supervisee work within the parameters of policies to cater for clients, and the agency uses the supervisory process as a mechanism to ensure efficient service provision to the clients. Disputes may arise within these dimensions and there should be mechanisms in place, i.e. grievance procedures, for use by all parties to resolve disagreements. Ideally, all parties must be supportive pillars to each other and this could be achieved only if they are able to resolve disputes. The success of these relationships goes a long way in enhancing the supportive component of supervision that forms the cornerstone of this study. Furthermore, it is worth noting herein that these relations are also largely influenced by the developmental route taken by a social worker towards the supervisory role.

2.7.3 The transitional stages of supervisors and supervisees

Practitioners do not wake up one morning to find themselves as expert supervisors. They go through a series of developmental stages. Supervisees also need to adapt to the supervisor and his or her supervision style. These facets are discussed in detail hereunder.

2.7.3.1 The transition from practitioner to supervisor

The supervisor grows from performing generic and/or clinical social work roles to assuming the supervision role. In most instances in South Africa the social worker is promoted into a supervision role after years of experience in practice. Mokoka (2016:122) found this to be the case; that social work supervisors within DSD in the Johannesburg Region were not trained to perform supervision but were promoted to be supervisors based on their years of experience as social workers. In South Africa, the recommended years of experience for practitioners getting appointed in a supervisory position are five years (Department of Social

Development, 2012:31). It is thus assumed that after five years of practice the social worker has acquired enough knowledge and skills to guide newly qualified social workers, which is not always the case. According to Mokoka (2016:122) relying on experience without appropriate supervision training makes it difficult for supervisors to know what they have to do and how to go about performing this role and function and this in turn impacts negatively on social work service delivery to clients.

Regardless of the aforementioned challenge and/or misconception; ready or not, social workers continue to enter the field of supervision and the move is motivated by various reasons. There are those workers who have a strong propensity towards moving into managerial positions and supervision is usually the first step. Others move into it by default because of a lack of more preferable alternatives; some move because advancement up the career ladder in direct service positions is limited while others opt for supervision because of being burnt out as direct service workers (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:207-208). According to the researcher, some social workers also move for lucrative financial gain compared to practising as a direct service worker.

The preparation for moving into the supervision role varies from practitioner to practitioner. Many supervisors have limited preparation for the position and little educational support available following assignment to the position (Kaiser & Kuechler in Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:208). A report from the Think Tank Symposium also revealed that workers often become supervisors without adequate training and/or understanding of their role (Social Work Policy Institute, 2011:7). All the supervisors in the study by Moss (2001:64) reiterated the crucial need for training of prospective supervisors before making the role transition. Respondents in the study by Hair (2012) also echoed the need for training of supervisors to provide supervision. Those who are prepared are usually the ones identified in internal succession plans while others prepare themselves by attending supervision related training. Others, however, never prepare themselves for the position. For some, training in supervision is an incidental skill gained as a consequence of being a supervisee (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:208).

It is undoubtedly evident that practitioners need to prepare for the transition from active practice into the supervision role. The need for educational preparation for the role comes to the fore strongly from various authors. Coleman (2003:2) emphasises the need for training as critical for competency into the new social work role. This need was also expressed by participants in Moss (2001) study as stated earlier; they proposed that the following training sessions, amongst others, were essential for social work supervisors pre and after assuming

the supervision role: general management courses; people management courses; courses on relationships; training on emotional maturity/emotional intelligence; and refresher courses on social work supervision.

The National Association of Social Workers (2012:80) proposes the following general qualifications to assist in this regard: specified coursework or a minimum number of continuing education hours in supervisory practice required by the jurisdiction, being free from sanction of the licensing board for violation(s) of practice and experience and expertise in the practice arena and with the client population served. To meet this need, the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) in America developed an online training programme for supervisors entitled “The Leadership Academy for Supervisors” (Social Work Policy Institute, 2011:7). In South Africa, according to the Department of Social Development (2012:32), supervisors are required to attend a supervision course presented by the service provider accredited by the SACSSP. Also in South Africa, various universities provide postgraduate supervision Master’s programmes. There are also practitioners who offer the SACSSP accredited continuous professional development (CPD) workshops on social work supervision.

Over the years, scholars have embarked on a mission to chart the journey of a practitioner into the supervisory role. Tsui (2005:108-111); Wonnacott (2012:14) and Engelbrecht (2014:131) showcase the following stages, which have been captured succinctly and amalgamated in a table format hereunder.

Table 2.1 Transitional stages from frontline social worker to supervisor

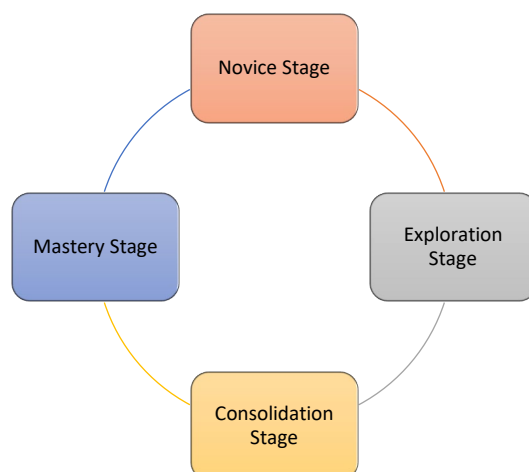
Alonso’s (1983) three stages in a supervisor’s career			
Novice stage	Mid-career	Later career	
Hess’s (1986,1987) model			
Beginning stage	Exploration stage	Confirmation stage	
Wonnacott (2012)			
Starting out	Consolidating and developing	Action learning and supervisor development	
Stoltenberg et al. (1998) stages			
The beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	
Stoltenberg and Delworth’s (1987) four-level model of supervisor development			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 integrated
Watkins’ (1990, 1993) supervision complexity model			

Role shock	Role recovery and transition	Role consolidation	Role mastery
Shulman (1993) stages			
The preliminary stage	The beginning stage	The work stage	The termination stage

From the stages illustrated in the table above, it can be deduced that practitioners go through a similar journey of transitioning from a frontline practitioner role to a supervisory role. The different stages depicted in the table above allude to similar milestones regardless of the number of stages that each researcher recommends. The analogy is as follows: a supervisor who has just been appointed in the supervision role is a novice; she/he is highly motivated yet lacks experience and consequently confidence. She/he is faced with shock at their own weaknesses and inadequacies (Watkins in Tsui, 2005:110). These supervisors are also shocked by the weight of authority bestowed upon them. Secondly, the supervisor embarks on an exploration and during this process she/he depends highly on superiors and peers for guidance. She/he then eventually begins to define herself/himself in the new role and begins to adjust. Lastly, the supervisor finds her/his feet; has clear role awareness; she/he finds a balance between herself/himself and supervisees. She/he is then cemented in the role. Those who achieve the last milestone and who are resilient in all the endeavours associated with the role “become master supervisors” (Stoltenberg & Delworth in Tsui, 2005:109).

The researcher has thus combined and consolidated the aforementioned stages and proposes four new stages in this regard. Their formulation is influenced to a great extent by the analogy which clarifies the transition from practitioner to supervisor. The stages are illustrated hereunder:

Figure 2.1: Transitional stages from social work practitioner to supervisor



The stages are depicted as a cycle because they are continuous. A supervisor might master one aspect of her/his work, e.g. administrative supervision, whilst simultaneously struggling with another, e.g. supportive supervision, which takes her or him back to the novice stage. It is critical to note in this regard that whilst supervisors go through a series of stages to master supervision so do the supervisees.

2.7.3.2 Transitional stages of supervisees in the supervision process

Supervisees go through a variety of stages to acclimatise to the supervision process and to the supervisor. According to Itzhaky (in Hughes & Wearing, 2013: 134) supervisees' go through the following stages:

- **The beginning stage**

Here the supervisee relies heavily on the supervisor but at the same time feels threatened in supervision; he or she does not trust the supervisor fully.

- **The intermediate stage**

During this stage, the supervisee feels more confident in his or her work and draws on a wide range of sources of knowledge from the environment. Supervisees are also likely to respond positively to feedback but still struggle with autonomy. The supervisor engages the supervisee in decision-making and supports supervisee suggestions.

- **The advanced stage**

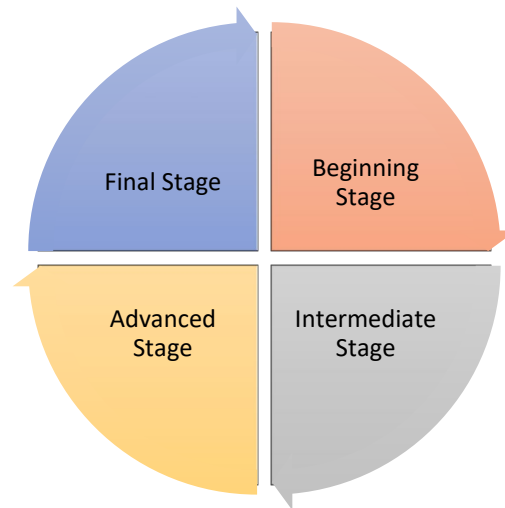
Supervision becomes a flexible learning environment. The supervisee takes initiatives and is able to select solutions from a range of alternatives.

- **The final stage**

The supervisee is independent, competent and confident in her/his job, and has developed his or her own professional identity. The supervisee can take on the role of being a supervisor.

From the transitional stages of supervisees discussed above, the researcher has developed a schematic illustration to represent the transitional stages of supervisees.

Figure 2.2: Transitional stages of supervisees in the supervision process



These stages are also continuous. Similar to the transitional stages of practitioners to supervisory roles, supervisees may master one aspect of their supervision, e.g. administration, and they may struggle with another, i.e. opening up to supervisors about personal stressors impinging their performance. For the supervisee to transit successfully through these stages, both the supervisor and supervisee should work on their relationship. The transition from a frontline practitioner to a supervisor comes with the assumption of new roles. A discussion of the supervision roles follows next.

2.7.4 The roles of supervisors

Social work supervisors assume a wide range of roles. The middle management roles of supervisors imply that supervisors have management roles. Supervisors also have practice roles, which they execute when facilitating supervision sessions. These two sets of roles are applicable to administrative, educational and supportive supervision functions. In the context, owing to the goal of this study, the roles are explained in relation to supportive social work supervision.

2.7.4.1 Managerial roles of supervisors

The management roles of supervisors are intrinsically linked to the general functions of management and constitute the following:

- **Planning**

Planning involves setting goals and determining how to meet them (Certo, 2013:11). It also includes analysing situations, forecasting events, establishing objectives, setting priorities,

and deciding what actions are needed to achieve objectives (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:259). This role can be undertaken at different managerial levels. At top management level in organisations; supervisors set the goals of the organisation and provide broad plans as to how those goals ought to be met. Top management planning is referred to as strategic planning (Certo, 2013:145). The purpose of planning by supervisors, at middle management position, is to direct the work unit towards achieving parts of the strategic plans (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:259). They also determine how the social work employee could contribute to achieving the organisational goals (Certo, 2013:11). The supervisory planning is also referred to as operational planning (Certo, 2013:145). Assisting supervisees with planning serves as a supportive mechanism for them because they are able to execute tasks timeously; they gain confidence in their skills and facilitate their independence.

- **Organising**

In an organisational context, organising involves setting up the group, allocating resources, and assigning work to achieve the goals (Certo, 2013:11). Leonard and Hilgert (2007:270) define organising in a similar manner stating that it involves grouping employees to carry out designated functions and accomplish certain objectives. At a supervisory level, organising usually involves activities such as scheduling projects and assigning duties to employees (Certo, 2013:11). It is the view of the researcher that organising also involves scheduling supervision sessions as well as helping supervisees understand their roles in the bigger organisational context. If supervisees are able to define their roles, then they are able to execute responsibilities bestowed on them and by creating such a feasible working environment for the supervisees, the supervisors become supportive to their supervisees.

- **Staffing**

Staffing is the recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, and training of employees (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:335). These activities are usually carried out by a supervisor in conjunction with the human resources department. Once an employee is suitably positioned in the organisation, then he/she is allocated a supervisor who will then delegate (assign) job responsibilities and provide mentoring (guidance) including educational, administrative and supportive supervision. The supervisory staffing functions also include the evaluation of an employee's performance (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:335). It is critical that a supervisor appropriately staff his or her unit because the performance of supervisors is judged by the quality of work provided by their supervisees. The orientation and training activities associated with this role are supportive. Through orientation, supervisees understand their duties and

their relationships with other team members. Through training, supervisees are also enabled to polish their skills to suit the organisational setting. Supervisors are thus supportive by affording supervisees various developmental opportunities.

- **Leading**

Leading involves influencing people to act (or not to act) in a certain way (Certo, 2013:11). There are three general types of leadership styles: the authoritarian leader, the democratic leader and the laissez-faire leader. The authoritarian leader retains a great deal of authority, makes decisions and dictates/instructs supervisees; the democratic leader allows employees to participate in decision-making and problem-solving; and the laissez-faire leader is uninvolved and lets employees do what they want (Certo, 2013:210).

Similarly, there are three types of supervisory leadership styles, i.e. autocratic (authoritarian) supervision, laissez-faire (free-reign) supervision and general supervision (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:436-440). Supervisors who adopt autocratic supervision rely on formal authority, threats, pressure and close control; in democratic leadership both the supervisor and the supervisee participate in decision making; free-reign (or Laissez-fair) supervisors, on the other hand, delegate virtually all authority and decision-making to supervisees to such an extent that supervisors do not become involved in workplace decisions unless asked (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:436-440). The supportive component of supervision may be closely linked to democratic leadership style because a supportive supervisor involves a supervisee in decision-making.

It is also critical to note in this regard that a supervisor ought to adapt whatever leadership style they decide to take on. Ideally, a supervisor should make use of different leadership styles with supervisees in dealing with different issues. The supervisor should instruct supervisees, allow supervisees to participate in decision-making and also allow them some free reign so that they can become independent. The supervisor must also make use of different supervision styles at different spectrums according to need and appropriateness. The trick for the supervisor is to establish when to apply each leadership and/or supervision style from one supervisee to another each day or on a single supervisee at varying times during the day. This will demonstrate individualisation and supervisees will become themselves and enjoy the relevant support that is tailor-made according to their individual capabilities and needs.

- **Controlling**

Controlling entails ensuring that actual performance is in line with intended performance and taking corrective action, if necessary (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:541). Supervisors control by establishing performance standards, monitoring performance against standards and if supervisees are not compliant with standards, then the supervisor reinforces success and fixes problems (Certo, 2013:158). Control mechanisms can be categorised as feed forward, concurrent- and feedback based (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:546-547). Feed forward means the supervisor should anticipate and prevent potential sources of deviations from standards by considering in advance, the possibility of malfunctions or undesirable outcomes (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:546). Concurrent control refers to corrective actions taken while operations are proceeding, and that spots problems as they occur; and feedback control refers to actions taken after activities or service provision by the supervisee to evaluate and determine ways to prevent deviations from standards in the future (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:546-547).

The implication of this role in this regard is that a supportive supervisor must be forward thinking; she/he anticipates potential deviations from standards; she/he is able to act quickly to correct malfunctions when the supervisee encounters a mishap and must also determine ways of minimising deviations from standards by supervisees in the future. The challenge with controlling relates more prominently to provision of therapeutic services because services occur in a confidential context between the social worker and the client; the supervisor only learns of what transpires in the working relationship through the lenses of the social worker only.

From the discussion it can thus be deduced that a supportive supervisor should be able to juggle these roles each day. The supervisor should be able to do so despite the fact that she or he has practice roles which she or he must also undertake.

2.7.4.2 Practice roles of supervisors

The practice roles are intertwined with the generalist social work practice roles assumed by practitioners in the provision of services to clients. As alluded to previously, this is because social work supervision mirrors the helping relationship. Practice roles are thus those roles that supervisors execute during each supervision session. The following can be used to convey support to practitioners:

- **Facilitator**

A facilitator is a guide, an expeditor and an implementer. In general, social work service delivery with a group, a facilitator guides the group's experience (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110). It is almost custom, drawn from the researcher's experience, that supervisors are the ones who facilitate the supervision sessions. It is also the opinion of the researcher that in a supportive supervision session, the supervisor may facilitate various discussions, including those pertaining to challenging cases; unpacking and dissecting tough administrative process; as well as discussing emotionally charged work and personal issues negatively impacting on the supervisee's performance and professional development. The researcher is further convinced that a supportive supervisor also facilitates the discussion of a supervisee's professional and personal achievements to celebrate with them.

- **Broker**

In a general social work service delivery process a broker links client systems with needed resources. Supervisors also need to link supervisees with resources to do their job effectively and efficiently. To effectively undertake this role, supervisors should be knowledgeable about alternative services and programs available for staff and must understand the procedures to accessing those (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2012:40). This role requires a supervisor who understands his or her own limitations so that he or she can be able to refer the subordinate accordingly. The expectation here is that supervisors should liaise and build working relationships and/or must have a data base of different organisations for them to be able to refer supervisees accordingly. If the supervisor succeeds in playing this role effectively the supervisees will be able to function effectively with minimized stress levels.

- **Counsellor**

In a therapeutic encounter, a counsellor provides guidance and assists service recipients in a planned-change or problem solving process (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110). A counsellor also gives support (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:54). In the supportive supervision context, the supervisor must also offer counselling to supervisees according to need. However, wherein long-term therapeutic services are required, the supervisor should refer the supervisee accordingly. With the latter, the supervisor should seek generic feedback on the progress from the supervisee and/or the therapist.

- **Mediator**

A mediator resolves arguments, disagreements or conflicts among individuals, family, group, and/or organisational or community systems (Hull & Kirst-Ashman, Yessian & Broskowski in Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110). A mediator is neutral and does not side with any party. The supervisor can offer support to supervisees by mediating on disputes involving the supervisee. With the neutral role that the supervisor plays in resolving disputes the supervisee will enjoy the necessary support and be able to face the situation with a sense of objectivity that is so needed to maintain human relations especially because human relations are critical in social work service where sometimes social workers have to rely on stakeholders to comprehensively render services to client.

- **Negotiator**

A negotiator is an intermediary; he or she acts to settle disputes and/or resolve disagreements (Hull & Kirst-Ashman in Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110). Unlike mediators, negotiators take the side of one of the parties involved in a dispute. Likewise, the supervisor is supportive when he or she negotiates on behalf of the supervisee during disputes. Consequently, in the negotiation the supervisor takes the side of his or her supervisee(s). The supervisor negotiates for the retribution of the supervisee only if the supervisee's case is water tight. Wherein the supervisee is at fault, the supervisor must negotiate for an amicable solution on behalf of the supervisee. Going into negotiations, the supervisor and supervisee should have a game plan. Negotiation becomes supportive only when the supervisee understands that 'game plan', if they understand why the specific 'plan' and if they contribute to the 'plan'.

- **Advocate**

An advocate is a person who speaks on behalf of another to promote fair and equitable treatment or gain needed resources (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110). A supervisor would be regarded as supportive when he or she defends, represents or speaks for the supervisee on critical issues where necessary and where possible, with teams, top management and other authoritative figures. In this advocacy role the supervisor has to ensure that the supervisees are provided with all the resources that they need to meet the goals of the agency, i.e. to provide effective and responsive services to the client systems.

- **Coaching**

The term coaching is synonymous to teaching, training, tutoring, instructing, preparation and drilling hence coaching is defined as “giving employees instructions, information, and suggestions relating to their job assignments and execution of those assignments” (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:392). In agreement, Thornby and Pettrey (2005:28) refer to coaching as partnership and a relationship where a senior personnel nurtures, supports and/or helps others. Coaching is also transformational by influencing behaviours or ways of thinking, and helping people commit to different ways of doing things (Thornby & Pettrey, 2005:28). In an effort to support supervisees through coaching, supervisors can identify skill gaps in their subordinates. They should then teach, train, tutor and instruct supervisees or refer them accordingly with the aim of nurturing and supporting them in the execution of their assignments. This role does not mean supervisors ought to dictate but it promotes suggesting and dialogue. Coaching is a function of mentoring hence the discussion of mentoring next.

- **Mentoring**

A supportive supervisor becomes a mentor to his or her supervisee. Mentoring is an interpersonal relationship between two individuals (the mentor and the protégé/mentee) at different stages of professional development and is undertaken on a voluntary and self-determination basis of both parties (Tsui, 2005:28). The interpersonal relationship is a professional mentor-mentee relationship and it is undertaken voluntarily by the mentor to provide career advice, to plot and help in the achievement of some tasks towards the career advancement of mentees. It also involves emotional support and providing any other assistance required by the mentee.

A mentor is someone who takes a personal interest in another’s career and acts as a guide or sponsor (Tsui, 2005:27). Tobin (in Haider, 2007:32) identified seven mentoring roles, i.e. teacher, sponsor, adviser, agent, role model, coach and confidante. Tsui (2005:27) identified four: socialisation, technological assistance, career development, and emotional support. Socialisation helps the protégé to adjust to the organisation and that he/she understands organisational culture; protégé’s technological skills are harnessed through direct teaching and offering of challenging assignments; career advancement includes information about opportunities, letter of references; and sponsorship while emotional support encompasses acceptance, supportive criticism and timely encouragements (Tsui, 2005:32).

The aforementioned mentoring functions must be undertaken simultaneously and concurrently in each mentor-mentee relationship. The mentor-supervisor must introduce the mentee to the industry and industry stakeholders and role players. The mentor-supervisor should ensure that

the mentee stays abreast of new developments (technologies) in their field, i.e. they educate or ensure the education of mentees about the new technologies. They must also teach mentees strategies to overcome obstacles in their journey. Mentor-supervisors must further assist supervisees to map out, plan and execute career aspirations; they must advise, coach and model good behaviour; and they should offer emotional support to mentees, i.e. become the mentees' confidante. In this manner the supervisees will develop confidence in the supervisor and feel free to approach them whenever the need arises in their professional journey.

- **Manager**

In this role the supervisor is responsible for the quality of the work the supervisee is doing with their clients (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:54). This role thus entails managing the supervisee's workload and, indirectly, the personal issues of supervisees ensuring that personal issues do not hinder professional service. In a supportive context, particularly with regard to case management, supervisors support subordinates by affording them time to discuss challenging cases, helping them plan their treatment procedures and by giving them information on new resources that can assist them (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2012:43). Supervisors also support supervisees by assisting them to effectively manage their time (time management); and by monitoring the standard of service provision (quality assurance) (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2012:43).

The overarching purpose of all the identified roles is to advance practice and in turn contribute to the professional development of the supervisee. These roles are intertwined. It is only through their correct and constructive implementation that supervisees' are able to determine their challenges (both personally and professionally), uncover reasons for the challenges, constructively correct negative behaviours, and reinforcing positive behaviours/practices. It is therefore critical that supervisors give supervisees constant feedback and appraisals for them to feel supported. For the supervisory relationship to withstand the test of time, supervisors need to have certain abilities (or qualities), which are covered in detail hereunder.

2.7.5 Qualities needed to be an effective supervisor

Hawkins and Shohet (2012:52) mention the following qualities needed to be an effective supervisor: flexibility, a multi-perspective view; solid knowledge of the profession and orientation in which they supervise; ability to work transculturally; the ability to manage and contain anxiety; sensitivity to a wider contextual issues; and the ability to handle power including assertiveness. The author simply lists these qualities and for the purpose of this

study and of unearthing supportive supervision, they are elucidated to encapsulate supportive supervision.

- **Flexibility:** flexibility suggests that supervisors are able to move between theoretical concepts and make use of a wide variety of interventions and methods. In their supportive supervision endeavour, supervisors should also advise and teach supervisees and where necessary model the use of techniques to supervisees.
- **A multi-perspective view:** Supervisors should have a 360° view. This quality thus implies that a supportive supervisor should be able to see the same situation from a variety of angles and they should share the observation with the supervisee and thus afford the supervisee an opportunity to make own decisions.
- Supervisors can only be able to offer ample support if they have a **solid knowledge** of the profession and orientation in which they supervise. As she or he endeavours to be supportive to supervisees, a supervisor also makes an effort to gain knowledge on issues affecting the professional and personal lives of their supervisees.
- **The ability to work transculturally.** Supervisors ought to be culturally sensitive and culturally competent. This quality denotes that a supportive supervisor should be aware of different cultural backgrounds of their supervisees; they acknowledge the diverse cultures; and they respect cultural orientations without compromising practice. Where prejudices and biases exist, supervisors should actively address them.
- Supervisors should be **able to manage and contain anxiety**; their own and that of their supervisees. The critical thing to note here is that a supportive supervisor should be aware and should acknowledge own limitations and where she or he cannot assist a supervisee should seek assistance.
- **Sensitivity to wider contextual issues.** Being sensitive to wider contextual issues denotes that supportive supervisors need to be versatile and proactive in anticipating challenges and generating strategies to minimise adversities.
- **Supervisors should have the ability to handle power appropriately.** This quality implies that supervisors should not be oppressive but that they should be supportive to supervisees by creating a working environment wherein supervisees can flourish.
- **Supervisors should have humour, humility and patience.** This implies that supportive supervisors exercise the specified personality traits according to need.
- Lastly, **supervisors must be assertive.** Consequently, being assertive implies that supportive supervisors communicate openly issues impacting negatively and positively on service provision and on the supervisory relationship. The ability of a

supervisor to advocate, mediate and negotiate on behalf of the supervisee showcases assertiveness.

A supervisor may enter the supervision position having developed the aforementioned qualities, whilst others may need to acquire a range of them. These qualities may be acquired by heeding feedback from supervisees and other related colleagues; through experience in supervision; and by attending training opportunities. If a supervisor possesses all the aforementioned qualities then she or he will be able to contextualise the supervision process with each supervisee.

2.7.6 The contexts of social work supervision

Social work services are largely carried out in an organisational context. Likewise, social work supervision is mostly carried out in an organisational context. According to Tsui (2005:49) the organisational context is influenced to a large extent by the following: the physical context; the interpersonal context; the cultural context; and the psychological contexts of staff members, clients and the communities within which they function. These contexts are briefly discussed below.

- **The physical context**

The physical context refers to the venue, the seating arrangements, and the atmosphere of where the supervision session is held (Tsui, 2005:49). Traditionally, supervision sessions are either held in the supervisor's or supervisee's office. Tsui (2005:51) recommends a variety of physical settings: that if supervisors are giving instructions or conveying official information, the session should take place in the supervisor's office; that if brainstorming and creative thinking is the context, then an open space with more physical freedom could be inspiring; and that on occasions when supervisors wish to give emotional support and allow supervisees to express their feelings, an interview room may be a good choice. In the absence of an interview room, the researcher suggests the supervisee's office because in their own office supervisees command power.

The most common seating arrangements include the face-to-face discussions across office desks; the second one is where a supervisor sits next to the supervisee at a 90-degree angle; and the third is whereby the supervisor and the supervisee sit side by side (Tsui, 2005:52-53). The seating arrangements are influenced by the venue where the session is held. Simultaneously, the atmosphere will also be determined by the venue and the seating

arrangements of the session. The supervisor-supervisee relationship will also play a role in determining the siting arrangement.

- **The Interpersonal Context**

The interpersonal context refers to the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. The interpersonal context is important because supervision occurs between two people who, in one way or another, have to form some form of a relationship as they work together. According to Tsui (2005:54) there are potentially three kinds of relationships that can occur between the supervisor and the supervisee. First is the supervisor-subordinate relationship. In this situation, the session tends to be administratively inclined. Secondly, the supervisor may treat the supervisee as a professional peer. In this instance the supervisor enhances professional growth of the supervisee taking into consideration the supervisee's wealth of knowledge and experience. Thirdly, the supervisor and the supervisee could view their relationship as a friendship with each individual also fully aware of their collegial relationship.

Ideally, the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee should be characterised by a combination of the supervisor-supervisee, professional-peer, and the friendship-collegial interpersonal context. Each interpersonal trait may be defined for each component of supervision. For instance, when conducting administrative supervision, the supervisor can assume largely the supervisor-supervisee relationship whilst during supportive supervision they may assume the friendship-collegial relationship to allow supervisees freedom to express themselves adequately. Ideally, both the supervisor and the supervisee should define the interpersonal context and the supervisor should set the tone.

- **The cultural context**

According to Tsui (2005:49 & 58-59) the cultural context refers to the norms and values of the society in which the supervisor and the supervisee work; the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee and the organisational culture. According to the researcher the cultural context should also encapsulate the norms and values that the supervisor and the supervisee develop and agree upon to maintain in their supervisory relationship. The latter addition to the description thus takes into consideration that the supervisor and the supervisee both come into the supervision relationship bearing their own individual ethnic values and norms; the organisational values and norms as well as the norms and the various values and norms of the society within which they work. The three sets of value systems, similar or

different, brought forth by the supervisor and the supervisee are synergised to develop supervisory values and norms. In this regard, effective communication is fundamental to building a successful supervisory relationship (Tsui, 2005:60; Ortega & Mixon-Mitchell, 2009:211).

- **The psychological context**

The psychological context refers to the way in which the supervisor and the supervisee perceive the supervisory process (Tsui, 2005:59). These perceptions may be rational or irrational. This could be irrational in the sense that they may be based on impressions arising from personal history, ideas acquired during practice, or feelings engendered by the internal and external environments (Tsui, 2005:59). The perceptions may also be rational if either the supervisor and/or the supervisee sense the irrational perceptions from each other; those perceptions become real and have a potential of making the supervisory sessions unpleasant. It is therefore advisable that there be a supervision agreement in place, pointing out that each party should be brutally honest with the other at every stage of the supervision or supervision session so that they can talk issues over. This is because effective communication is fundamental to a successful supervisory relationship (Tsui, 2005:60; Ortega & Mixon-Mitchell, 2009:211).

Taking note of the physical, the interpersonal, the cultural and the psychological contexts of their subordinates constitutes a supportive act on the part of the supervisors. The onus is thus on supervisor to not only take note but to advocate for supervisees should they need to mitigate problematic contextual issues as they strive to provide effective services to clients.

Over and above the aforementioned contexts, supervision is also characterised by various stages and a discussion of the stages follows.

2.7.8 The stages of the supervisory process

Similar to the traditional social work intervention process employed by practitioners when working with client systems, there are also stages to be followed in the provision of supervision. These stages are applicable to administrative, educational and supportive supervision, however, in this context; the discussion of the stages is centred on supportive supervision. The stages of the supervisory process in this study are divided into two; the stages of the supervisory series and those of the supervision sessions.

2.7.8.1 Stages of the supervision series

Supportive social work supervision is also a series of events and occurs through various stages. These stages overarch the entire supervision relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. According to Tsui (2005) the stages of the supervision series include the following:

- **The Preparation stage**

Preparation denotes planning for the entire supervision relationship between a new supervisor and a supervisee. Preparatory arrangements in this regard, amongst others, include agreeing on the physical setting (venue) for the preliminary stage, contemplating the sitting arrangements, agreeing on the time span for the first meeting and preparing the agenda by both parties (Tsui, 2005:125). Supervisors should hold a short meeting with a prospective supervisee to agree on the identified logistics.

- **The preliminary stage**

The preliminary stage occurs once in the lifespan of the supervisory relationship. During this stage the supervisor and the supervisee meet and interact for the very first time as supervisor and supervisee. The supervisor and the supervisee get acquainted not in a formal supervision session but on a general note. The most critical agenda for this session is the supervision contract. The supervisor and the supervisee agree on the day, the time and the venue for the supportive supervision session. During this stage the supervisor and supervisee share their perceptions, discuss mutual obligations and expectations (Shulman in Tsui 2005:113).

With regard to supportive supervision, the two should describe their understanding of support in the supervisory context. The supervisor should convey his or her commitment to supporting the supervisee. The supervisee must also articulate how he or she wants to be supported. All the aspects discussed in this stage must be contained in the supervision contract and must be authenticated by signatures. This is because this stage lays the foundation for the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee (Tsui, 2005:112).

- **The planning stage**

Planning specifies what should be done (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:123). If planning specifies what should be done then the researcher is of the opinion that the supervisor and the supervisee

ought to meet and plan the content to be covered in the initial educational, administrative and supportive supervision sessions; that the supervisee should articulate his or her shortcomings in relation to the new position; and that the supervisor should analyse the supervisees' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) so as to identify the developmental needs of the supervisee.

To be supportive in this regard, the researchers is also of the opinion that the supervisor can facilitate a discussion on activities that the two can undertake together to be able to distress and ventilate. This may include, for instance, going out for drinks or bowling. It is further the opinion of the researcher that formal and official appointments for such activities should be scheduled to make sure that this critical component of the supervisory relationship is not neglected.

- **The beginning stage**

The first educational, administrative and supportive sessions are undertaken during this stage. The researcher thus recommends that each function is carried out in its own time slot at this stage so that the goals of each function are clearly articulated. According to the researcher, the supervisor may convey support to the supervisee in the beginning stage by facilitating the articulation of administrative and educational shortcomings and by determining strategies for tackling the shortcomings together. Likewise, the first supportive supervision session must also be undertaken as alluded to earlier and that the supervisor should convey to the supervisee that it will be used to discuss personal and work-related challenges (other than administrative and educational challenges), which impact negatively on the supervisee's function. It is imperative for the two to plan and undertake activities to remedy the identified distress.

- **The working stage**

This is the core phase of the supervisory process (Tsui, 2005:113). The supervisor and the supervisee get down to business. The supervisor conducts the supervision sessions and the supervisee attends the session as agreed. Case work, group work and community work cases are discussed; intervention strategies for each method are devised according to the supervisee's needs. By assisting supervisees with difficulties and challenges faced by the supervisee during educational and administrative sessions, supervisors are supportive. Further to that, the supervisor must continue to support the supervisee by scheduling formal supportive supervision sessions to allow him or her opportunity to distress, offload and debrief.

Sometimes a supervision relationship comes to an end hence the upcoming discussion.

- **The termination stage**

Termination is the end of the professional supervisor-supervisee relationship (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:124). During this stage, the supervisor and supervisee part ways. There are various reasons for termination. One such reason could be that the supervisor or supervisee has secured new employment or position within the organisation. The termination may therefore be carried out over a number of sessions or once off depending on the reasons for termination. In a timely termination process, each session may be concentrated on each component of supervision. Where termination is done in a single session, then all components are included. During termination, the supervisor should summarise the supervision process; she should give feedback on the supervisee's SWOT analyses and make recommendations on areas needing further attention. Further, exit-interviews should be arranged for those leaving the organisation (Tsui, 2005:117). The supervisee should also be afforded an opportunity to give feedback on the supervision process. The supervisor should also arrange for formal evaluation by the supervisee to help her sharpen her supervision skills and refine her role.

From the preceding discussion it can therefore be deduced that similar to the administrative and the educational functions of social work supervision, it is critical that supervisors prepare for how supportive supervision may be undertaken with the supervisee. First and foremost, this entails making sure that supportive supervision is officiated in the supervision contract. Secondly, it also entails making sure that supportive supervision should be formally scheduled. It is paramount to note in this regard that whilst the supervisory process goes through a series of stages so does each and every supervision session.

2.7.8.2 Stages of the supervision session

The stages of the supervision process refer to a course followed when conducting a supervision session. These stages are drawn from the preceding discussion on the stages of the series. In describing these stages, and due to absence of literature regarding stages of the supervision session, the researcher adapted their meanings from the descriptions from Toseland and Rivas (2014) who discuss the process of group work. According to the researcher, the stages of the supervision sessions can thus encompass the following:

- **The planning stage**

This phase occurs at the end of each session. Both the supervisor and the supervisee plan for each administrative, educational and supportive session. They agree on the time, the venue and the agenda for the upcoming session.

- **The preparation stage**

Both the supervisor and supervisee prepare, individually, for the coming sessions.

- **The beginning stage**

It encompasses introductory remarks, confirming the agenda for the day and looking back at the last sessions for the purpose of building forward.

- **The working stage**

It involves getting dirty by implementing the plans, i.e. engaging in the discussion of, for instance, regarding challenges faced by supervisee in rendering case work, group work and community work projects including discussing emotionally charged issues according to need.

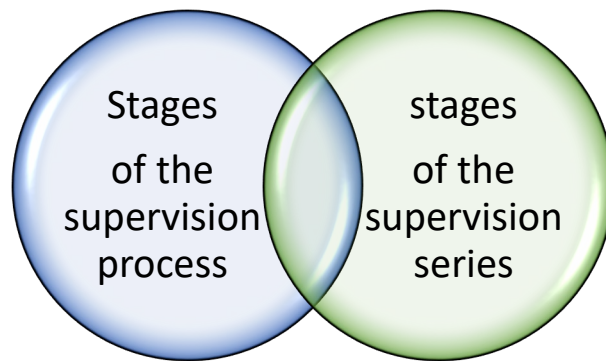
- **The ending stage**

The stage involves summarising the work done, outlining tasks to be undertaken by both parties if any, and planning for the future session. Then the session ends.

These stages are intertwined, in practice, they occur simultaneously. This is because sometimes the functions of supervision are also carried out simultaneously. When the supervisor meets for the first time with the supervisee, they draw the supervision contract, they discuss their roles and responsibilities and their expectations. At the same time, they discuss the supervisee's work related shortcomings, strengths and weaknesses as well as coming up with strategies of tackling them.

The functions maybe carried out simultaneously in the following manner: a challenge may be identified in the implementation of legislation or policy in a particular case and the supervisor can teach the supervisee how to interpret and apply it in various cases. Support often forms part of all sessions; the strategies sought to resolve practice difficulties are supportive in nature. It can thus be said with conviction that the stages and the processes are intertwined and do not occur in a linear format. From the discussion, the researcher has developed the following diagram to illustrate the interconnectedness of the stages discussed:

Figure 2.3. The interconnected stages of the supervision process



2.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter sets out to describe in depth and yet comprehensively the different aspects of supportive supervision. The realisation came very early during the literature review that there was a lack of scientific literature pertaining solely to supportive social work supervision. As a remedy, aspects of supportive supervision were derived from generic social work supervision literature; the practice experience of the researcher as well as from others' experiences as recorded in various scientific materials.

CHAPTER 3

REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Social work practice is regulated. Globally, the regulation of social work practice is rooted on the treaties and conventions provided for by the United Nations (UN). The practice of social work is also regulated by the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) established to help in standardising the practice and teaching of social work worldwide. The confluence of UN Conventions and the international social work organisations is echoed through the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibilities and respect underpinning social work (International Federation of Social Work, 2014). Continentally, there also exist structures that define social work practice. In Africa, the regulation of social work practice is rooted in the treaties and conventions provided for by the African Union (AU). The IFSW has regional wings such as the IFSW Africa and so does the IASSW. The provisions by the UN, the AU, the IFSW and the IASSW though binding are by no means legislative nor prescriptive; they simply provide practice standards and guidelines which may be adapted by member states to suit the political, social, and economic landscape of each country. This can be seen as a loophole because some countries might decide not to abide by these standards, as they will not incur any punishment for deviations. Nonetheless, the researcher believes that having the said organisations help to bridge the geographical boundaries amongst countries in as far as social work service delivery is concerned because they make it possible for social work agencies to collaborate, co-ordinate and to take systematic action to protect the rights of citizens globally.

In South Africa social work practice is regulated by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and the custodian of social work services is the Department of Social Development (DSD). These two national institutions are affiliated to the aforementioned international agencies. South Africa is a signatory to many conventions and treaties provided for by the UN, the AU and the IFSW. As indicated earlier, the international agencies do not prescribe to South Africa how social work ought to be practised. Social work practice is the mandate of the Department of Social Development in conjunction with the SACSSP.

This chapter is thus set out to discuss the regulatory frameworks governing social work supervision, particularly supportive social work supervision. The discussion commences by presenting the international stance and terminates with the national sphere. The discussion is

rounded off by discoursing the ethical behaviour of supervisors as well as the values and principles guiding social work supervision.

3.2 INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Various terminology is used to define a particular international agreement and the terms range from declaration, covenant, convention and treaty. It is critical that social work practitioners are aware and understand the differences of these connotations. According to Reichert (2011:37-39) a declaration refers to a formal non-binding statement listing general principles and broad obligations; a covenant is a promise by two or more countries that they will enforce provisions of the covenants by means of enacting specific laws. A convention, on the other hand, refers to an international agreement that contains provisions to promote or to protect specific rights while a treaty is similar to a covenant or convention but slightly differs in that it may not require a specific number of signatures before going into effect. The relevance of the UN conventions, covenants, declarations and treaties and the provisions of the IFSW and those of the IASSW to social work supervision are outlined hereunder.

3.2.1 United Nations declarations, conventions, covenants and treaties.

The international conventions form common standards of achievement, and recognise rights that are accepted by the global community. According to the IFSW (2012) documents particularly relevant to social work practice and action include the following:

3.2.1.1 The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)

The UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948, consequent to the experiences encountered during the Second World War (WW II) adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations, 1949). With the end of that war and the creation of the UN, the international community vowed never again to allow atrocities like those of WW II to happen again and as a remedy, the UN formulated and propagated 24 human rights articles contained in the declaration (United Nations, 1949). All the articles contained in the declaration may be directly linked to social work practice and by default are also applicable to social work supervision. Herein, however, a few with the flair of social work supervision are extrapolated:

- Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

This article derives that all people are born with the same human status, and because they have reason and conscience, they should view others as having the same rights, dignity and entitlement (Reichert, 2011:53). The implication of this right on social work supervision is thus that a supervisor and supervisee have similar human rights and they each must respect the dignity and the rights of one another and those of the client systems including those of fellow colleagues.

- Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (United Nations, 1949).

The implication of this article is that both supervisors and supervisees should treat each other with respect and dignity regardless of their race, religious affiliation, gender and sexual orientation. Where a social worker (supervisor/supervisee) has been found guilty of negligence or misconduct in their provision of their duties; the employee should be punished equal to the misconduct, that which is not cruel nor inhumane and degrading.

- Article 23: Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and protection against employment (United Nations, 1949).

This article implies that in a supervisory relationship, just and favourable conditions must be encapsulated. The inference is that employers must treat supervisors fairly and they must provide them with adequate resources to do their jobs. Conversely, supervisors must advocate for supervisees to be treated equally and fairly when performing their supportive role and supervisors should ensure that supervisees have adequate resources to do their jobs.

- Article 24: Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay (United Nations, 1949).

The article implies that employing organisations are obliged to make sure that social work supervisors and supervisees have periodic rest during their working hours, limited working hours and periodic holidays according to the operational labour laws. In a supervision context, supervisors should ensure that supervisees take days off at work to unwind, debrief and distress. Where possible, the off days can be planned in advance. This should provide a supportive environment for the supervisees leading to them being productive.

- Article 26(2): Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall also promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the UN for the maintenance of peace (United Nations, 1949).

The provisions contained in this article mandate the teaching of human rights (Reichert, 2011:69). In relation to social work supervision, a supposition is that supervisors should educate supervisees about human rights, their own, those of their clients and the larger community that they serve and those of their fellow colleagues including all the other stakeholders in the welfare sector. Supervisors in this regard should strive to ensure that their supervisees are exposed to and engage in professional development training aligned to their desired career paths and by so doing they will foster a supportive work environment. The article also asserts that supervisors should deal with diversity and discrimination issues during supervision. Supervisors should support supervisees to identify their shortcomings and biases and also help them find ways to resolve them.

The UDHR sets forth the ideals by which all human beings should strive for globally. Social work practice prides itself as a human rights profession (Sewpaul, 2014; Reichert; 2011; Ife, 2001), and by default so should social work supervision. In their supportive role, the social work supervisor should work with supervisees and strive to incorporate the ideals of the UDHR in their own relationships and in their work with clients. The political will of governments will contribute towards attaining the universal rights hence the discussion on the international covenant on civil and political rights next.

3.2.1.2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

State parties to this covenant recognise, in accordance with the UDHR, the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom (United Nations, 1966). Fifty-three (53) articles are promulgated in this covenant and are meant to aid member states create conditions where everyone may enjoy their civil and political rights. Many provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights directly link to the ethical standards of social workers (Reichert, 2011:99). A few articles from this convention with an inclination to social work supervision are extrapolated and expounded as follows:

- Article 1(1): All people have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (United Nations, 1966).

The right to self-determination espoused in this article is succinctly linked to the principle of social work practice with clients. In social work practice, self-determination refers to allowing clients, i.e. individuals, families, groups or communities, to seek solutions to their own problems. In social work practice the right to self-determination also has limitations on when a client is acting in a manner that could be harmful to him or her and also involves potential harm by a client to others (Reichert, 2011:87-88).

In a supportive supervision context the article conveys the logic that supervisees should be treated equally; their political affiliation should not disadvantage or advantage them in any way and that they should be afforded opportunities to grow professionally. With regard to self-determination, it is also deduced that supervisees must be allowed to determine how they address their personal and work related challenges. The views by Reichert also caution a supervisor that the identified limitations of self-determination ought to be applied in supportive manner according to the circumstances in a given situation.

- Article 3: States parties to the present covenant undertake to ensure the equal right for men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present covenant (United Nations, 1966).

The inference of this article is that in a supervisory relationship, supervisors should treat supervisees equally regardless of their gender. They have to support their supervisees according to need and should be consistent in their support across the genders.

- Article 17(1): No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation (United Nations, 1966).

The article implies that when offering support, supervisors should respect the privacy of their supervisees and that of their families. Supervisors should make an effort not to attack their supervisees' honour and reputation, including the reputation of their families and homes. Every supervisee must be given the space to divulge, in a supportive session, that which they feel comfortable with and supervisors should work with what they have been

given and not force the supervisees to give more than they are able and comfortable to give. The supervisor must then keep confidential all personal issues shared by supervisees at all times.

- Article 19(1): Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference (United Nations, 1966).

This article suggests that a supportive supervision context should encourage supervisees to share their opinions on any issue related to their work environment; the supervision process and about the social and political landscape which have an impact on their social work interventions. Where disagreements exist both the supervisor and supervisee should resolve these amicably. In some instances, differences may not be resolved and if there is no direct impact on service delivery parties should sometimes agree to disagree.

It is certain that supervisors will at some point in their professional life supervise people who hold different political views than their own. This instance should not be a deal breaker but should be used as a platform to explore the differences and find a middle ground to working together. Exploring civil and political rights in supervision paves a way for discussion of economic, social and cultural rights of supervisors and supervisee and the related covenant to these rights is discussed next.

3.2.1.3 The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The states parties to the present covenant recognize that, in accordance with the UDHR, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights (United Nations, 1966). Likewise, a few articles closely linked to social work supervision in the covenant are extrapolated and discussed:

- Article 9: The states parties to the present covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance (United Nations, 1966).

The article does not define social security but intends that states parties provide a level of security sufficient to enable an individual to maintain a basic existence (Reichert, 2011:110). By default, the article also spells out the duty of employers of social workers that they should make provision for security, including social indemnity. In the context of

supportive supervision, supervisors should ensure that their supervisees receive social indemnity which they are entitled to.

- Article 12 (1): The states parties to the present covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. 2(b) the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene; (c) the prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases; (d) the creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness (United Nations, 1966).

This article thus suggests that the employers of social workers should ensure availability of health and mental health policies and the provision of occupational health services in their organisations. Supervisors, as middle managers, should participate in the formation of such policies and they should advocate for and echo the needs of supervisees in the development of such policies. To ensure supportive supervision, supervisors must ensure that supervisees are aware of occupational health and safety policies. When supervisors are supportive, they will also be able to identify situations which require supervisees to seek medical or mental health care services and would link them accordingly.

- Article 15(4): The states parties to the present covenant recognize the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and co-operation in the scientific and cultural fields (United Nations, 1966).

This article conveys the sense that supervisors should encourage supervisees to liaise with international social workers according to practice needs. For the supportive supervision to be realised, the supervisor will encourage supervisees to affiliate to international social work associations and also encourage supervisees to collaborate on job-related and profession specific research projects with their international counterparts. Lessons learnt from the collaborations should ultimately contribute to enriched service delivery. Such collaborations may only exist if all forms of racial discrimination are eliminated globally.

To ensure the desired and absolute economic, social and cultural rights, there should be total eradication of racial discrimination.

3.2.1.4 The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

The states parties to this convention pledged themselves to take joint and separate action, in co-operation with the UN, for the achievement of one of the purposes of the UN, which is to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction based on race, sex, language or religion (United Nations, 1965). This covenant stems from the UDHR proclamations that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour or national origin (United Nations, 1965). This convention contains twenty-five (25) articles. Once again, a few articles are extrapolated and their link to social work supervision is established.

- Article 1(1): In this convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (United Nations, 1965).

In a supervisory context, this article promulgates that employers should assign supervisees to supervisors based on the needs of supervisees and not on race, colour, descent and ethnic origin. This article requires supervisors to refrain from any form of racial discrimination against their supervisees. Within a supervisory relationship the onus is also on supervisors to ensure that they identify own racial biases against supervisees and that supervisees should be aware of their biases towards their supervisors and clients. In fulfilling his/her supportive function the supervisor should ensure that parties deliberate on their biases and consciously come up with strategies to counteract such.

- Article 6: States parties shall assure to everyone within their jurisdiction effective protection and remedies, through the competent national tribunals and other state institutions, against any acts of racial discrimination, which violate his human rights and fundamental freedoms contrary to this convention, as well as the right to seek from such tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination (United Nations, 1965).

The article implies that supervisors should advocate for their supervisees who have been racially discriminated, failing which the supervisor should advise such a supervisee of

organisational grievance policies and/or national tribunals that can assist in resolving the discrimination. In this manner the supervisor will be fulfilling the supportive function that all social work supervisors have to fulfil. Likewise, supervisors should also lodge grievances against supervisees if they feel they have been discriminated against and should inform supervisees of this intention.

At the core of the racial issues is also elimination of discrimination against women. The discussion of this convention is next.

3.2.1.5 The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

States parties to this convention reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women (United Nations, 1979). They also affirm the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaim that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex (United Nations, 1979). A few articles linked to supervision are explicated as follows:

- Article 5(a): States parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices, which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women (United Nations, 1979). The article infers that supervisors should treat people of the different genders equally and that they should also engage in open discussion with supervisees about prejudicial issues they have against the opposite gender. Actions should then be taken, consciously, to counteract the prejudices. It is again the duty of supervisors as middle managers to contribute to the development of organisational strategies to curb gender prejudices and ensure that they are adhered to.
- Article 10: States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women(10)(e) the same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest

possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women (United Nations, 1979).

The article carries the meanings that a supervisor should provide supervisees similar programmes of continuing education irrespective of their gender as an effort to fulfil their supportive function. Where gender disparities exist regarding educational attributes of supervisees, supervisors should have a dialogue with supervisees regarding the disparities and formulate a plan to redress the disparities.

- Article 11(1): States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular, 11(1)(b) the right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment (United Nations, 1979).

This article suggests that in order for the supportive function to be fulfilled supervisors, must give the same consideration to women as he/she would to men when an opportunity for promotion becomes available.

CEDAW requires states to take appropriate measures in all fields, particularly the political, social, economic and cultural fields, to ensure the full development and advancement of women (Reichert, 2011:131). Therefore, it can be deduced that in a supervisory context, the convention suggests that supervisors ought to advocate for and participate in civil actions against any form of discrimination against women in the work place. Practically, employers of social workers should have policies to address the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and they should adhere to national policies developed to alleviate the differences in the work place. Compounding this issue is also “indigenous and tribal practices which have for decades advanced a patriarchal and patrilineal society” (Kambarami, 2006) hence the next discussion.

3.2.1.6 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention

The convention recognises, amongst other issues, the aspirations of indigenous people to exercise control over their institutions, ways of life, and economic development and to develop and maintain their identities, languages and religion, within the framework of the states in which they live (United Nations, 1989). Relevant to social work supervision, amongst others, are the following articles:

- Article 2(1): Governments shall have the responsibility for developing, with the participation of the peoples concerned, co-ordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of these peoples and to guarantee respect for their integrity (United Nations, 1989).

Social work prides itself as an advocacy profession. It also prides itself as a social activist profession. At a service provision level, the article implies that social work supervisors should encourage supervisees to get involved in social activism to protect the rights of indigenous and tribal people where they are subjected to unfair treatment. Supervisors should thus serve as a support system for supervisees in this regard by ensuring that they have at their disposal resources that would assist them in their advocacy endeavours. Similarly, in a supervision context, supervisors should advocate for the protection of indigenous rights of their supervisees.

- Article 5(a): In applying the provisions of this convention, the social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices of these peoples shall be recognised and protected, and due account shall be taken of the nature of the problems which face them both as groups and as individuals (United Nations, 1989).

This article promulgates that supervisors need to ensure that supervisees are culturally sensitive in their provision of social work interventions to clients. Conscious effort should be made during supervision to learn about the social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices underpinnings of clients that they (the supervisor and supervisee) serve. Likewise, supervisors should also be mindful of their supervisees' value system. For a supervisor to be seen as fulfilling his/her supportive function, for instance, he/she should accommodate the supervisee when in need of a day off to observe cultural, religious and spiritual practices.

It is without doubt that social work practice is constantly faced with indigenous people whose indigenous and tribal rights set forth in this convention were violated at some point in their lives at the time of colonization. This is particularly real in South Africa emanating from the consequences of the apartheid regime. Social work practitioners should operationalise national policy set forth as redress mechanism through their organisational mandates and their engagement within the supervision process.

The preceding discussion on all forms of discrimination against women and that of the indigenous and tribal people's rights encroach on almost reflexively to one's mind the question of the position of a child in society hence the upcoming discussion.

3.2.1.7 Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance (United Nations, 1989). Article 1 (41) of this convention describes in detail all the rights of children and the obligation of the member states to promote those rights. All the articles contained in this convention are directly linked to generic social work practice and discussing all of them is not possible because it sways the content and purpose of this chapter and that of the study in a wrong direction thus only two are covered:

- Article 1 defines a child as every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (United Nations, 1989).
- Article 3 stipulates that in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (United Nations, 1989).

By defining a child, the convention sets a global boundary as to which people are considered children, making it easy for countries to tailor services applicable to them. Of paramount importance in this convention is that a supervisor must ensure that the best interest of a child is advanced at all times and that children, as stipulated by article 3, should be involved in cases pertaining to them.

All the conventions discussed in this segment serve as guidelines for social work practitioners in the provision of intercontinental social work services. It is thus critical to note in this regard that these conventions must be studied in conjunction with national legislative framework. As indicated in the introductory remarks, it is also important to note that national legislations supersede provisions made in the conventions.

3.3. INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK ORGANISATIONS

The two international organisations, i.e. the IFSW and the IASSW, which buttress the practice of social work globally, are discussed.

3.3.1 The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)

The IFSW develops global agendas and standards for social work practice. As indicated earlier, the IFSW facilitates the development of a global definition for social work on a

continuous basis based on the changing trends. The definition of social work has embedded in it the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity (IFSW, 2014). The implication of this definition is that social work supervision should also be centred on the principles identified here. The supervisor must treat supervisees in a just and fair manner at all times; they should not discriminate against a supervisee; and that they should take partial responsibility for some of their supervisees' behaviour; and must acknowledge and respect supervisees' diversity whilst simultaneously promoting the self-determination of supervisees.

The IFSW has also promulgated global standards for social work supervision, which are discussed under the global standards for the education and training of social work profession. Of the standards contained therein is the programme curricula on field education standards and in it the following promulgations are made: schools of social work should, amongst other factors, aspire to provide social work supervision during training for a social work qualification. Fieldwork supervisors must be orientated; the appointment of field supervisors must be based on their qualifications and experience; and that field practice supervisors must have at their disposal a field instruction manual that details its fieldwork standards, procedures, assessments, and expectations.

In its policy statement the IFSW also propagates the need for good quality and regular social work supervision by people who have the necessary experience and qualifications as fundamental attributes that ensure accountable and ethical practice (IFSW, 2012). Milne (in Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:132) also emphasises the issue, stating that to supervise well supervisors need to be ethically informed about the ethical framework regulating the practice of supervision. Ethics and ethical issues in social work supervision are discussed in detail further down in this chapter.

From the discussion it can be deduced that the promulgations of the IFSW cement the importance of the adaptation of the new definition of social work practice within the social work supervision context and secondly also cement the need to regular supervision according to individual needs of supervisees. It is also worth noting that there is direct significance of the programme curricula on field education standards on social work supervisors in practice. It gives supervisors baseline criteria for engaging in student supervision. The programme curricula on field education standards are also linked inextricably with the mandate of the IASSW, whose contribution to social work supervision is articulated next.

3.3.2 The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) is an international association of institutions of social work education, organisations supporting social work education and social work educators. Its mission, amongst others, is to develop and promote excellence in social work education, research and scholarship globally in order to enhance human wellbeing; to create and maintain a dynamic community of social work educators and their programmes, and to support and facilitate participation in mutual exchanges of information and expertise (IASSW, 2018).

In fulfilling its mission, IASSW adheres to all UDHR, recognising that respect for the inalienable rights of the individual is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace (IASSW, 2018). The association also collaborates with the IFSW on social work related matters as a result participated in the development of the new definition of social work and by implication all its affiliated institutions of higher learning should disseminate to the students. The IASSW also espouses the ethical notations and principles similarly to those of the IFSW.

Following the discussion of international organisations influencing the practice of social work, it is only logical that one proceeds to the continental conventions, hence the upcoming discussion.

3.4 THE CONTINENTAL AFRICAN CONVENTIONS

The continent of Africa has undertaken strides to coordinate and intensify cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa and to promote international cooperation under the umbrella body called the African Union (AU), previously the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). One way this has been done is by means of entering into agreements including charters, conventions and protocols, which bind member states in agreements to improve the living conditions of their people. Similar to the international instruments, the African instruments are by no means legislative but provide guidelines. For the purpose of this study, amongst others, few charters are selected for discussion and their connections to social work supervision extrapolated from them.

3.4.1 Africa (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

The charter contains sixty-three (63) articles delineated into four chapters. Taking into consideration the colonial history of Africa and the virtues of the historical tradition and the

values of African civilization (OAU, 1981) parties to this charter declared, amongst other articles, the following:

- Article 2 states that every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.
- Article 3 states that every individual shall be equal before the law; and that every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law (OAU, 1981).
- Article 7 states that every individual shall have the right to have his cause heard (OAU, 1981).

The articles relate to social work supervision because they imply that supervisors and supervisees in an organisational context have equal rights; they are equal before the law and that in cases of disputes they each have the right to have their cause heard. Closely linked to the human and people's rights charter are cultural issues. It is almost impossible for one to talk about human rights without making reference to cultural issues hence the following discussion.

3.4.2 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Cultural Charter for Africa

The charter contains thirty-seven (37) articles. The aims and objectives of this charter include the following: the combating and elimination of all forms of alienation and cultural suppression and oppression everywhere in Africa, especially in countries still under colonial and racist domination, including apartheid; the encouragement of cultural cooperation among the states with a view to the strengthening of African unity; and the encouragement of international cultural cooperation for a better understanding among peoples within which Africa will make its original and appropriate contribution to human culture (OAU, 1976).

This charter requires supervisors to be culturally aware and culturally sensitive to their supervisees' cultures. Similarly, supervisees will have to learn about the cultural backgrounds, practices, values and principles of their clients in order for them to provide culturally sensitive and culturally relevant social work services that are responsive to their clients' needs. A

supervisor becomes supportive in this regard if he/she creates a platform for robust debate with supervisees on the implication of culture in each case.

Refugees and asylum seekers further exacerbate cultural diversity in any country. This is because refugees and asylum seekers bring with them an array of cultural practices, which may not be known in the host country. Guidelines for governing refugee-related problems is covered in the convention hereunder.

3.4.3 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa

Noting with concern the constantly increasing numbers of refugees in Africa; recognising the need for an essentially humanitarian approach towards the problems of refugees; convinced that African problems require African solutions and in solidarity with each other, amongst other realisations, African countries entered into this convention (OAU, 1969).

Article one (1) of the convention defines the term “refugee”; article (2) expatiates on asylum. Article three (3) stipulates that every refugee must conform with the laws and regulations as well as with measures taken for the maintenance of public order within the country in which they find themselves (OAU, 1969).

Critical for social work practice, and in particular for social work supervisors, is that supervisees should be made aware of article two (2) as stipulated and that they should interpret the provided definitions with those of South Africa as they provide services to refugees and asylum seekers. Also critical herein is that all cases pertaining to refugees should be handled according to South African legislation because refugees or asylum seekers have to abide by the laws and regulations of the country where they find themselves.

It is critical also to note in this regard that some adult refugees and asylum seekers bring with them children; whilst in some cases children arrive in countries alone, unaccompanied whilst others get displaced from their parents and adult companions on arrival in the foreign country. The discussion that follows focuses on how to handle the rights and welfare of children in the continent.

3.4.4 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Noting with concern that the situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances,

natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger, and on account of the child's physical and mental immaturity he/she needs special safeguards and care (OAU, 1999). Consequently, parties to this convention declare, amongst other rights, the following:

- Article 2: that a child means every human being below the age of 18 years (OAU, 1999);
- Article 3: that every child shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in this charter irrespective of the child's or his/her parents' or legal guardians' race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status (OAU, 1999);
- Article 3: that in all actions concerning the child undertaken by any person or authority the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration (OAU, 1999);
- Article 4: and that in all judicial or administrative proceedings affecting a child who is capable of communicating his/her own views, an opportunity shall be provided for the views of the child to be heard either directly or through an impartial representative as a party to the proceedings and those views shall be taken into consideration by the relevant authority in accordance with the provisions of appropriate law (OAU, 1999).

In a supervisory context, the implication of this particular charter is that it paves way for dealing with cases of children born in other countries. However, it should again be noted that national legislation on dealing with children cases takes precedence over the charter.

3.4.5 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

The state parties to this protocol are determined, amongst many other commitments, to ensure that the rights of women are promoted, realised and protected in order to enable them to enjoy fully all their human rights (AU, 2003). State parties to this protocol have agreed, amongst other articles, to combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative, institutional and other measures (article 2); and to provide for appropriate remedies to any woman whose rights or freedoms, as herein recognised, have been violated (article 6) (AU, 2003). Furthermore, states parties shall adopt and enforce legislative and other measures to guarantee women equal opportunities in work and career advancement and other

economic opportunities (Article 13) and provide for appropriate remedies to any woman whose rights or freedoms, as herein recognised, have been violated (article 25) (AU, 2003).

This protocol indirectly implies that social work supervisors, in their middle management positions should adhere to national policies geared at the advancement of women. Supervisors should also, depending on their organisational mandates, encourage supervisees to take part in activities (i.e. policy development) which promote the rights of women in Africa and/or in their respective countries.

To be able to adequately operationalise all the discussed conventions thus far, the continental government administrations have to be streamlined as outlined in the next discussion.

3.4.6 African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration

The member states of the African Union, determined to promote the values and principles of democracy; governance, human rights, and the right to development (AU, 2011), amongst other realisations, have developed this charter. Of the seven chapters contained in this convention, chapter 3 and chapter 4 may have a direct link to social work supervision.

Chapter 3 stipulates the code of conduct for public service agents and chapter 4 propagates the rights of public servants (AU, 2011). Chapter 3, article 9 relates to professionalism and article 10 outlines the expected ethical behaviours of public service professionals (AU, 2011).

Herein the expectation is that public servants should demonstrate professionalism, transparency and impartiality including courtesy, integrity, and neutrality when servicing users. Some of the ethical behaviour sought from public servants include demonstrating integrity and respect of all rules and established codes of conduct; that they should not solicit, accept or receive directly or indirectly any payments, gifts, donation, or reward in kind or cash, for service rendered, and that under no circumstances should they use their positions for political or personal gains.

In a supervisory context, this convention implies that social work supervisors should serve their clientele (i.e. supervisees) with integrity, respect and should be transparent. Supervisors are also prohibited from accepting, directly and indirectly, any remuneration from services rendered and that they are prohibited from using their positions for political or personal gains. Supervisors should inform supervisees of these prohibitions.

Chapter four (4) of this convention stipulates the rights of public agents (AU, 2011). Article 14 espouses the equality of public servants while article 15 advocates for freedom of expression and association (AU, 2011). In a supervisory context article fourteen and fifteen imply that supervisees must not be subjected to any form of discrimination based on their origin, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, political opinion or any other consideration. They also imply that supervisees have the right to create or belong to associations, trade unions or any other group to promote their rights in accordance with national laws. Article fourteen and fifteen thus encourage supervisors and supervisees to partake in associations to advance their professional growth.

There are similarities between the international conventions and those developed in Africa. For instance, the Africa (Banju) charter on human and people's rights draws heavily on the provisions of the UNDHR; the African charter on the rights and welfare of the child is linked to the convention on the rights of the child. The organisation of African Unity's cultural charter for Africa is linked to the indigenous and tribal people's convention to name but a few. The impact of these conventions on social work supervision has been established in this chapter. The onus thus lies on supervisors to support supervisees to learn about them by scheduling educational sessions aimed at tackling the conventions.

The UN and the AU conventions have had an influence on the development of various legislations in South Africa. The relevance of social work legislation to social work supervision follows next.

3.5 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, as earlier discussed, the profession of social work has institutionalized supervision as its core element (Department of Social Development, 2013:104). The inextricability of supervision in social work in South Africa is embedded in policies and legislations. A few such legislative documents and policies which regulate the provision of social work supervision are extrapolated for discussion.

3.5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 as amended

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the supreme law of the country. Adopted on 8 May 1996 and amended on 11 October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly, it contains

basic human rights of all South Africans. Due to voluminous rights contained therein, a handful are extracted for discussion.

Section 10 makes reference to human dignity, that everyone has inherent dignity and that people have the right to have their dignity respected and protected. Section 9 makes reference to equality. Section 13 warns against slavery, servitude and forced labour, that no one may be subjected to slavery, servitude or forced labour. Section 15 subsection 1 propagates that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Section 18 states that everyone has the right to freedom of association and section 23 propagates that everyone has the right to fair labour practices.

In a supervisory relationship these rights convey the fact that supervisors and supervisees should treat each other with dignity and that they should respect and protect each other's dignity and that a supervisee has a voice and his/her voice must be heard in a supervisory dialogue. The rights also infer that where a supervisor has more than one supervisee, he or she should treat supervisees equally irrespective of their race, culture, religion, creed, political affiliation and organisational associations; and that supervisors should be equally fair in dealing with supervisees on labour related matters. Supervisors, in an event that supervisees are exploited and/or discriminated against, should support supervisees by advocating for them.

3.5.2 The Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995 as amended

The Labour Relations Act (LRA), Act 66 of 1995 as amended aims to promote economic development, social justice, labour peace and democracy in the workplace. Chapter two (2) of the Labour Relations Act promulgates the following rights to freedom of association and general protections: employees' right to freedom of association (article 4); protection of employees and persons seeking employment (article 5); and employers' right to freedom of association (article 6) including the protection of employers' rights (article 7). Rights of trade unions and employers' organisations; procedures for disputes (article 8); procedure for disputes (article 9) and burden of proof (article 10).

In a supervisory context, these rights convey that a supervisor cannot prohibit a supervisee from forming and/or from joining a trade union or an association; that supervisees are free to seek alternative employment; and that where disputes occur between a supervisor and supervisee, supervisees should be aware of procedures for disputes and they should be referred to accordingly. Consequently, social work related disputes may be handled internally

by the employing organisation. Where an ambiguous resolution has been taken according to a party in a dispute the matter can be referred to the Department of Labour for further handling. However, in some instances, social work practice related disputes may be referred to or downright handled by the South African Council for Social Services Profession. The discussion on the role of the SACSSP as the regulatory body for social work practice in South Africa is presented later on. Now, the contribution of the South African Social Services Professions Act, Act 110 of 1978 as amended follows.

3.5.3 The South African Social Services Professions Act, Act 110 of 1978 as amended

The South African Social Service Professions Act, Act 110 of 1978 as amended makes direct reference to social work supervision. Section 15 (2) amongst others, stipulates that in so far as any person undergoes practical training requirements in the profession for the acquisition of a social work qualification at a training institution, such practical training should take place under the supervision of a social worker or a person practising another profession in respect of which a professional board has been established, as the case may be.

In South Africa current practice demonstrates that any registered social worker may supervise a social work student, and in some instances, depending on the social work staff complement in an organisation, social work students are supervised by social work practitioners who may not be involved in supervision of other social work practitioners and also not having the necessary credentials to supervise. The reason for this is to groom grass roots practitioners for supervision posts. Because the social workers who supervise students are themselves also supervised, a supervisor should support their supervisees who are involved in supervision of social work students.

3.5.4 The Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005 as amended

The Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 as amended also endorses social work supervision. Almost all the sections of the Act require intervention by social work practitioners and in some instances social workers are required by the children's courts to conduct investigations into the circumstances of clients for the courts to pass reasonable sentences during children's court enquiries. Some of the promulgations include:

- Section 46(f) which stipulates that the children's court may make a supervision order, placing a child, or the parent or caregiver of a child, or both the child and the parent or caregiver, under the supervision of a social worker.

- Section 156(3)(i) stipulates that a court may issue an order that a child found to be in need of care and protection rendering the placement of the child subject to supervision services by a designated social worker.
- Section 186(1) stipulates that after a child has been in foster care with a person other than a family member for more than two years and after considering a need for creating stability for the child, order that (186)(1)(a) no further social work supervision is required for that placement.

The continuous emphasis on the family reunification and reintegration services in the Act [subsections 106(2)(g);187; 194(2)(l)] clarify the fact that social workers should work with affected parties in a children's court case beyond the case by supervising the circumstances of the child/rens' parents/family to make sure that the child/ren is/are reinstated in the care of biological parents/family. A supervisor must therefore make sure that supervisees working in family care services are aware of these promulgations and that they are upheld.

Another legislation, which has been enacted recently to deal with children litigation is the Child Justice Act, Act No. 75 of 2008 and its discussion follows next.

3.5.5 The Child Justice Act, Act 75 of 2008

The Act, amongst others, aims to establish a criminal justice system for children, in accordance with the values underpinning the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 as amended and the country's international obligations. The Child Justice Act, Act 75 of 2008 also makes inferences to social work supervision. Section 57(1) promulgates that when making a diversion order, the magistrate, inquiry magistrate or child justice court must identify a probation officer (who is a social worker) or other suitable person to monitor a child's compliance with the diversion order.

Once again, a supervisor needs to support supervisees to be aware of, understand, interpret and apply all the pieces of South African legislation according to cases they are dealing with. Also critical to note in this regard is that a supportive supervisor does not become a jack of all trades when it comes to the interpretation and application of legislation, instead he or she acknowledges individual shortcomings and sends a supervisee for training and consultation with experts as they quest to interpret and apply legislations.

It is further imperative that a social work supervisor ensures that a supervisee is aware of, understands, can interpret and can apply various work related policies. The policies, which regulate the provision of social work supervision are thus discussed next.

3.6 POLICY DOCUMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS REGULATING SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Some of the South African and social work specific practice policies, which regulate the provision of social work supervision include the following:

3.6.1 The White Paper for Social Welfare

Post 1994 elections in South Africa, the White Paper for Social Welfare was adopted to deal with key substantive issues in the restructuring of social welfare services, programmes and social security (Department of Social Development, 1997:8; hereafter the “white paper” (Department of Social Development, 2013:12). Amongst many issues recommended in the white paper was the institutional arrangements of the roles and responsibilities of the various sectors and stakeholders in the provision of social welfare services. The National Department of Welfare (now renamed the National Department of Social Development) was to carry out, amongst others, the following strategic guidelines: (a) co-ordination: to harmonise central functions with those of other national departments, provincial governments and other national role players; (b) national policy and planning: to determine and review policy and to conduct integrated welfare and development planning which will be implemented inter-provincially and inter-sectorally; (c) to facilitate the development of the norms and standards for social services and development programmes, social security and facilities: to determine and regularly review basic guidelines for norms and standards (Department of Social Development, 1997:25).

Although there is no direct mention of social work supervision in this citation, the material definitely applies to social work supervision. The implications are that the National Department of Social Development should harmonise the provision of social work supervision services by practitioners in the three spheres of government (i.e. national, provincial and local level) including the non-government sector; that National Department of Social Development should ensure the development of a supervision policy including the norms and standards for supervision. It is important to note that at the time of writing this chapter the White Paper for Social Welfare was undergoing review.

Consequently, years after promulgation, and emanating from the aforementioned strategic guidelines, the white paper gave birth to numerous social welfare policies in South Africa and one such policy is the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM).

3.6.2 The Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM)

The ISDM was developed with the aim to provide a comprehensive national framework that clearly sets out the nature, scope, extent and level of social services, and to form the basis for the development of appropriate norms and standards for service delivery (Department of Social Development, 2005:5). The interrelatedness between the Department of Social Development within which social work services fall, and community development was also recognised with the policy aiming to integrate and streamline services of programmes with each other (Department of Social Development, 2005:5).

In the ISDM stipulations were made regarding the roles and responsibilities of various role players and those of service partners in the provision of social services, inter-sectoral policies and programmes, at both national and provincial levels in South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2005:30). Also, the ISDM stipulated that social work services should be provided by means of the following levels of intervention: prevention, early intervention services, statutory intervention and residential/alternative care and reconstruction and aftercare.

Similar to the case of the White Paper, there is no direct mention of social work supervision in the extracted citations from the ISDM but strictly the material has implications for social work supervision. The ISDM infers that whatever programmes were developed from the identified levels of intervention, social work supervision should be co-ordinated and harmonised so as to ensure that supervisees are adequately supported as they render prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention and residential/alternative care and reconstruction and aftercare services to their clients. The ISDM also re-emphasises the need for streamlining service delivery between the Department of Social Development, social security and community development across the various social welfare sectors at the national, provincial and local government levels including the non-government sector, which in turn also purports the streamlining of supervision services amongst the social welfare sector.

Following the enactment of the two preceding policies, there were noticeable cracks in the provision of social welfare services in South Africa and as such there was a need to conduct

a system overhaul and that overhaul gave birth to the recruitment and the retention strategy for social workers, which is discussed next.

3.6.3 The Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers

The objectives of the strategy include the following: providing a framework for the recruitment and retention of social workers as learners and professionals that are committed to render services where they are most needed in the country; to reposition the social work profession to meet the challenges of the 21st century; to promote a positive image of social work as a career of choice; and to address the concerns and conditions of service that impact negatively on service provision (Department of Social Development, 2007:15). The strategy also documented challenges faced by the social welfare sector at the time and as such promulgations were also made regarding the management and supervision of social work practitioners in the South Africa.

Some of the challenges highlighted in the report show that there is lack of structured supervision provided to supervisees; the quality of supervisors was also questioned with the proclamation that social work supervisors lacked capacity to conduct professional supervision (Department of Social Development, 2007:33). The policy also categorically stated that this problem was exacerbated by historical practices, which assigned supervisory functions to new white social workers, thus defeating the purpose of this critical function and resulting in the development of negative perceptions about supervision (Department of Social Development, 2007:33). Furthermore, the aggravation also resulted from the historic subjection of black social workers to perpetual supervision. Consequently, the recruitment and retention strategy for social workers paved a way for the development of insight into the status of social work supervision in South Africa and consequently influenced the development of many policies within the Department of Social Development.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the ability of social work practitioners to render effective services to their clients and the ability of supervisors to render supervision effectively is dependent on the manpower. The Framework of Social Work Services proposed in this study presents a baseline for social work supervisors-supervisee ratios.

3.6.4 The Framework for Social Welfare Services

This framework is applicable in conjunction with the ISDM and it also draws on the promulgations of the White Paper (Department of Social Development, 2013d:12). In the

framework guidelines for managing social work workload ratios, social auxiliary workload ratio, social work supervision workload ratios, child and youth care work workload ratio, and care giver ratios are suggested.

The following workload scenarios are suggested for social work supervisors: 1:13 supervisees for a supervisor whose key responsibility is supervision and located in the same office; 1:10 supervisees for a supervisor whose key responsibility is supervision and supervisees located in a different service office/organisation, and 1:3 supervisees for a supervisor who has added responsibility of casework or management of social welfare services (Department of Social Development, 2013:d25). Because this policy was developed four years ago from the writing of this thesis, it is hoped that it will be reviewed in the near future to establish if the ratios are appropriately allocated because social work supervision and specifically supportive social work supervision is dependent on the social workers' ability to provide the supervision.

In perusing the framework, one identifies that it scantily deals with social welfare issues and as such there was a need to formulate a more comprehensive Policy for Social Service Practitioners and this is discussed next.

3.6.5 The Policy for Social Service Practitioners

The objective of this policy, amongst others, is to provide a contextual, institutional and regulatory framework for the establishment of functions, powers, responsibilities and regulations of the social welfare services sector in South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2013b:5). In this policy it is explicitly and categorically stated that the profession of social work has institutionalised supervision as its core element (Department of Social Development, 2013b:104). This therefore means that social work practitioners are obliged to render and receive supervision. The policy articulates principles for supervision, which are discussed in-depth further down.

With all the policies discussed thus far, more specifically the retention strategy, having evidenced the critical nature of social work supervision, including issues plaguing social work supervision in South Africa, there was a need to develop a policy solely dedicated to social work supervision, hence the subsequent discussion.

3.6.6 The Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa

The framework came into effect in 2012. The framework is developed to provide guidance to organisations and supervisors in the different sectors in the provision of social work supervision. The supervision framework gave birth to the standards for supervision practice in the country. These include the legislative requirements of social work supervision; requirements for supervisors; the supervision of newly qualified social workers; the supervision of experienced social workers in new organisations; supervision sessions and organisational requirements to name but a few (Department of Social Development, 2012:31). The legislative nature of these standards implies that they are mandatory as discussed hereunder.

3.6.6.1 Legislative requirements for social work supervision:

Amongst other requirements the Department of Social Development (2012:31), through the framework, proclaimed the following overarching legislative requirements for social work supervision:

- That supervision of all social workers is mandatory;
- That only social workers may act as social work supervisors;
- That it is the responsibility of the employer of a social worker to appoint a supervisor who takes primary responsibility for the supervision of the social worker;
- Where the higher ranking social worker in the organisation reports to another professional grouping, then supervision may be outsourced for that practitioner to receive clinical supervision from a social worker; and
- That the organisation should capture the ratio of supervisee per supervisor as articulated in the framework for social work services above.

The aforementioned requirements cement the critical nature of social work supervision in social work and in South Africa. The employers of social workers are obliged to adhere to these requirements because by so doing they create a supportive environment for social work practitioners.

3.6.6.2 Requirements for supervisors

The framework prescribes that a supervisor of a social worker should be a social worker registered with the SACSSP; that he or she must have a minimum of five years' experience as a social worker; that he or she should attend a supervision course presented by an

accredited service provider recognised by the SACSSP; and that every supervisor must be listed on the data base of supervisors of the SACSSP (Department of Social Development, 2012:31).

The requirement denotes that employers of social work supervisors should ensure that they employ supervisors with the correct relevant experience; they should monitor and ensure that supervisors are registered yearly with the SACSSP and they should make sure that supervisors are recorded on the data base of supervisors of the SACSSP. It is also the opinion of the researcher that wherein a social work supervisor has not received any kind of training on supervision, the onus still lies with the supervisor to make sure that they attend supervision training as prescribed because a well knowledgeable and informed supervisor will go a long way in ensuring that social workers are adequately supported.

3.6.6.3 Requirements for newly qualified social workers

The Department of Social Development (2012:32) suggests the following prescripts in the supervision of newly qualified social workers:

- That newly qualified social workers should be oriented to their new posts;
- That they must have at least three years supervision bi-monthly and of these the incumbent must have mandatory fortnightly supervision during the first year of employment;
- That thereafter the frequency may be contracted to once a month;
- That the assessment of incumbent must be done on a quarterly basis in line with the personal development plan;
- That upon completion of three years structured supervision that a final assessment should be conducted to determine the frequency of supervision going forward; and
- That should the person be ready to move to consultation level, a report with recommendations must be submitted by the supervisor.

The researcher concurs with the promulgations made herein and believes that newly qualified social workers do require aggressive supervision. This is because, drawing from personal experience, they are usually not familiar with labour market issues; because they have no exposure to an array of social problems, which they will be faced with and because they are not sure about their capabilities. Therefore, regular supervision can assist supervisees to gain confidence in their capabilities and to grow professionally.

3.6.6.4 Requirements for experienced social workers in new organisations

It is stipulated in the framework that experienced social workers in new organisations must undergo orientation upon employment; that the type of supervision they will engage in and the timeline for supervision must be determined by them and their supervisors; and that an assessment of their performance must be done twice a year (Department of Social Development, 2012:32). The researcher also concurs with the promulgations made here because she also believes that social workers entering a completely new field from those which they have worked before require supervision to help them learn about their work contexts, the most prevalent social problems dealt with and to identify the existing networks and resources.

3.6.6.5 Requirements for supervision sessions

The framework specifies that supervision functions and sessions should be structured, i.e. they should be properly planned and linked with the personal development plan of the supervisee; must have an agenda; it must be recorded and must be signed by both the supervisor and supervisee (Department of Social Development, 2012:32). Munson (2002:12) holds a similar view, that supervision must be structured, regular, consistent, case oriented, and evaluated constantly. The researcher thus believes that by making sure that supervision sessions are planned, have an agenda, are regular and consistent and are linked to the personal development plans of supervisees will go a long way in ensuring that supervisees are supported.

3.6.6.6 Organisational requirements

It is insisted in the framework that employing organisations must ensure enabling environments between the supervisor and management through proper communication channels that promote participatory management (Department of Social development, 2012: 33). Organisations are also obliged to provide administrative, educational and developmental support to supervisors in order for them to render effective supervision (Department of Social development, 2012:33). The latter is critical in the provision of supportive supervision by supervisors because if supervisors are administratively savvy, then they will relay the information to supervisees. If supervisors themselves are engaged in continuous professional development (CPD) they are likely to pave a way for supervisees to also undergo CPD trainings. Wherein supervisors are supported they will also learn how to support their social work subordinates.

The preceding discussion paved a new dawn for the implementation of social work services because no such policy existed before in South Africa. The policy, to some extent enhanced understanding of the industry on what is supervision and how it can be conducted. However more still needed to be done. As was purported in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) the norms and standards for the provision of social work supervision needed to be developed.

3.6.7 Generic Norms and Standards for Social Welfare Services

The generic norms and standards for social welfare services in South Africa have been developed to guide the delivery of integrated quality service to service beneficiaries (Department of Social Development, 2013c:4). Social work supervision is thus discussed under the Organisational Norms and Standards in the policy. The idea behind the supervision of social service practitioners is to ensure the delivery of quality services to beneficiaries while supporting and building the capacity of practitioners (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). The Department of Social Development (2013c:49) thus articulates the following norms for the provision of social work supervision:

- That social welfare service providers should provide supervision for all social welfare service practitioners and students;
- That social welfare service providers should make supervision of social welfare service practitioners and students an integral and on-going part of the professional practice;
- That supervision should be conducted in compliance with the code of ethics for social welfare practitioners;
- That social welfare service providers should ensure the quality of supervision;
- That supervisors should be qualified and experienced in the social welfare profession and occupation;
- That supervisors should have appropriate training and experience;
- That supervision should be a synthetic collaboration between supervisors and supervisees based on the needs of the practice and the supervisees;
- That supervision should be structured and planned, including all the functions of supervision;
- That service providers should make provision for mechanisms and processes to deal with conflict in the supervisory relationship;
- That all supervision sessions should be recorded promptly and accurately and the records stored securely; and
- That the supervisor should ensure that the management function is carried out.

It is thus incumbent of all social work supervisors that they adhere to the aforementioned norms as they endeavour to provide social work supervision. Also, it is critical to note herein that supervisors cannot do it all but they need the backing of their employers. Supervisors require their employers to not only adhere to the norms but also to the requirements set forth by the Supervision Framework for Social Work Services in South Africa. The supervisors also require employers to adhere to the supervisor-supervisee ratios as articulated in the Framework of Social Welfare Services in South Africa.

Furthermore, as articulated earlier, because in South Africa social workers also provide supervision to student social workers, it is also critical that employers abide by the requirements set forth by the norms in the supervision of student social workers. It is also critical to note herein that the training of social work students is also regulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the promulgations of SAQA regarding social work supervision is encapsulated in detail next.

3.6.8 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

The South African Qualifications Authority's mission is to ensure the development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) accompanied by supporting quality assurance systems (Lombard, Grobber & Pruis, 2003:1). The NQF is a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications (National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008). The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is the quality council for the bachelor of social work degree in South Africa.

The NQF also makes provision for level descriptors which range from one (1) to ten (10). The purpose of level descriptors for levels one to ten of the NQF is to ensure coherence in learning achievement in the allocation of qualifications and part qualifications to particular levels, and to facilitate the assessment of the national and international comparability of qualifications and part qualifications (SAQA, 2012:3).

SAQA also makes provision for Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs). "Exit Level Outcomes" refer to the outcomes which define the level of performance according to which a candidate completing the qualification is assessed (SAQA, 2012:4). ELO 21 of the Bachelor of Social Work qualification categorically states that students should demonstrate understanding of roles, functions, knowledge and skills for effective social work supervision and consultation (SAQA, [sa]:4).

Consequently, in South Africa, social work practitioners are introduced to supervision from their second year of training at the university. The social work students are usually placed in welfare organisations or any industry applicable and they are usually supervised by social work practitioners. In this supervision process students are provided with administrative, educational and supportive supervision. Supportive supervision is critical in this regard because social workers must assist student social workers to manoeuvre the university requirements against organisational obligations, which maybe challenging for the student. It is thus the opinion of the researcher that supervisors of social workers who are involved in students' supervision should schedule supervision sessions geared at assisting supervisees with the challenges they may encounter with their student supervisees process.

While SAQA regulates the teaching of the social work qualification in South Africa, it does so within the ambits of the professional body, i.e. the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). The promulgations of the SACSSP regarding social work supervision as contained in the Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers follows next.

3.6.9 Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers

The code of conduct of social workers is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional conduct required of social workers when carrying out their daily activities (SACSSP, [Sa]:1). Ethics, on the other hand, are principles by which people distinguish what is morally right (Certo, 2013:98). In relation to social work practice, code of ethics is thus a manual containing the standards, rules and regulations for social work practice (Sesoko, 2015:68).

The purpose of the code of ethics by the SACCSP include defining core values on which social work missions are based; to summarise broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific standards used to guide social work practice; to help social workers identify relevant considerations when their obligations conflict or unethical issues arise and also provides ethical guidelines according to which the general public can hold social workers accountable (SACSSP,[Sa]:5).

The ethical provisions contained in the policy are thus divided into the guiding ethical values and principles and the general ethical standards. The latter are discussed next in conjunction

with social work supervision while the guiding ethical values and principles will be discussed as a separate entity later in this chapter.

3.6.9.1 General ethical standards of social work practice and their Implication for Social Work Supervision

The SACSSP has compartmentalised ethical issues into the following broad categories: ethical responsibilities towards the profession; social worker's ethical responsibilities towards client systems; social worker's ethical responsibilities towards colleagues and other social workers; social worker's responsibilities in practice settings; and social worker's responsibilities to the broader society (SACSSP,[Sa]). The first four ethical responsibilities have a direct bearing on supportive supervision and as such are discussed below. In the discussion, a summary is presented regarding their implication to social work supervision, to social work supervisors and social work supervisees.

- **Ethical responsibilities towards the profession**

The discussion of social workers' responsibilities towards the profession is categorised into the following components: promotion of the integrity of the profession; evaluation and research; education, training and development; competency; incompetency of colleagues; negligence, and dishonesty (SACSSP, [Sa]:8-14). The proclamation contained in each component has a direct bearing on social work supervision. Their proclamations, amongst other assertions, imply that supervisors should:

- Ensure that they uphold the integrity of the profession by ensuring that supervisees provide high standard services to their clients. Likewise, in a supervision context, supervisors should also uphold the integrity of the profession by providing supervisees with high standard services as it is possible, to their clients;
- Monitor, evaluate and research the implementation of programmes and practice interventions by supervisees;
- Provide supervision within areas of their knowledge and competency. Wherein the supervisors' knowledge is limited, the supervisor should refer a supervisee to a resource which will assist the supervisee accordingly;
- Not engage in dual or multiple relationships with supervisees;

- Maintain competency in the areas of service provision through continuous social work education, development, consultation and conformance with practice standards and scientific social work knowledge;
- Curb inconsistencies by supervisees by identifying the training needs of supervisees and implementing a development plan;
- Ensure supervisee compliance with social work related legislation, policies and procedures. It is paramount to note herein that supervisors can achieve this only if supervisors themselves are knowledgeable about the legislation, policies and procedures. Supervisor can thus educate themselves and/or attend training opportunities to this effect; and
- Guard against negligence and dishonesty on the part of the supervisee. In a supervision context, this regulation demands that a supervisor should also ensure that he or she does not neglect supervisees and should be upfront with them.

The discussion highlights the significance of ethical responsibilities towards the profession. The responsibilities of supervisor with regard to supporting supervisees in promoting the profession has also been uncovered. Similarly important are also ethical issues towards client systems.

- **Ethical responsibility towards client systems**

Ethical responsibilities towards the client systems are also compartmentalised. They are discussed according to the following: confidentiality, professional relationships, third party requests for services, gifts and incentives, dealing with clients' money, terminating the social worker-client relationship, and advertising and public sentiments (SACSSP, [Sa]: 14-32). The proclamations contained in each component, amongst other assertions, imply that supervisors should:

- Ensure that supervisees understand the two dimensions of confidentiality, i.e. the right against intrusion and the right to confidentiality of their clients;
- Ensure that supervisees manage the affairs of their clients in manners that optimise the privacy of clients;
- Ensure that supervisees understand the importance of having a truthful, understandable and transparent social work relationship with client systems; and
- Alert supervisees of the following prohibitions amongst others: engaging in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of emotional harm to the client; having sexual relationships with current clients; engaging in exploitation which includes

coercion, manipulation and blackmail over clients; accepting goods, services or other non-monetary remuneration from clients in return for services provided; and that they should not provide services to persons with whom they had previous sexual relations with.

The preceding requirements according to the researcher may also have implication for social work supervisor-supervisee relationship. For instance, the requirements denote that a supervisor should also discuss with the supervisee the two dimensions in relation to their supervision relationship. Another is that supervisors themselves should also have truthful, understandable and transparent relations with their supervisees. Lastly, supervisors are warned against having sexual relationships with supervisees and against exploiting supervisees.

Social work supervision also has ethical responsibilities towards colleagues and other social workers.

- **Ethical responsibilities towards colleagues and other social workers**

These standards are packaged into the following: respect, confidentiality, interdisciplinary collaboration, consultation, referral for services, and supersession (SACSSP, [Sa]: 32) and they imply that supervisors should ensure that:

- Supervisees exhibit loyalty towards colleagues;
- They should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of their colleagues in communication with clients or with other social workers;
- Supervisees treat their fellow social workers with respect;
- Supervisees treat confidential client information shared by other social workers;
- Supervisees maintain the principle of confidentiality in their collaborative work within interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams;
- They caution supervisees against criticising other social workers but that they should defend colleagues against unfair criticisms.

To aid the supervisees' ability to adhere to this requirement, the researcher believes that in a supervisory context, the supervisor should model the aforementioned regulations to supervisees. The supervisors should not speak negatively of other supervisees and fellow social work colleagues to their supervisees; supervisors should treat supervisees with respect;

they should hold confidential sensitive, personal and emotionally charged issues supervisees share with them; and they should defend supervisees against unfair criticism.

Over and above being obliged to upholding ethical responsibilities towards colleagues and other social workers, supervisors and supervisee further need to uphold ethical responsibilities in practice settings.

- **Social Workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings**

This section refers to rules relating to the course of conduct that concern the employer and a social work setting (SACSSP, [Sa]:37) and consequently rules relating to supervision/management and consultation, amongst others, are discussed. These rules are the only ones that speak to social work supervision directly hence the profoundness for this chapter. According to the SACSSP ([Sa]:37-38):

- Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should be knowledgeable and skilled to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence. Although this is the case, research has found that a large number of supervisors in South Africa do not hold any supervision qualification. Engelbrecht (2010:329) found that except for an internal organisational orientation on supervisory responsibilities, no participants in his study were in possession of a formal qualification in social work supervision or has ever attended an accredited supervision course, instead, most of them had experience in the field that they are providing supervision in. This is the case despite numerous calls, some of which date decades ago, by for instance Kirby (1972) and Moss (2001) that there is a need for formal training in social work supervision in South Africa.
- Supervisors or consultants should have clear and cultural sensitive boundaries in supervision and/or with supervisees;
- Supervisors and supervisees should not be engaged in any dual or multiple relationships where there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisees;
- Supervisors should evaluate supervisees' performance in a fair and respectful manner;
- Supervisors and supervisee should record what transpires during supervision and consultation sessions;
- Supervisor could be held liable for a complaint of alleged unprofessional conduct held against a supervisee; and that

- Social workers should be supervised by a registered social worker on social work matters.

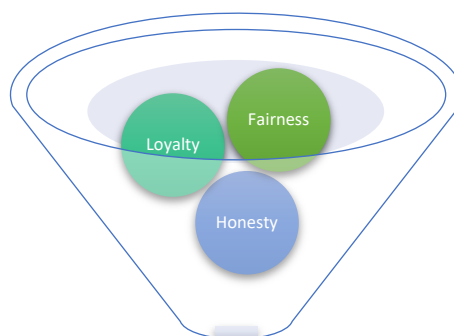
As alluded to earlier, these ethical issues are two pronged; they describe canons expected of social work practitioners and they also prescribe unethical behaviours which practitioners should refrain from. It is further imperative to note in this regard that these standards are applicable to all social work practitioners irrespective of practice setting (SACSSP, [Sa]:8). Because the aforementioned rules are mandatory and must be adhered to by social work supervisors and the employers of social work services, it is thus the opinion of the researcher that wherein a social worker is employed in a non-traditional social work organisation (i.e. the corporate environment), the onus is on the practitioner to ensure that their employer is aware of these rules and that effort is made towards ensuring adherence to them.

Following the ethical discussion as provided by the SACSSP, there is a need to explore comprehensively the ethical behaviour of social work supervisors.

3.7 THE ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF SUPERVISORS

If supervisors expect high standard of ethical behaviour from their supervisees as implied throughout the preceding discussion, supervisors should also exhume high standards of ethical behaviour. According to Deal and Kennedy (in Duh Belak & Milfelner, 2010:475), in an enterprise values serve to direct managers' attention to important issues, guide subsequent decisions by managers and facilitate commitment to something larger than the self, which in turn convey a sense of identity to its members and enhance the stability of its social system. According to Certo (2013:105) supervisors would be ethical if they exhibit important dimensions of ethical behaviour which include loyalty, fairness and honesty. These dimensions are presented schematically hereunder:

Figure 3.1: Important dimensions of ethical behaviour by supervisors



Source: Certo (2013:105)

According to Certo (2000:92) as a leader, a supervisor is expected to be loyal to his/her employer, to his/her manager, and to his/her subordinates. Loyalty expectations are multiplied for social work supervisors. As indicated during the discussion of ethical requirements above, in social work, a supervisor is expected to be loyal to fellow social workers, to clients, to the profession, to practice settings, and to the broader society. Fairness on the other hand denotes that subordinates should be treated even-handedly (Certo, 2013:105). Fairness according to Garcí'a-Marza (2005:216) also implies the equal distribution of burdens and benefits. Lewis, Packard and Lewis (2012:246) concur with the preceding authors and are of the view that ethical leaders should behave in a just way, that they should show concern for fairness and that they should avoid special treatments. Owing to the description of fairness, it can be said in this regard that supervisors are expected by supervisees to treat them similarly in similar situations; that supervisor should not favour one supervisee over the other(s); and that they (supervisors) need to be consistent with regard to interactions with all the subordinates.

The third dimension proposed by Certo is honesty. The word honesty is synonymous to trustworthiness, it implies that supervisors should be trusted by subordinates, their manager and by their employers. Lewis et al. (2012:246) is also of the view that leaders need to be honest and that they should not be honest in telling the truth but that they should represent reality as fully and comprehensive as possible. It is thus the view of the researcher that supervisors must model honesty if they expect honesty. Echoing Certo (2013:106) supervisors should also exhibit the following behaviours indicative of honesty; acknowledging outstanding contributions by supervisees and being honest about what the organisation can offer them.

Ethical issues are an integral part of supervision in social work practice, including the supportive responsibility of the supervisor to the supervisees. Ethics prescribe how supervision ought to be rendered. They set out boundaries for practice for the benefit of the supervisor, the supervisees, the clients and the organisation. In providing supportive supervision, supervisors are thus obliged to practice within the parameters of ethical responsibilities at all times. The behaviours of social work supervisors and supervisees in supervision is also guided by values and principles, which must be adopted by both the supervisor and supervisee(s). The discussion of values and principles governing supervision follows.

3.8 GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

In South Africa social work practice is influenced by an array of contextual issues which include, but not limited to, the legislation, provisions by the SACSSP including all the policies

by DSD; and by the provisions made by international organisations. The socio-political landscape of South Africa further compounds the provision of social work supervision. Social workers thus have at their disposal a pool of sources including the national policies, policies from the SACSSP and in scientific literature, from which to source out practice values and principles. The values and principles provided for by the Department of Social Development (2012); the SACCP (2006); IFSW and Sesoko (2015) interwoven hereunder guide the provision of social work supervision.

- **Social justice.** Social justice refers to upholding the condition that in a perfect world all citizens would have identical rights, protection, opportunities, obligations and social benefits irrespective of their background and racial grouping (Barker in Sesoko, 2015:66). In a supervision context, a supervisor can be supportive by challenging social injustices against the supervisees and by encouraging and supporting supervisees to challenge injustices against their clients.
- **Respect of people's worth, human rights and dignity.** Generically, social workers are obliged to respect the rights of their clients to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and autonomy (SACSSP, [Sa]:6). Likewise, supervisors in performing their supportive function have to respect the rights of their supervisees to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy.
- **Competence.** Competence refers to striving to maintain high standards of work and an ability to recognise one's particular competencies and limitations (SACSSP, [Sa]:6). Applied in supervision, a supervisor provides supervision in the areas of expertise (this applies to all supervisors). Supervisors have to recognise and acknowledge their limitations and shortcomings and strive towards addressing them.
- **Integrity.** Integrity entail being honest, fair and respectful (SACSSP, [Sa]:7). In this regard supervisors have to be honest and fair to their supervisees if they adhere to their responsibility to perform the supportive function of supervision. Supervisors are expected to be transparent and treat supervisees equally.
- **Professional responsibility.** Professional responsibility requires social workers to uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their social roles and obligations, accept responsibility for own behaviour and adopt their intervention methods to the needs of their different client systems (SACSSP, [Sa]:7). Applied to supervision, supervisors should take responsibility for their contribution into the supervisory processes and partially accept responsibility for supervisees' service intervention.
- **Show care and concern for other's well-being.** This principle entails showing care to human relationships and not exploiting or misleading clients during and after

termination of social work relationships (SACSSP, [Sa]:7). Similarly, for the supervisors to be regarded as performing their supportive function of supervision they would need not exploit their relationships with their supervisees. Instead, they will have to make efforts to engage with supervisees as partners in the supervisory relationship in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain and enhance the well-being of supervisees.

- **Service delivery.** Generically social workers' primary goal is to assist individuals, families, groups and communities address their social problems (SACCSP, [Sa]:7). Likewise, a supportive supervisor's goal is to ensure that supervisees render effective services; deal with challenges and handle all the emotionally charged issues they may experience in relation to their jobs and also in their personal lives.
- **Respect.** Respect entails recognising and acknowledging that clients have sufficient capacity to deal constructively with their problems (Sesoko, 2015:64). Respect also denotes that social workers should work cooperatively with colleagues (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:43). Likewise, in performing their supportive function supervisors should acknowledge that supervisees have the capacity to deal with work-related and personal problems on their own and that sometimes supervisees should be left to figure it out on their own. Respect also entails that supervisors should respect the inherent dignity and worth of supervisees.
- **Individualisation.** It refers to viewing clients as unique and not generalising and treating people with similar problems in the same way (Bistek in Sesoko, 2015:65). In a supervisory context this principle implies that a supervisor with two or more supervisees needs to individualise the supervision for each supervisee, guided by the individual needs of each supervisee.
- **Self-determination.** It refers to recognising and acknowledging the client's right to make his or her own decisions (Kirst-Ashman, 20113:36). Practically, it entails informing clients about available resources, helping them define and articulate their alternatives and assisting them to evaluate the consequences of each option (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:36). The inclination of this principle is that a supervisor should not resolve all problems for supervisees but that they should let supervisees come up with own solutions to problems.
- **Confidentiality.** It implies that workers should not share information provided by a client or about a client unless they have a client's explicit permission to do so. The inclination herein is that in the context of supportive supervision supervisors should hold confidential all the information that a supervisee shares with them and/or information they hear about a supervisee.

- **Non-judgemental attitude.** It refers to refraining from passing judgement on people (Bistek in Sesoko, 2015:64). In a supervisory context, a supportive supervisor does not pass judgement on supervisees but instead engages supervisees to facilitate own understanding.
- **Promotion and protection.** Supervision should promote the interest of beneficiaries, i.e. the supervisees and their clients (Department of Social Development, 2013:105). Likewise, supervision should also promote the interest of the employing organisation.
- **Ensuring that professional development is valued and encouraged** (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). The inclination of this principle is that supervision is a learning environment and that professional development should be valued and encouraged.
- **Accountability.** It implies that all legislation, policy and regulations should be complied with (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). The principle thus denotes that a supervisor should make sure that supervisees are aware of policies and that they apply them and that in a supervisory context supervisors adhere to employment policies and legislations in their work with supervisees.
- **Appropriateness.** It implies that social work practice should respond to social, economic, cultural and political conditions of service users (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). Likewise, the supportive efforts of the supervisor should be relevant to the supervisees' economic, cultural and political status.
- **Empowerment.** Power relations should shift towards people so that they can create control and influence over decisions and resources that impact their lives (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). The same principle should be slowly introduced in a supervisory relationship, i.e. the supervisor should create an environment whereby supervisees can come up with solutions to problems and the supervisor should support the initiatives.
- **Partnerships.** Stakeholders should accept collective responsibility to deliver services (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). Supervisors should make an effort to form partnerships with colleagues, which in his/her absence allows their supervisees to seek assistance from other social work supervisors. In this way the supportive function will be fostered.
- **Participation.** It infers that people should be engaged in their own process of learning, growth and change (Department of Social Development, 2013:10). The inclination herein is that in honouring the supportive function of supervision supervisors should involve their supervisees in the life of the supervision process. One way of involving supervisee might be their inclusion in all the decisions pertaining to supervision.

- **Promoting human rights.** Social workers embrace and promote the fundamental and inalienable rights of all human beings (IFSW, 2018). In a supervision context, this principle purports that social work supervisors should embrace and promote the fundamental human rights of their subordinates.
- **Promoting social justice.** Social workers have a responsibility to engage people in achieving social justice and to achieve this, social workers should challenge discrimination and institutional oppression; they should respect diversity; they should ensure access to equitable resources; they should challenge unjust policies and practices and they should promote solidarity (IFSW, 2018). In this regard, social work supervisors are also expected to challenge any discrimination and organisational oppression of their supervisees, they should respect the diversity of supervisees, they should ensure that researches are distributed evenly amongst supervisees and they should challenge any unfair labour practices and policies, which may lead to the discrimination and violation of the rights of supervisees.
- **Ethical use of technology and social media.** This principle cautions social workers that they should recognise that the use of digital technology and social media may pose a threat to the practice of many ethical standards including but not limited to confidentiality, competence and documentation and that social workers must obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to guard against unethical practice when using technology. In relation to supervision, this ethical principle denotes that supervisors conscientize supervisees about the use of technology and social media in their work with clients. Supervisors should also advocate for supervisee to attend trainings in relation to the use of technology and social media. This ethical principle further denotes that supervisors should themselves be careful in their use of technology and social media in their supervision processes.

These principles are set forth to regulate the practice of social workers. As social workers, it is therefore the responsibility of both supervisors and supervisees to make sure that they strive to practice within the parameters of these values and principles.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the regulatory framework governing social work supervision and as a result the following were unpacked; the international and the African Conventions, Declarations, Covenants, Treaties and Charters including the South African legislation and policies. Through concerted discussion of these instruments it has been demonstrated that

regulatory frameworks are interrelated, with their goals being equality amongst all people; the promotion of social justice and democracy; and the destruction of all forms of racism and discrimination. Furthermore, the relationship between these instruments and social work supervision was fully established.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate the research methodology followed by the researcher in undertaking this study. The chapter also specifies the population and sample involved; it describes method(s) and instrument(s) which were used for data collection and the procedures for administering the instruments. The discussion thus commences by providing a description of the research site wherein the study was conducted.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE

This study was conducted in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Geographically, Mpumalanga is situated on the eastern end of South Africa and its name is eponymous of its location because “Mpumalanga” means the place of the rising sun. Mpumalanga occupies 6.3% of the total land distribution of South Africa by province (Statistics South Africa, 2012:13). During the 2011 census Mpumalanga recorded a population size of 4 039 939, ranking it the sixth biggest province of South Africa in terms of population size. The majority of the residents of Mpumalanga are of African descent making 90.9%, followed by 7.5% white population; the coloured population was recorded to be 0.9% while the Asian stood at 0.7% (Statistics South Africa, 2014:18). Mpumalanga is demarcated into three (3) districts, namely, Gert Sibande District, Nkangala District and Ehlanzeni District and the districts are subdivided into seven (7), and six (6) municipalities respectively. In Mpumalanga, both nationally and provincially, the figures show that the proportion of males in the younger age groups was larger than that of the females, whilst in the older age groups the female proportion was higher than those of the males (Statistics South Africa, 2014:24).

Similar to all other provinces in South Africa, social welfare services in Mpumalanga are rendered by social work practitioners either through state institutions and by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The study was thus conducted within the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development. The Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development has divided its offices into sub-district offices as per its municipalities. There are thus 97 DSD sub-district offices operating in the Province (Grevensteyn, 2014). The DSD offices employed a combined total of 321 social workers and 53 supervisors while the Non-profit organisation sector employed 162 social workers and 42 social work supervisors (Grevensteyn, 2014). DSD was thus opted for because it employed most social workers in the

Province and thus presented the researcher with a large pool of prospective study subjects. However, echoing Alston and Bowles (2003:81), due to the time and resource constraints, because as a PhD research project the researcher needed to complete the study in a specified time, not all the DSD sub-district offices were included in the study. The sampling technique, which is discussed in detail later in this chapter was used to determine the sub-district offices for inclusion in the study. Subsequently, Dr JS Moroka sub-district; Ehlanzeni sub-district; Govan Mbeki sub-district, Lekwa sub-district, Msukaligwa sub-district, Emalahleni sub-district and Bushbuckridge sub-district were included in this study.

In conducting the study, the researcher adopted a specific research approach, which is amplified in the following discussion.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

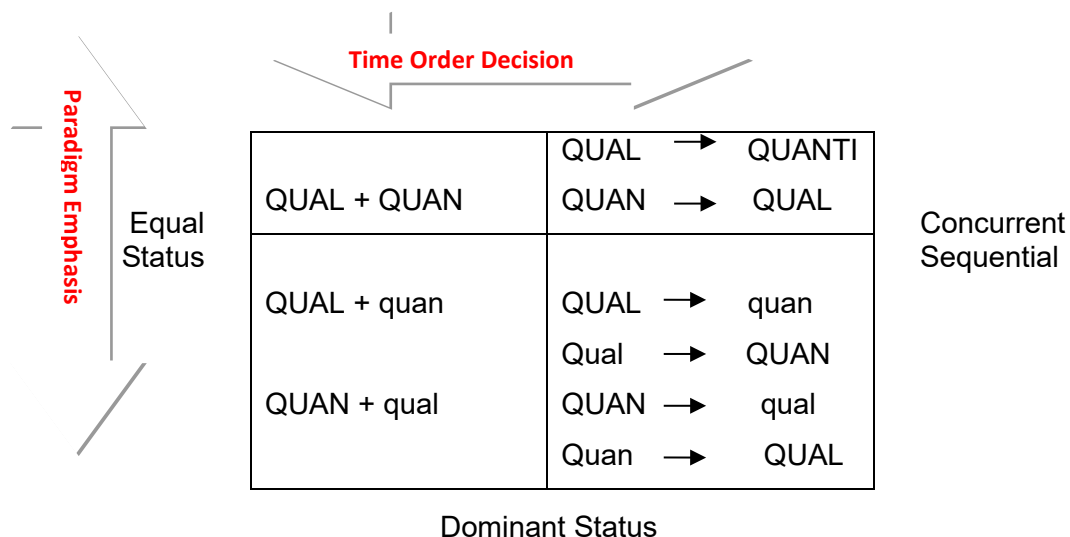
The study followed a mixed methods research approach. Mixed method studies integrate the qualitative and quantitative research approaches and techniques into a single multiphase study (Royse, 2004:251; Delport and Fouché, 2011:434; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:440; Creswell, 2009:203). The exact mixture that is considered appropriate depends on the research questions and the situational and practical issues facing the researcher (Creswell, 2008:31). Johnson and Christensen (2008:443) term the preceding description as the “*fundamental principle of mixed research*”. According to this principle, the researcher should strategically mix or combine the two methods, approaches and concepts in a way that produces an overall design with overlapping strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses.

The contribution of both approaches in the study is highlighted, in a way that is succinct and profound by Madey (in Royse, 2004:251) who states that “the methods are analogous to zooming in and zooming out with a lens; zooming from different directions and reproducing objective, wide-angle, telephoto, and microscopic views which are simultaneously valid”. Simply stated, this means that combining the two methods in a single study affords researchers an opportunity to utilize the two methodological procedures (microscopic lenses) to study a single problem, yielding wider, more comprehensive and objective findings (wide-angle). According to the researcher there is thus one strong requirement, which can be deduced from the description, namely, there should be clear differentiation of the components from each approach as included in the mixed method study.

Creswell (2009:206) warns that before selecting mixed method strategies, proposal developers should consider the following critical aspects: (1) *timing* which entails considering

the timing of data collection whether it would be in phases (sequential) or gathered at the same time (concurrent); (2) *weighing* which might be either equal or an emphasis on one or the other; (3) *mixing* which means either that the qualitative and quantitative data are actually merged in one end of the continuum, kept separate on the other end, or combined in some way between the two extremes; and (4) *theorizing or transforming perspectives* that entails deciding whether a larger, explicit or implicit, theoretical perspective will guide the entire design. In addition, Johnson and Christensen (2008:445) concede that mixed research takes most of the space on the research continuum that varies from ‘not mixed’ (that which is called *monomethod*) to ‘partially mixed’ research and/or ‘fully mixed’ research. Johnson and Christensen (2008:445) further conceptualize the mixed methods approach as a function of two dimensions: (1) *time orientation* (i.e. concurrent vs. sequential) which refers to whether the qualitative or quantitative phases of the study occur at approximately the same point in time (i.e. concurrently) or whether they are organised into phases over time (i.e. sequentially); and (2) *paradigm emphasis* (equal status vs. dominant status) which refers to whether the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study have approximately equal emphasis (i.e. equal status) with regard to answering the research question(s) or interpreting the results or whether one paradigm clearly has more weight than the other (i.e. dominant status). The figure below provides a schematic presentation of the mixed design matrix discussed above:

Figure 4.1: Mixed methods design matrix



Source: Johnson and Christensen (2008:446)

The letter words “qual” or “QUAN” stand for qualitative and quantitative research respectively; the capital letters in the writing of the approach denotes priority or increased weight whilst lowercase letters denotes lower priority or weight, and a plus sign (+) represents concurrent

or simultaneous collection of data, whilst an arrow (→) represents a sequential collection of data with one form (e.g. qualitative research) building on to the other (Johnson & Christensen; 2008:445; Creswell 2009:446). Creswell (2009:209) refers to the preceding description of the strategy using symbols as the *mixed method notation*, which he describes as the tool that a researcher uses to communicate the procedure she/he plans to follow easily.

With reference to Figure 4.1, the study adopted the combination of “QUAN→qual” sequential dominant status-design. The adopted design suggests that the quantitative paradigm had a dominant status in the study. The design also indicates that the quantitative phase was followed sequentially by the qualitative phase in the study (this is because of the arrow between QUAN and qual) and that in terms of data collection the quantitative phase was dominant in the study (QUAN is in capital letters and qual is in lower case). Creswell (2009:211) and Ivankova, Creswell and Clark (2010:267) refer to the adapted strategy as the *sequential explanatory strategy*. The purpose of this design, according to the authors, is to use qualitative findings to help clarify the quantitative results, as was applied in this study.

Likewise, in relation to the study, the sequence also alluded to the fact that more quantitative data were collected than qualitative data. The quantitative data thus informed the themes and questions, which directed the qualitative data collection process. The sequence also implies that the analysis of quantitative data and its results were used to identify participants for qualitative data, i.e. the qualitative data was used to complement and corroborate the quantitative data (Creswell, 2013:25; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:444). The reason why in the study the quantitative approach enjoyed dominant status was based on what is stated by Johnson and Christensen (2008:444), that the quantitative sampling would increase the generalizability of qualitative results while the qualitative component provided an explanatory feedback and insight garnered from the views of the participants regarding the studied phenomenon. The researcher also believes that using this type of research paradigm further added insight and understanding regarding the phenomenon that might otherwise be missed if only a single method was used.

Following the determination of the appropriate approach in this study, a research design was also developed. Because the aims of this study were twofold, there was a need for a research design which would tie succinctly the research processes followed from the first aim of the study to the attainment of the second aim. Consequently, the D&D methodology was adopted. The mixed method approach, which followed the “QUAN-qual” sequential dominant status-design was thus tackled within the context of the D&D paradigm with each aspect contributing

to the first or the second aim explicitly undertaken. A comprehensive description of the D&D methodology follows next.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Fouché and De Vos (2005:133) use the term “research design” to refer to the groups of small worked-out formulas from which prospective researchers can develop one (or more) suitable to their specific research goals and objectives. According to Sarantakos (2013:120), the research design explains in some detail how the researcher intends to conduct the work. In agreement with the preceding descriptions of research designs, Creswell (2014:12) refers to research designs as types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific directions for procedures in a research design. The D&D methodology was thus adopted for the purpose of this study.

The D&D methodology is an integrated model based on the pioneering work of Jack Rothman, published in 1980, entitled “*Social R and D: Research and Development in the Human Services*” and Edwin J Thomas’ 1984 work “*Designing Interventions for the Helping Professions*” (Tripodi, 1994:xx). The authors, Tripodi (1994: xx-xxii) and Thomas and Rothman (1994: 3-14) conceptualized D&D as follows:

- That D&D is a problem-solving process that seeks effective intervention and helping tools to deal with given human and social difficulties;
- Its primary objective is to evolve new human service technology (e.g. treatment methods, programmes, service systems, or policies);
- That it is systematic, deliberate, and immersed in research procedures, techniques, and other instrumentalities;
- That it is carried out within six phases: problem analysis and project planning; information gathering and synthesis; design; early intervention and pilot testing; evaluation and advanced development; and dissemination. All these are interconnected activities intended to guide researchers and practitioners to develop innovative interventions for effecting change in problem solutions that relate to human services;
- That, within every phase, there are also several operations that are critical for adequate fulfilment of that phase; and

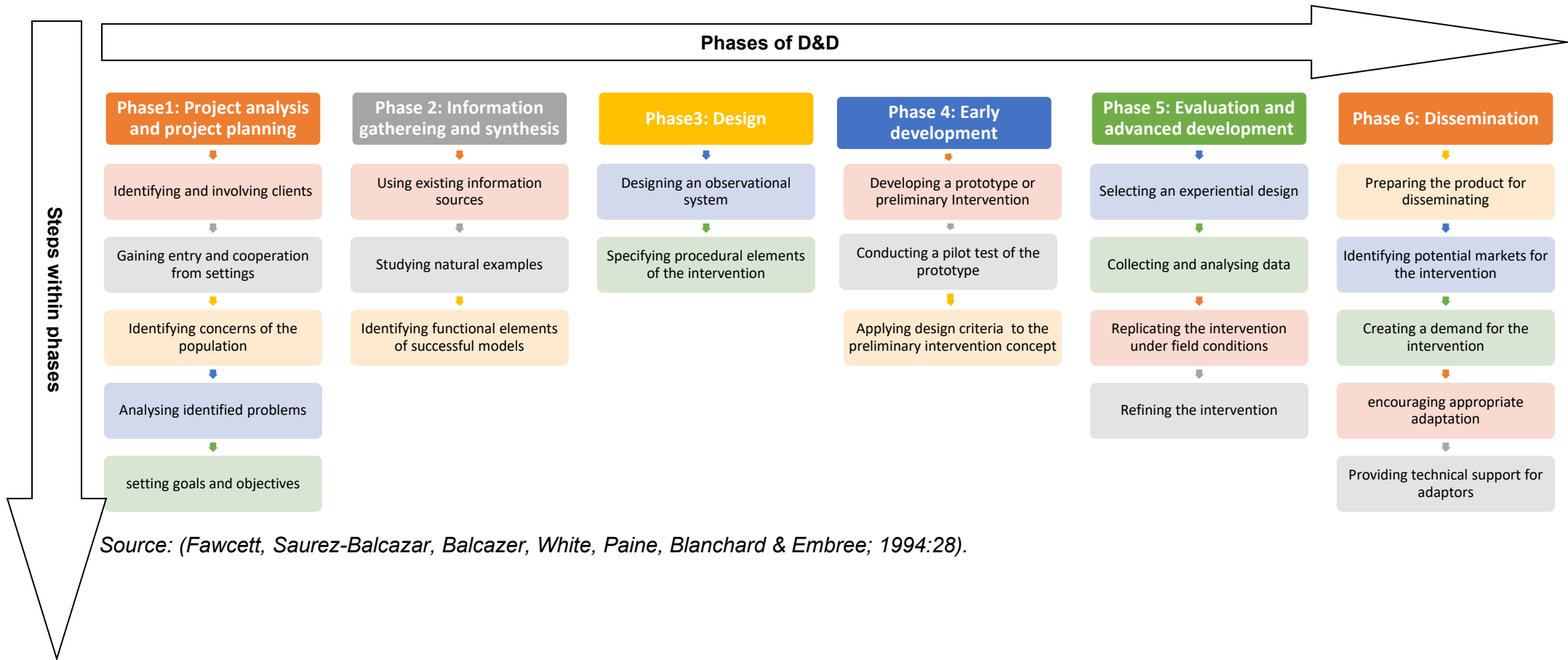
- That, although ideally stepwise and linear, there can sometimes be looping back to earlier phases and different operations within the phases, as difficulties are encountered and new information is obtained.

Gilgun and Sands (2012:349) add that the D&D research methodology involves the development and testing of practice models, description of change processes, and the application of models of practice to new populations and contexts.

In this study neither all the identified phases nor all the steps in some of the phases of the D&D methodology were undertaken. The study began with phase 1: problem analysis and project planning and ended with phase 4: early development. The steps in phases 1 and 2 were all undertaken in this study. In phases 3 and 4 only one step was undertaken respectively. Phase3-step1: designing an observational system, phase4-step2: conducting a pilot test of the prototype and phase4-step3: applying design criteria to the preliminary intervention concept, were excluded from this study. The reason why designing an observational system and applying design criteria to the preliminary intervention concepts were excluded from the study was due to reasons of time and resource constraints. With regard to pilot testing, as clarified in the limitations of the study, the initial plan in the proposal was that the researcher would subject the model to pilot testing but because of wanting to safeguard her intellectual property rights, pilot testing was also excluded from the study. Instead, the model was subjected to a discussion with supervisors to test its feasibility and applicability. This process is discussed comprehensively in Chapter 7.

The phases and steps of the D&D methodology are depicted schematically below.

Table 4.1: Phases and steps of D&D methodology



Source: (Fawcett, Saurez-Balcazar, Balcazer, White, Paine, Blanchard & Embree; 1994:28).

The D&D paradigm was well suited for this study. According to Tripodi (1994: xxi) and Thomas and Rothman (1994:13), there is not one particular research technique that is employed in D&D and as such the modality was well suited for the mixed method nature of the study. Secondly, the D&D paradigm is used when researchers want to shed light on a particular phenomenon concerning the current state of practice, and, in this study, the supportive component of social work supervision is that phenomenon. Thirdly, D&D methodology was deemed relevant and critical in the study because the ultimate goal was to develop a model for supportive supervision. Lastly, a prerequisite of the D&D paradigm, according to Tripodi (1994: xxi), is that the process of development should be conducted in the context of real-world encounters wherein the realities of 'users' are explored and as such D&D informed the development of the model in this study because of the realities of social work practitioners from whose experiences and encounters the model was developed. The phases of the D&D process thus unfolded as follows:

4.5 Phase 1: Problem analysis and project planning

This phase involves establishing that a problem exists and culminates in a comprehensive understanding of the problem, the verification of its seriousness, and the documentation of the inadequacies of existing interventions (Bailey-Dempsey & Reid, 1996:210). Caspi (2008:576) describes the phase in a similar manner by stating that it is concerned with identifying a focal problem and subsequently evaluating whether sufficient practice technologies exist to address it. In this study, the critical aspects of this phase were unpacked through the following steps: identifying and involving clients; gaining entry and cooperation from settings; identifying concerns of the population; analysing the problems identified; and setting goals and objectives of the study as advised by Fawcett et al. (1994:27). These steps are discussed below.

4.5.1 Phase 1-Step 1: Identifying and involving clients

Identifying and involving clients entails the selection of a population whose issues and problems are of current interest to the project (or study) clients themselves, researchers, and the society as a whole (Fawcett et al., 1994:27). De Vos and Strydom (2011:477) concur and state that researchers should select a constituency or population with whom to collaborate in a study. Drawing from these views, it was evident that the researcher also needed to identify project clients (the study population) and also to articulate how they would be involved in the study.

4.5.1.1 Study population

The term 'population' denotes the total group about which a researcher is interested in learning more (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:224). Babbie (2010:211) describes it similarly, calling it the aggregation of elements from which a sample is actually selected.

From the descriptions of the term population, it can be deduced that, ideally, for both aims of the study, the study needed to be inclusive of all social workers in South Africa. According to Marakalala (2014) of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) the nationwide social work population in South Africa was at 16 164 in 2012. Consequently, owing to the nature of the study, i.e. a doctoral study, the size of the overall social work population in South Africa and the time and resource constraints, it was impossible to include the entire community of South African social workers in this study. Consequently, of the nine South African Provinces, only one, i.e. Mpumalanga Province, was considered for the study. The selected province was particularly well suited for the study because it possesses two imperative features, i.e. it is composed of peri-urban cities and is also largely rural in other parts. These two features were critical in the study because they make the envisaged model applicable to both rural and urban setups.

At the inception of the study, there was a need to determine the social work population in the province and according Greyvenstein (2014), the social work population in the Province as of 2013 was as follows:

Table 4.2: Social Work Population of Mpumalanga Province as of 2013

Districts	Municipalities per District	DSD Sub-District offices	Social worker			Supervisors		
			Total number of social workers			Total number of supervisors		
			DSD	NPO	Combined Total	DSD	NPO	Combined Total
Nkangala	6	24	83	77	160	17	15	32
Gert Sibande	7	27	112	31	143	16	9	25
Ehlanzeni	5	46	126	54	180	20	18	38
Total	18	97	321	162	483	53	42	95

Source: Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development (2014)

Ideally, in order to answer the research questions accurately, the researcher needed to collect data from every member of the population from which the study was based, i.e. from all social workers employed by the Department of Social Development and NGO's/NPO's in Mpumalanga Province. However, owing to the number of social workers as depicted, coupled with the financial, resource and time constraints alluded to earlier, the researcher could not include the entire population of Mpumalanga social workers in the study. Consequently, only those employed by DSD constituted the population for the study because as shown in table 4.2 DSD is the largest employer of social workers in the province

The mixed method nature of the study implied that the social work population be categorised for each approach. The population for the study thus comprised of two interest groups, viz. the social workers rendering services to client (supervisees) and the social work supervisors who were employed by the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development. At the time of data collection, between 2017 and 2018, the social work population within DSD in Mpumalanga Province according to Grevenstein (2019) was as follows:

Table 4.3 Social work practitioners in Mpumalanga Province as at 2018

District	Social Worker	Social Work Supervisor	Social Work Manager	Social Work Policy Manager
Ehlanzeni	194	25	7	0
Gert Sibande	123	23	10	0
Nkangala	110	24	7	1
Provincial office	0	2	5	5
TOTAL	427	74	29	6

Source: Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development (2019)

Again, because at the time collection not all social workers and supervisors employed by DSD Mpumalanga could be involved in the study due to the same aforementioned reasons, the researcher had to select a sample to represent the population.

4.5.1.2 Sample and sampling

A sample refers to a set of elements taken from a larger population, while sampling is the process of drawing a sample from a population, and it involves studying the characteristics of

a subset selected from a larger group to understand the characteristics of a population (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:222). Kumar (2011:193) offers a similar definition of a sample and sampling, i.e. that a sample is a subgroup of the population one wishes to investigate while sampling is the process of selecting a few from the sampling population to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown type of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group.

There are two types of sampling methods, i.e. non-probability sampling and probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is utilised by qualitative researchers because of the nature of their research, which is largely exploratory; it also does not allow the researcher to generalize findings; it gives insight into previously unexplored areas, and the odds of selecting a particular individual are also not known because the researcher sometimes does not know the population size (Alston & Bowles, 2003:80; 87; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:223; Rubin & Babbie, 2010:132). Probability sampling, on the other hand, is used by quantitative researchers because of the statistical processes they undertake, which are based on the theory of “probability”, a scientific procedure that guarantees an equal chance of selection of each element when substantial samples are selected from large populations (Alston & Alston, 2003:80, 87; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:223; Rubin & Babbie, 2010:132).

Due to the fact that the mixed method approach was followed for the first aim of this study, a sampling method, including the sample size, needed to be selected for each approach. Consequently, for the quantitative sample of this study a probability sample, particularly cluster sampling, was followed. In cluster sampling, a sampling frame, such as a list, is usually not available, but only a map of the relevant geographical area (Strydom, 2011:230). Within the quantitative paradigm cluster sampling involves a multistage process of listing and then randomly sampling groups of cases rather than individual cases (Yegeedis & Weinbach, 2009:206). The population is divided into a number of non-overlapping groups called clusters and they should be as heterogeneous as the population (Maree & Petersen, 2007:176). According to Strydom (2011:230), each cluster must represent the whole population and where there are variations among clusters they must be small. Strydom (2011:321) further states that the selected clusters can either be included fully in the sample, or further sampling within the selected clusters can be performed.

In this study, the eighteen (18) municipal demarcations found within Mpumalanga Province constituted clusters. Because in cluster sampling one can further subdivide the clusters, the researcher sub-divided the clusters and termed the further division ‘sub-clusters’. The sub-clusters in this study were drawn using the systematic sampling technique cited by Strydom

(2011:32). The different DSD offices were listed according to their municipality; the first case in each list was selected randomly whilst all the others were selected according to a particular interval, i.e. every 3rd DSD sub-district office on the list was included in the study. The following DSD sub-district offices were ultimately identified for inclusion in this study: the Dr JS Moroka sub-district; Ehlanzeni sub-district; Govan Mbeki sub-district, Lekwa sub-district, Msukaligwa sub-district, Emalahleni sub-district and Bushbuckridge sub-district.

Following the determination of DSD offices for inclusion in the study, the question of how many respondents would be representative of the entire identified population arose. Dudley (2011:149) and Schutt (2011:226) suggest that in a quantitative study, the larger the sample, the more confidence in the representativeness of the sample. Strydom (2011:224) shares a similar opinion and states that it is wise to draw a sample larger than may eventually be needed because a certain degree of respondent mortality occurs in any research project. From the total of 427 social workers a total of 62 social workers were subsequently included in the study.

As alluded to earlier, because the qualitative design followed the quantitative design in the study, so did sampling. With regard to qualitative sampling, non-probability purposive sampling was adopted. This afforded the researcher an opportunity to specify, using her own judgment, the characteristics of those who would participate in the qualitative phase of the study, according to Alston and Bowles (2003:90); Johnson and Christensen (2008:239); Rubin and Babbie (2010:147); Babbie (2011:179). Consequently, the following criteria was used to purposively sample the participants:

- Social work supervisors providing supervision to social workers;
- Social work supervisors employed by the DSD in Mpumalanga Province;
- Social work supervisors with five years of supervision experience and
- Social work supervisors willing to participate in the study.

As alluded during the discussion of the limitation of the study, the researcher deviated from the third criterion on the list that the social work supervisors who would participate in the study should have professional experience of five years in providing supervision. This is because the researcher did not have the luxury of hand picking the supervisors but included all those who were willing to take part in the study, irrespective of their years of experience. Having participants with an array of experience allowed the researcher to obtain information from both experienced and inexperienced supervisors, which was seen as an advantage.

Although the researcher knew the total number of prospective participants as evidenced earlier, the researcher did not know how many supervisors would be included in the study eventually. Subsequently, twelve (12) participants were included in the study. The number of participants was determined by the principle of data saturation. Data saturation refers to a point in the study where the researcher begins to hear the same information reported repeatedly and no longer learns anything new (Seidman in Strydom, 2011:350). Likewise, as soon as the researcher heard the participants provide similar responses to questions asked, the interviews were stopped.

4.5.1.3 Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection processes were undertaken for this study. The aspects of data collection, that is, preparation for data collection, method of data collection, pilot testing, data analysis and data verification, are closely linked with phase 1- step 2 until phase 1- step 3 of the D&D methodology.

4.5.1.3a Phase 1-Step 2: Gaining entry and cooperation from settings/Preparation for data collection

Generally, according to Bouma and Ling (2004:135), before data can be collected the researcher must finalise the research methodology. Dudley (2011:213) adds that data collectors preparing to use quantitative methods must be thoroughly familiar with the data collection instrument used, they need to understand fully all the questions asked, and where there are technical terms included, they need to understand them in depth so they explain them to research respondents. Those planning to collect qualitative data, according to Dudley (2011:214), must prepare themselves similarly. They must have a good understanding of the research topic and questions asked.

In keeping with the suggestions by the authors, in preparing for data collection, the researcher completed the research proposal. In the research proposal, the research methodology underpinning the study was interrogated and the tentative data collection instruments were also presented. The methodological procedure used in the study was thus certified ethical by the Unisa Department of Social Work Research and Ethics Committee (see Addendum A).

According to Gochros (2011:317-320), preparing for data collection also involves gaining access to study participants, obtaining organizational consent, and deciding on where data is collected. To gain access to study participants, Fawcett et al. (1994:29) contend that the

researcher must identify and talk with key informants who introduce him/her to gatekeepers, those individuals who control access to the setting where the researcher conducts the study. Fawcett (in Fawcett et al. 1994:29), states that researchers should also form collaborative relationships with representatives of the settings by involving them in identifying problems and planning the project. In this study, the researcher heeded the suggestion by Gochros and Fawcett in that after she obtained the ethical clearance certificate from the university, she then approached the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development and sought permission to conduct the study in the province. The researcher furnished the department with the research proposal accompanied by the ethical clearance certificate from the university and after reviewing the documents DSD Mpumalanga also granted the researcher approval to collect data from social work practitioners in the province (See Addendum B).

After obtaining approval the researcher established that the key informants were the officials occupying the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and Norms & Standards portfolio's in the province. The researcher thus orientated the said officials about the study. The NPO and Norms and Standards officials introduced the researcher to the gatekeepers who were the sub-district social work managers and the social work supervisors. As recommended by Rothman (1994:96) the researcher held information sessions to orientate the identified gatekeepers about the study. The gate-keepers were targeted at the DSD Mpumalanga Provincial Supervisor's Forum Meeting, which on that particular day was also attended by the managers.

During the information session, the researcher sought endorsements from the managers that their employees participate in the study. During the information session the researcher also requested social work managers and supervisors to assist her in identifying possible respondents for the quantitative leg of the study. The gate-keepers were furnished with the copies of the letters requesting the social workers' participation in the research project (see Addendum E for the letter) including the informed consent forms which were intended for social workers. The documents were handed out so that the key informants could distribute them to the social workers as a mechanism for recruiting them for the study. The key informants were also asked to give the copies of the ethical clearance certificate to the social workers as evidence of the legitimacy of the study. The researcher also informed the key informants that they should encourage the social workers to contact her if they had any questions regarding the study.

Because the researcher had social work supervisors readily available during the forum meeting, she used the information sessions to recruit participants for the qualitative leg of the study. The supervisors were also furnished with a letter requesting their participation in the

study (see Addendum F) and the informed consent form for the qualitative part of the study. Supervisors were also encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any questions regarding the study.

It was critical that the information session was held as recommended by Rothman (1994:96), because issues of collecting data during working hours were discussed. The researcher engaged supervisors and managers in a practical discussion on when and where data could be collected and the researcher negotiated to use DSD offices for this end. During the discussion the researcher presented the sub district offices selected for inclusion in the study and thereafter she obtained copious information, the contact details of all the managers and supervisors of the selected sub-district offices. The researcher also indicated the time period (month) she intended to collect data. Weeks leading to data gathering for both quantitative and qualitative legs of the study, the researcher confirmed the dates for the meetings and days before the agreed dates the offices were reminded of the appointments. Such planning is recommended by Weiss (cited in Rothman, 1994:88), when he argues that procedures should be planned with the participation of representatives from the settings to ensure feasibility and fit, and it also engenders interest in and commitment to the study. The information sessions proved important because the supervisors and managers helped the researcher to understand the bureaucracy of each office. The discussion also made the project compatible to organisational procedures so that users of social work services are not compromised in any way.

4.5.1.3b Phase 1-Step 3: Identifying concerns of the population/ Method of data collection

In D&D methodology, the step of identifying concerns of the population involves affording prospective respondents an opportunity to air their views pertaining to the phenomenon under study. According to Fawcett et al. (1994:29-30), researchers should talk to key informants and the prospective participants to obtain information about local problems and strengths of the population in respect of the phenomenon under study. Fawcett et al. further advice that researchers should understand issues of importance to the population, clarify dimensions of identified issues, and understand the scope of such concerns. In keeping with this recommendation, in the study the researcher identified the concerns by means of two data collection methods, one per approach.

The term 'data collection method' describes the document used by the researcher in acquiring necessary information from prospective participants (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2009:249). In

mixed method research, as is the case in this study, specific types of data in each approach are specified (Creswell, 2009:217), that is, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were specified. As pre-determined by the sequential design of this study, the quantitative data collection preceded the qualitative data collection. Because of the QUAN-qual sequential study design in this research, the quantitative data collection process was treated as a separate entity from the qualitative approach. Collecting data this way was beneficial to the study because, echoing Creswell (2007:203), in mixed method research the researcher has an opportunity to benefit from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

During quantitative data collection, a questionnaire was utilized to collect data from the respondents. A questionnaire is defined by Babbie (2008:272) as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to elicit information appropriate for analysis. Johnson and Christensen (2008:203) define it similarly as a self-report data-collection instrument filled out by research respondents. Several quantitative data collection questionnaires are found in the literature, but for the purpose of this study, a self-developed group administered questionnaire was used. A group-administered questionnaire refers to a questionnaire completed by individuals assembled in a group (Engel & Schutt: 2009:352). Maree and Pietersen (2007:157) concur that in a group administered questionnaire the researcher waits while a group of respondents completes the questionnaire on an individual basis. In administering the questionnaire, the researcher arranged with the supervisor in each sub-district office to have a group of social workers together. The group of social workers was briefed about the study, they went through an informed consent session individually and concerns were discussed in the group. After obtaining the written consent of prospective respondents who expressed willingness to be part of the study, they then completed the questionnaire. The researcher was available on site throughout the completion of the questionnaire to clarify any queries. The respondents did not discuss the questionnaire as each respondent completed it on their own.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using this type of questionnaire. In this study it was found that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. This was because by using this type of questionnaire minimized the time and financial constraints alluded to earlier. The researcher had a group of respondents complete the questionnaire simultaneously and handling the process this way further guaranteed the researcher 100% returned questionnaires. An example of the questionnaire used to collect data is attached as Addendum G.

Within the qualitative study, interviews were used to collect data from supervisors. An interview is a data collection method in which an interviewer asks an interviewee questions (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:203). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:87), an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks participants questions to collect data while simultaneously allowing the researcher to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of participants. In scientific research, according to Johnson and Christensen (2008:203), interviews are used “to obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions and behavioural intentions of participants”.

Similar to quantitative data collection methods, several qualitative data collection methods are also found in literature, but, for the purpose of this study, data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. Semi-structured interviews are conducted when it is known from the onset what information is needed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:119). In a typical semi-structured interview, Edwards and Hollard (2013:29) state that the researcher has a list of questions covered in an interview guide. Gochros (2011:306) concurs by stating that a semi-structured interview schedule affords researchers an opportunity to determine the general areas to be explored and to formulate the questions in advance. The following key questions were pre-determined for the study, which were subsequently posed to participants and were divided into biographical questions and open-ended questions:

The following biographical questions were asked to the participants:

- What is your age?
- What is your cultural grouping?
- How many years have you been a social worker overall?
- How many years have you been employed as a social worker at DSD Mpumalanga Province?
- Are you employed in a rural set-up or in an urban area?
- “Yes” or “No”, are you legally appointed as a social work supervisor?
- How many years of experience do you have as a social work supervisor within DSD Mpumalanga?
- How many social work practitioners are you supervising currently?
- Are you supervising any other professional groupings?
- Which programmes are you responsible for?

The open-ended questions were the following:

- What is your overall perception of social work supervision?
- Locate yourself in the following: a novice supervisor, at an exploratory stage of supervision, at a consolidation stage of supervision or a master supervisor and kindly elaborate the reasons for your response.
- Share with me your understanding of the administrative, educational and supportive functions of supervision.
- How often, in a space of a month, do you provide administrative, educational and supportive supervision to your supervisee(s)?
- When do you offer supportive supervision to your subordinates?
- Talk me through an incident where you offered supportive supervision to a supervisee.
- Do you have any culturally rooted principles that you employ when supervising the social workers and how?
- Discuss the benefits of providing supportive supervision to social work practitioners.
- What are the challenges that you often come across in providing supportive supervision to social work practitioners?
- Are you supported in your endeavour as a social work supervisor? By who and how?

The funnelling technique was used in constructing the interview tool. Funnelling, according to Polster and Collins (2011:311), involves starting the interview with broad, general questions and then moving on to narrower, more specific, and perhaps more difficult and sensitive questions as the interview progresses. Sekaran and Bougie (2013:122) also refer to the transition from broad to narrow themes in interviewing as a funnelling technique. In this study, the advantage of using this technique for the researcher is that “rapport could be established early in the interview with questions that do not make the interviewee particularly uncomfortable” (Polster & Collins, 2011:311).

Listening, probing, and summarising are some of the interviewing techniques that were utilised by the researcher in conducting the interviews. Listening, according to Grobler, Schenck and Mbedzi (2013:49), is an active process of receiving auditory stimuli, attaching meanings to what you hear, and making sense of the raw vocal symbols received. Through listening, the researcher was able to probe the participants further. According to Polster and Collins (2011:313), researchers use probing to “seek greater depth or clarity about the answers the interviewee has already given”. In probing, the researcher, as advised by Nieuwenhuis (2007:88-89), used mostly *elaborated probes*, which involved asking the participant to tell her more about a certain example or answer given and *clarification probes*, which were used to check whether the researcher’s understanding of what has been said is accurate.

Summarising was also used throughout the interview to make the transition from one question to another.

To ensure that none of the responses from the interviews were lost, the researcher captured the responses using a voice recorder as advised by Greef (2011:359). Conscious of the possibility that some study participants may have had reservations about the use of an audio recorder, the researcher made sure that its use and its handling was discussed in detail in the informed consent form. The researcher did not leave the issue to participants reading about it only but she assured each participant that the information would be handled confidentially as discussed in Chapter 1.

It is critical to note herein that not all questions asked from social workers were included in the qualitative interview. This was because the approaches were treated as separate entities during data collection; the researcher strived to stay as true as possible to the data collection procedures of each data collection instrument. Consequently, because a typical semi-structured interview schedule has a few themes, which are predetermined, it was impossible in the study to corroborate each question asked in the questionnaire during the interviews. Lastly, the strength of the quantitative data also necessitated that more quantitative data be collected than the qualitative data. Handling data collection this way is supported by Creswell, Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (in Hanson et al., 2005:233) who report that in mixed methods studies the point at which data integration begins and ends may depend on the type of data collected, which in turn depends on the sample size, the research design, and the purpose of the study.

Before data could be collected, the researcher subjected the data collection tools to a pilot testing process.

4.5.1.3c Pilot testing

The researcher had planned to conduct three pilot testing scenarios: the pilot testing of the quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments and that of the model. However, as alluded to in the discussion of limitations for the study earlier, due to the possible risk of compromising the intellectual property of the model, the pilot testing of the model was put on hold and this discussion is amply covered in chapter 7. Consequently, pilot testing was conducted only for the quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments and not the proposed model.

A pilot test refers to a preliminary test of the data collection instrument (Johnson and Christensen, 2008:189-190). Pilot testing in this study was thus conducted to determine the appropriateness, usability, and applicability of the quantitative data collection instrument and the interview schedule. Strydom (2011:236-247) and Strydom and Delport (2011:390-396) encourage the pilot testing of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments so as to improve and consolidate their efficacy.

Johnson and Christensen (2008:189) suggest that when conducting a pilot test a minimum of five to ten people should be included in the pilot. In response to this view, six (6) individuals were included in the pilot testing process, four (4) for the quantitative phase and (2) for the qualitative phase. Because the study design was tipped in favour of the quantitative paradigm that had a dominant status, more pilot test subjects were thus identified for the quantitative phase.

During pilot testing the researcher made sure to include DSD offices located in rural parts of Mpumalanga Province and those from the peri-urban area. Thembisile Hani DSD sub-district, represented the rural setup while Emalahleni sub-district represented the peri-urban setup. During pilot testing the researcher made sure that the participants resembled as far as possible the characteristics of final participants in the main study as specified in the sampling frames. The pilot test participants responded to the questionnaire and where the questions were unclear, biased and intrusive they alerted the researcher and changes were effected accordingly. Likewise, the researcher asked the pilot test participants questions intended for the qualitative data and where questions were unclear, biased and intrusive they alerted the researcher and changes were also effected accordingly.

Following data collection for both approaches, the researcher embarked on data analyses for both phases of the study.

4.5.1.3d Phase 1-Step 4: Analysing identified problems/ Data analysis

In D&D a critical aspect of data analysis relates to assessing those conditions that people label as community problems (Fawcett et al., 1994:30). Fawcett et al. (1994: 30-31) argue that researchers should answer, amongst other things, the following questions, "What is the nature of the discrepancy between 'ideal' and 'actual' conditions that define the problem? What are the negative consequences of the problem for the affected individuals? Who should share the responsibility of 'solving' the problem? What behaviours need to change to consider the problem solved? What is an acceptable level of change? Is this a multi-level problem that

requires action at a variety of levels of change? Is it possible to make changes at each identified level?" In this study, the highlighted questions were answered through conducting quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

In mixed methods studies, data analysis and integration may occur by analysing the data separately, by transforming them, or by connecting the analyses (Caracelli & Green, Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, & Tashakkori & Teddlie in Hanson et al., 2005:227). In this study the QUAN-quali sequential study design compelled the analyses of the two sets of data separately and sequentially as was the case with data collection.

Authors such as Williams, Tutty and Grinnell (2011:430); Pietersen and Maree (2007:198); Johnson and Christensen (2008:464); Yegidis and Weinbach (2007:262-263) report that quantitative studies provide space for statistical analyses. In this study, the researcher used univariate analysis. According to Dudley (2011:226) univariate analyses is also referred to as descriptive statistics (Kruger & Neuman in Fouché & Bartley, 2011:254). Univariate statistical analysis involves one variable being analysed and described at a time (Fouché & Bartley, 2011:254; Dudley, 2011:226; Bryman, 2012:337). Univariate analysis was suitable in this study because the questionnaire items differed from each other and needed to be interpreted separately. Consequently, the summary of the questions ranged from tabular to graphic and diagrammatic displays. The interpreted quantitative data of this study is presented in Chapter five of this report.

Qualitative data analysis, on the other hand, refers to the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie, 2008:415). It requires that a lot of time be spent committing thoughts to paper and working out how they relate to one another. Yegidis and Weinbach (2007:262) and Nieuwenhuis (2007:99) add that qualitative data analysis seeks to make sense of the data by interpreting and finding meanings that participants ascribe to their experiences. In this study, the qualitative data was analysed by means of integrating Creswell's analytic spiral data analysis process with the process described by Marshall and Rossman and comments by Gibbs (cited by Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:403). The process entails the following:

- **Planning for recording of data**

In the study during the information session described in "phase 1- step 2", the supervisors were made aware that the interviews would be conducted at the work places either in their own offices or in an alternative and convenient office of their choice. The supervisors were

also made aware of the duration of the interviews, that it would take an hour and half, as this was confirmed during the pilot testing process. After many attempts at arranging individual interviews with supervisors directly without success because the supervisors are very busy, the researcher sought the assistance of the social work manager in a sub-district and requested assistance with organising supervisors willing to participate in the study. The agreement was that they would come in one day but at different time slots for the interviews. Arranging interviews this way mitigated the time and the resource constraints alluded to earlier and enabled the researcher to interview the participants in a day instead of travelling back and forth. The interviews were held individually and in camera.

- **Data collection and preliminary analyses**

Qualitative data analysis followed a twofold approach. The first approach involved data analysis at the research site and the second was away from the research site (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:405). In this study, data was gathered by means of interviews. During the interviews the researcher listened attentively to the responses of the participants and identified possible themes during each interview, which she jotted down. After all interviews were conducted, the researcher then analysed the data at her home and the first step of analysing the data involved managing the data as described below.

- **Managing data**

The actual managing of data involves transcribing interviews, organising data into file folders, index cards, or computer files, and then converting the text into words, sentences, and, then, an entire story (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:534; Schurink et al., 2011:408). In managing data, all the (12) audio recorded interviews were transcribed and turned into electronic copies. All the captured information was then compartmentalized into electronic files and saved in a folder. For safe keeping the data was saved in two computers, on the researcher's work laptop and on her personal notebook. The data was also saved on a flash disk. All the electronic files were encrypted with a password to ensure that no person has access to the information they contained. The transcriptions were also printed into hard copies and placed in a lockable cabinet at the researcher's home. After transcribing and compartmentalising the data, the next step involved gaining a deeper understanding of the data.

- **Reading and writing memos**

Babbie (2007:426) and Johnson and Christensen (2008:532) refer to this process as ‘memoing’, which refers to writing memos or reflective notes that researchers write to themselves about what they are learning from the data. Consequently, as advised by Schurink et al. (2011:409) the researcher immersed herself in the data by reading it several times and by replaying the audio recorder several time and by so doing she managed to make sense of the interviews. As suggested by Creswell (2007:159), in keeping with this step the researcher developed a list of significant statements depicting the experiences of participants. With those experiences the researcher began to generate themes.

- **Generating categories and coding the data**

Generating categories involves identifying salient themes, recurring ideas and patterns of belief that link people and settings together, and classifying them into five or six general themes which must be reduced into small, manageable sets to be written in a final report (Schurink et al., 2011:410). Creswell (2007:159) also recognises this step by stating that significant statements formulated must be grouped into larger units of information called “themes”. Following the transcription and after immersing herself in the data common themes emerged. The emerged themes were thus contrasted with those, which were captured as field notes. The researcher identified and extracted similar meanings, recurring ideas and patterns from the responses of each participant per question, which she then used to finalise the general themes. Simultaneously, the researcher also assigned a code to every theme. According to Dudley (2011:260) as themes are identified they may also be coded like a “book mark” that can be easily identifiable later. Johnson and Christensen (2008:534) concurs that coding also entails marking segments of data with symbols, descriptive words, or category names. The researcher, following the formulation of categories and themes, made use of file folders, both electronic and manual, which she labelled with key words from each theme to code the data.

- **Testing emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations**

The two processes, that is, testing emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations, are combined because, in attaining them, a similar exercise was undertaken by the researcher, where, the researcher read and reread the coded, themed and categorized data several times. The researcher, as specified by Schurink et al. (2011:415), then determined how useful the data was in relation to illuminating the questions being explored and how central the data was to the story that was unfolding about the phenomenon under study. The researcher then searched for plausible explanations and linkages to them. The

meanings, themes and the descriptions of the participants' experiences were systematically represented as the findings for the qualitative leg of the study.

- **Writing the report**

The analysis of data obtained qualitatively ends with the writing up of the information as research findings. This step involves asking, "What are the lessons learned?" and providing the answers thereto (Creswell, 2007:189). According to Schurink et al. (2011:418) the answers may be presented in text, tabular or figure forms. In this study, the findings are largely presented in a text format and where a table is necessary, it was inserted. The findings of this qualitative leg of the study are presented as Chapter 6 of the thesis. In the report, the researcher offers an answer to the research question in relation to the first aim of the study. The researcher presents interpretations of the phenomenon as perceived by participants and then derives an argument by comparing and/or contrasting the findings with information gained from the literature review, as advised by Creswell (2007:189).

Both the quantitative and the qualitative data have been subjected to data verification in the study, which is why the discussion on data verification follows next.

4.6 DATA VERIFICATION

Data verification is tantamount to data quality assurance. It infers that data collected in a study must be proven, validated or authenticated in accordance with the view that "it is important that conclusions that have been drawn are verified in one way or another" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:350). For both quantitative and qualitative approaches there exist various methods for verifying data.

The quantitative and qualitative data verification processes are therefore discussed in the study with reference to the principles of validity and reliability. Lincoln (in Morrow (2005:251), summarises the link between quantitative and qualitative data verification methods as follows, "*credibility* in qualitative research corresponds with *internal validity* in quantitative approaches, *transferability* to *external validity* or *generalizability*, *dependability* to *reliability* and *conformability* to *objectivity*". The operationalization of the identified data verification principles in the study for both approaches follows next.

4.6.1 Quantitative data verification

As indicated in the introductory remarks on data verification, the discussion of quantitative data verification in this study is centred on the principles of reliability and validity. In the quantitative approach, validity and reliability are spoken of to determine the effectiveness of data measuring instruments (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:225-229; Dudley, 2011:91-96; Bostwick & Kyte, 2011:182-195; Guthrie, 2010:100-107; Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007:37-39). In this context, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:225), reliability refers to a test of how consistently a measuring instrument measures whatever concept it is measuring, and validity refers to the extent to which instruments measure what they purport to measure. Bostwick and Skyte (2011:184) offer similar descriptions, viz. that validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, and reliability refers to the degree of accuracy or precision of a measuring instrument.

Various types of data validity tests are used in quantitative research. The traditional forms according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:225) and Creswell (2013:160) include content validity, construct validity, criterion validity, and construct validity. Likewise, there are also various methods to ensuring the reliability of a data collection instrument. Pietersen and Maree (2007:215-216); van de Sande and Schwartz (2011:133-134); Bostwick and Kyte (2011:182-195) cite the following: test-retest reliability; equivalent form reliability; split-half reliability; and internal reliability. According to Dudley (2011:98), another way to ensure the validity and reliability of the quantitative data collection instrument that the researcher can make use of is triangulation. In triangulation researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and theories to provide corroborating evidence, which involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 2013:251; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:444).

In this study, the reliability and the validity of data was determined by means of triangulation. There are also various forms of triangulation and for the purpose of this study the researcher used data triangulation, which denotes the use of more than one data source (Denzin in De Vos, 2005:362). Data triangulation was used in that a mixed method research approach, which employed interviews to corroborate findings from the self-developed group-administered questionnaires, was adopted and undertaken in this study.

4.6.2 Qualitative data verification.

In this study, the discussion of data verification is centred on the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

- **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency where the core issue is “how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so” (Gasson in Morrow, 2005:252). Morrow (2005:252); Creswell (2014: 201-202) and Shenton (2004:64-69) suggest the following techniques of ensuring credibility: prolonged engagement with participants; persistent observation in the field; the use of a peer debriefer or peer researchers; participant checks; validation or co-analysis; random sampling; triangulation; frequent debriefing sessions; peer scrutiny of the research project and member checks. Credibility was thus achieved in this study by means of data triangulation as explained under quantitative data verification.

- **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the reader is able to generalize the findings of the study to her or his own context. It addresses the core issues of “how far a researcher may make claims for a general application to their theory” (Gasson in Morrow, 2005:252). Morrow (2005:252) is of the opinion that “given the sample sizes and absence of statistical analyses, qualitative data cannot be said to be generalizable”. Creswell (2014:204) concur and contends that generalization is a term less used in qualitative research because the intention of qualitative inquiry is not to generalize findings to individuals, sites and places outside those under study. A contrasting view on the matter is offered by Stake and Denscombe (in Shenton, 2004:69) “who suggest that, although each case may be unique, it is also an example within a broader group, and as a result, the prospects of transferability should not be immediately rejected”.

The argument by Stake and Denscombe in Shenton resonated with this study because the adaptation of the mixed method approach, particularly the QUAN-qual dominant status design, influenced the transferability of the qualitative findings. In this study because the qualitative data corroborated the quantitative data, which is generalizable, by default the qualitative data became generalizable. The view of the researcher in this regard emanated from that of Johnson and Christensen (2008:444) who were quoted earlier saying that whilst the qualitative component of the study would provide an explanatory feedback and insight from the views of the participants regarding the phenomenon to be studied, the quantitative sampling approach would increase the generalizability of qualitative results. To strengthen the transferability of the qualitative results, the researcher, as proposed by Krefting (1990:220), “provided a

comprehensive background information about the informants and research site, including the detailed research methodology followed”.

- **Dependability**

The term ‘dependability’ is synonymous with steadfastness, constancy and reliability. Dependability deals with the core issue that the process through which findings are derived should be explicit and repeatable as much as possible, that is, “the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers and analysis techniques” (Gasson in Morrow, 2005:252). Dependability is accomplished through documenting thoroughly the research design and its implementation, data gathering and procedure, and the use of its analysis and interpretation of the qualitative research as well by evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry termed the “reflective appraisal of the project” (Krefting, 1990:2210; Shenton, 2004:71-72). Krefting (1990:221) further cites code-recode, triangulation and the use of colleagues and methodological experts to check the research and its implementation as other means of ensuring dependability. In this study, the use of data triangulation as described under the discussion of quantitative data verification simultaneously addressed the dependability of the data research results.

- **Conformability**

Conformability is based on the acknowledgement that research is never objective. It addresses the core issue that “findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories or biases of the researcher” (Gasson in Morrow, 2005: 252). Shenton (2004:72) offers a similar description of conformability. Krefting (2004:221), Shenton (2004:72), and Creswell (2014:203) emphasise the use of an external auditor to ensure conformability. In this study, the researcher’s PhD promoter served as an expert who assisted her with ensuring conformability. The study promoter is an experienced academic having mentored a number of masters and doctoral studies. The promoter thus oversaw the implementation of the whole study ensuring that the researcher stayed true to the qualitative and the quantitative research procedures.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the methodological procedures that were followed in undertaking the study. The critical issues are that the study adopted a mixed method research approach, which

followed the “QUAN-qual” sequential dominant status-design. The approach was tackled within the context of the D&D paradigm. Further, the discussion clarified that the “QUAN-qual sequential status design” was employed to achieve the first aim of the study, while the second aim was achieved by employing the techniques of the D&D methodology. Cluster sampling and purposive sampling procedures were adopted for the determination of the quantitative and qualitative participants respectively. Self-administered questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data, which were analysed by means of univariate analysis and by means of integrating Creswell’s analytic spiral data analysis process respectively. Aspects relating to both quantitative and qualitative data verification are also addressed.

The QUAN-qual dominant status design in the study arguably showed that the quantitative approach had a stronger footprint in the study as compared to its qualitative counterpart and as such the quantitative data was collected and analysed first. The next chapter presents and analyses the quantitative data.

CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the quantitative data, which was collected from the social workers employed by the DSD in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa is presented and analysed. Authors such as Williams et al. (2011:430); Pietersen and Maree (2007:198); Johnson and Christensen (2008:464); Yegidis and Weinbach (2007:262-263), amongst others, report that quantitative studies provide statistical analyses and as such this chapter obliges. As alluded to in the preceding chapter, data was collected by means of a self-developed group-administered questionnaire, which had been responded to by sixty-two (62) respondents. The data was subsequently analysed by means of univariate analysis.

The different sections contained in the questionnaire constitute the main headings for data presentation in this regard. It is critical to note herein that in an endeavour to articulate the data more clearly, section five (5) has been sub-divided into two and as a result the theme “the respondents’ overall impression of supportive supervision” was formulated anew. The researcher subdivided the latter part of section five (5), which explored the respondent’s generic perceptions of social work supervision and supportive supervision because she wanted to articulate clearly the respondents’ overall impression of supervision and supportive supervision.

5.2. INFORMATION REGARDING THE RESPONDENTS

The details of the respondents were captured in terms of their biographical information and their work information.

5.2.1 The biographical information of respondents

The biographical information of respondents was explored in terms of gender, age and their educational qualifications and yielded the following:

Table 5.1 The biographical information of respondents

Gender	Total respondents	Percentage
Females	53	85%
Males	9	15%
Age	Total respondents	Percentage
Between 20 and 25 yrs	07	11%
Between 26 and 35 yrs	42	68%
Between 36 and 45 yrs	13	21%
Education qualification	Total respondents	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	61	98%
Master's degree	01	2%

The sample was made up of 53 females and this number constitutes 85% of the sample, whilst their male counterparts were only 9 which translates to 15% of the sample. The age of the majority of the respondents was between 26 and 35 years and this constitutes 68% of the overall sample. According to Erik Erikson at ages of development between 18 and 35 years individuals are categorised as young adults and the developmental tasks of young adults is to form intimate relationships and failure to achieve intimacy can lead to alienation and isolation (Corey et al., 2017:60). In a supportive supervision context it can thus be deduced that social workers need to develop long lasting and meaningful relationships with their supervisors and that failure to achieve this might lead them to feeling unappreciated, alienated and isolated and consequently not sufficiently benefiting from supervision.

All the respondents (100%) in the sample held a social work bachelor's degree; there was only one (2%) with an additional postgraduate Master's degree in social work. These findings confirm previous findings by Naidoo and Kasiram (2006:118); Ellet, Ellis, Westbrook and Dews (2006:272); Sokhela (2008:77); Tham (2007:1233); Scott (2009:34); and Mokoka (2016:72), who also had a majority of female participants in their studies. This result further cements the reality of the social work profession as a female dominated profession.

The results also revealed that after completion of their bachelor's degree most social workers do not register for further post graduate qualification in social work. This was also established in the findings by Ellet et al. (2006:272), where of the 369 child welfare professionals who participated in their study, 80 possessed a Master's degree, while 232 possessed a baccalaureate degree. This was also the case in the study by Gunda (2018:140), in which out

of the 15 participants included in his study only 2 participants held an additional postgraduate qualification in social work.

Nonetheless, it is important to also note that the sample of this study is correctly placed to render social work services, because according to the National Department of Social Development (2013b:75), an individual must hold a four year Bachelor of Social Work degree and must be registered with the SACSSP in order to practice as a social worker in South Africa.

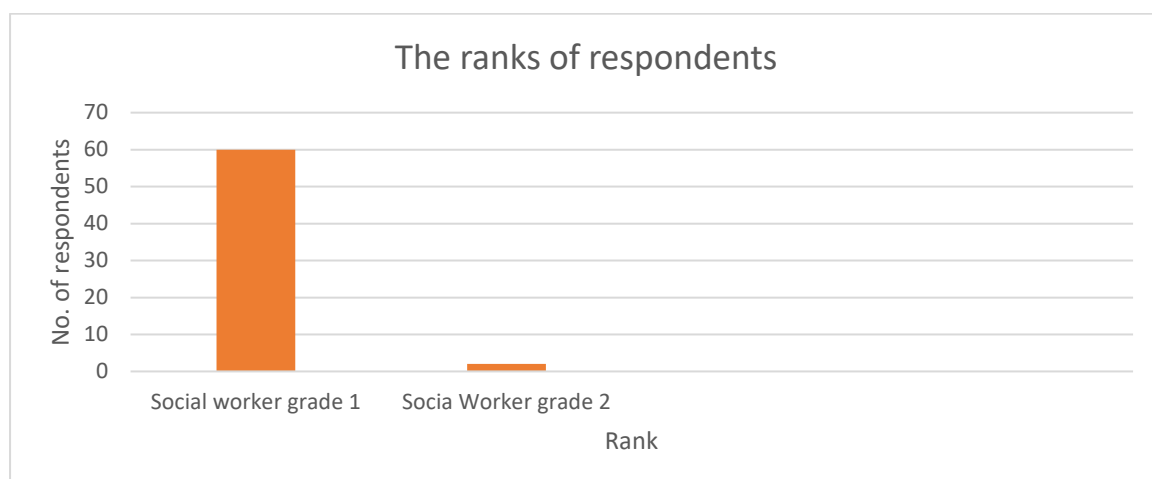
5.2.2. The work history of respondents

The work information of respondents is discussed in terms of their overall work experience as social workers as well as establishing their experience as social workers within the DSD in Mpumalanga Province. The discussion ends off with explicating the workload as well as categorising the stage of supervision of respondents.

5.2.2.1. The positions of respondents

The positions of social workers within the Department of Social Development are ranked according to grades. The resolution 1 of 2009 of the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) articulates the following social work career path or positions: social worker grade (01), social worker grade (02), social worker grade (03) and social worker grade (04). In this study, the majority of respondents 60, were entry-level social workers (grade 1), constituting 97% of the sample, while only 2 senior social workers were involved in the study and they constituted 3% of the sample.

Figure 5.1: The ranks of respondents



5.2.2.2. Years of experience of respondents

All the respondents 62 provided the status as elicited in this question. This question sought to determine the respondents' overall years of experience as social workers and their years of experience in the employment of DSD Mpumalanga. The respondents were required, in both instances, to select between the following: 0-3 years experience, 4-6 years experience, 7-9 years and 10-15 years of experience. The tables below portray all the data, which has been obtained in this regard.

Table 5.2: Respondents' overall social worker experience

Overall experience	Total respondents	The Percentage
0 to 3yrs	24	39%
4 to 6yrs	13	21%
7 to 9yrs	20	32%
10-15yrs	5	8%

The majority of respondents (24) had an overall experience of between 0-3 years followed by 20 respondents with between 7-9 years of experience constituting 39% and 32% of the sample respectively.

With regard to their social work experience within DSD Mpumalanga, the majority of respondents (27) had been in the employment of DSD Mpumalanga for between (0) and (3) years followed by (20) respondents with between 7-9 years of experience constituting 44% and 32% of the sample. All the categories are depicted in the table hereunder.

Table 5.3: Respondents' social worker experience within DSD Mpumalanga

Experience within DSD Mpumalanga	Total respondents	The Percentage
0 to 3yrs	27	44%
4 to 6yrs	11	18%
7 to 9yrs	20	32%
10 to 15yrs	4	6%

Comparing the results yielded by the two tables above it can be deduced that the sample consisted of fairly new social workers because the majority of respondents have some experience of between 0-3 years as social workers overall and also as social workers within DSD Mpumalanga. Secondly, the fact that the respondents with 10-15 years of experience

were the least on both account with 8% of the social workers overall experience and 6% on the respondents' experience within DSD supporting the notion that the majority of respondents were fairly novice social workers.

Further comparing the results between Table 1 and Table 2 above, it can also be deduced that the majority of the respondents began their social work careers within DSD Mpumalanga. This is because 27 of the 62 respondents with an experience of between 0-3 years began their social work careers in DSD Mpumalanga. Secondly, it is so because the 20 respondents with the overall years of experience of between 7-9 years started their social work careers within DSD Mpumalanga. Lastly, of the 5 respondents with an overall social work experience of between 10-15 years, 4 had been working within DSD Mpumalanga. Consequently, it can be deduced that of the 62 respondents, 52 (84%) of the sample began their social work careers within DSD Mpumalanga. The results from the two tables also demonstrate that the social work profession as a system consists of various subsystems which include practitioners at different levels.

The results confirm the notion that in South Africa the largest employer of social workers is the Department of Social Development. In 2014 the SACSSP registered 18,213 social workers and in 2012, approximately 16% of social workers registered worked for NGOs (Global social service workforce alliance, 2015:21). In Mpumalanga, during the same year, 2014, it was reported that DSD had in their employment 112 social workers whereas there were 31 social workers appointed in the NGO sector in the province (Grevenstein, 2014). Schmid (2012:15) attributes the disparity to the lack of parity in subsidies for NGOs and salaries of government social workers. In support of this view the HSRC in Kasiram (2009:647) reported that around mid 2000, in an attempt to address concerns of reasonable packages, the South African government regraded salaries of social workers in the public service but left the NGO in a dump, resulting in huge shortages of social workers in NGOs. And as such, according to Schmid (2012:15), this situation has led to a severe struggle by NGOs to retain a consistent workforce of competent social workers.

Further on, earlier, during the discussion of the positions of respondents it was revealed that only (2%) of the sample held senior social work positions. This prior result thus implies that only two (2), (3%) of the combined total of (24) respondents with the experience of between (6) to (9) years and those of between (10) to (15) years of experience either overall and/or within DSD Mpumalanga held senior social work positions. This is shocking. The shock comes about because the Framework for Social Work Supervision in South Africa stipulate that with and after five years practice experience a social worker is eligible to be appointed in

a senior position (Department of Social Development, 2012:32) and as such the researcher bluntly thought that after 10 years of experience the national Department of Social Development would have made provision for a promotional trajectory, which in the event that there are no vacant posts, practitioners could be promoted into senior positions. The shock was also because the discovery confirms the view by Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008:288) (2008:288) and Ellet et al. (2006:273) that social work salaries are not competitive with other comparable social and human service professionals. The major concern for the researcher with this issue is that social workers will leave the profession if salaries continue to be pitiful especially because this fact has been proven by studies such as that of Naidoo and Kasiram (2006:122) which explored the experiences of South African social workers in the United Kingdom (UK). The participants in the study by Naidoo and Kasiram reported that some of the motivating factors for them migrating to the UK was that their working conditions and salaries were definitely better in the UK than in South Africa. As was uttered by Malherbe and Hendricks (in Kasiram, 2009:647), the researcher is also of the view that being paid a reasonable remuneration package goes a long way towards contributing to job satisfaction of social workers, resulting in employee loyalty.

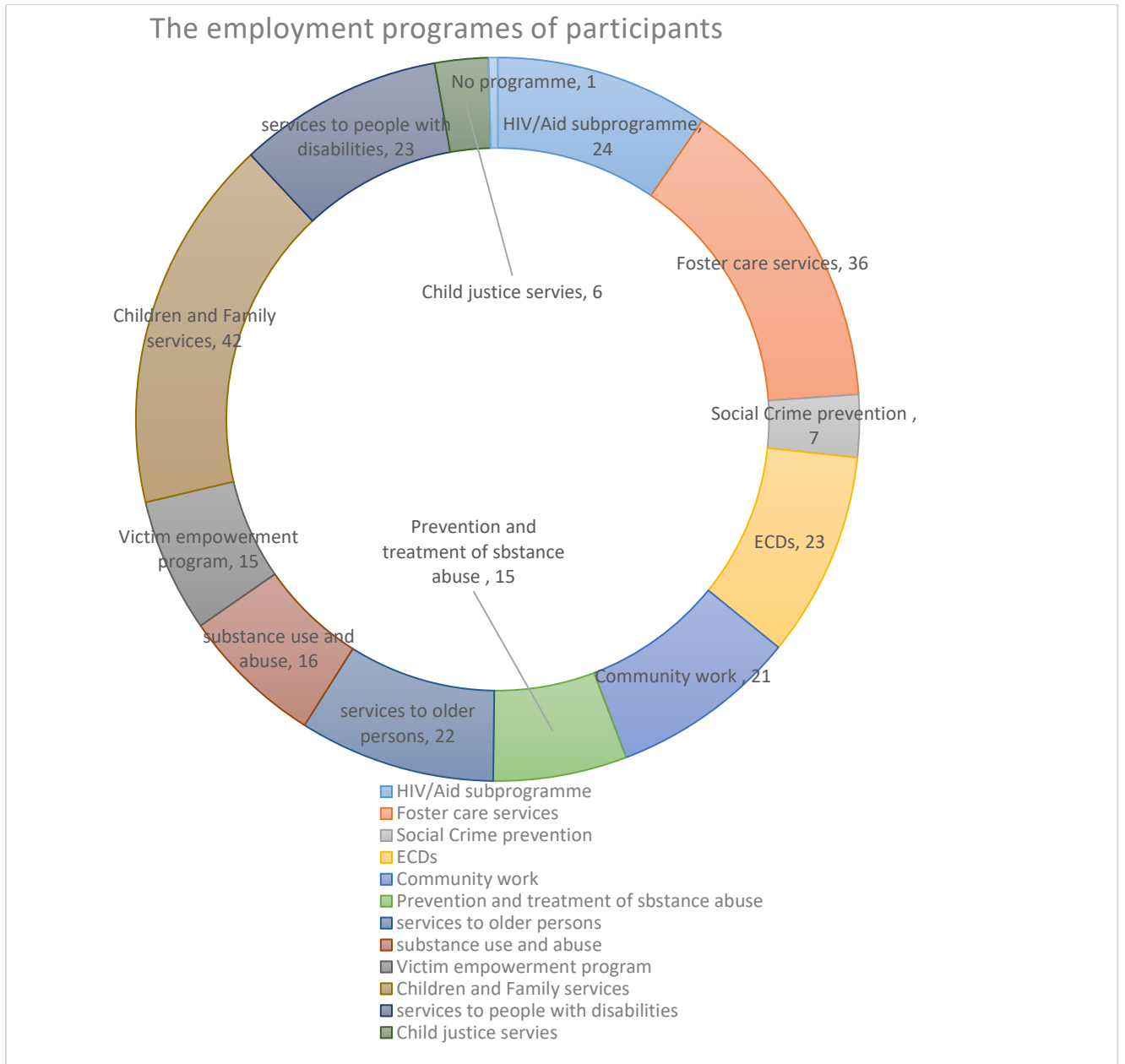
5.2.2.3 The workload of respondents

The Department of Social Development countrywide has a variety of specialised programmes, which spearhead the provision of social services for which social work is at the core. The ISDM and the Policy for Social Service Practitioners both comprehensively specify a plethora of psycho-social challenges faced by the South African society for which DSD is responsible. Out of those challenges the following programmes were formed: HIV/AIDS, Early Childhood Development (ECD), children and family services, foster care services, services to older persons, services to people with disabilities, community work, substance use and abuse, prevention and treatment of substance abuse, child justice services, and social crime prevention services (Department of Social Development, 2005: 21-28; Department of Social Development, 2013:23-40). It is thus the researchers' understanding that the Provincial Departments of Social Development carry out the programmes in their respective constituencies with oversight from the National Department of Social Development.

The respondents were thus asked in this question to indicate all the programmes that they are involved in. Sixty-one (61) respondents of the sample responded to this question. This is because there was one respondent who had just been employed as a social worker and had only been in the post for three months at the time of data gathering. The individual was undergoing orientation and training such that she had not been allocated into a programme

yet and thus could not respond to this question. However, of the 61 respondents to this question none cited working in all the programmes, they recorded working in a combination of programmes as indicated below:

Figure 5.2: The employment programmes of participants



In this study it was found that of the 61 respondents, the majority 42 (68%) work with children and family services, 36 (58%) cited their involvement in foster care services, 24 (39%) mentioned that they also work with HIV/AIDS services closely followed by ECD services and services to people living with disabilities at a tie with 23 (37%) respondents at 3% and 2% respectively.

Eighty-two (82) participants in the study by Ellet et al. (2006:272) also reported being involved in multiple programmes in their work at child welfare. The findings by Gathiram (2000:165-167) that reports that social workers deal with various types of problems at any given time also supports the findings established in this current study. This was also the case in the study by Mokoka (2016:75-85) where participants revealed that their job requirements compelled them to be involved in a combination of case, group and community work programmes.

If social workers are involved in a variety of programmes as indicated by these results, then one cannot help but wonder if the Department of Social Development's Framework for Social Welfare Services' prescription of 1:61 cases per social worker per month and 1:224 cases annually (Department of Social Development, 2013d:25) is realistic. This is because social workers deal with people and their involvement in various programmes translates into them having high caseloads. Kasiram (2009:647) found this to be true, in her study which investigated the emigration of South African social workers. She found that one of the main frustrations experienced by South African social workers was heavy workloads. The Centre for Social Development in Africa released a report on the trends in South African social welfare services from 2001-2010 and their findings revealed that, amongst other issues, social workers were faced with administrative and emotional overload (Schmid, 2012:16). Alpaslan and Schenk (2014:382) also reported high caseloads, poor salaries and lack of resources and infrastructure as some of the major challenges faced by social workers practising in rural areas of South Africa. All social work participants in the study by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015:467) also reported that they had to deal with high workloads, which they were unable to manage, and that they were unable to meet targets.

The fact that the respondents in this study worked with a combination of programmes in each given time and also as corroborated by findings from other studies, it can be concluded that social workers have high workloads; they are overburdened, a situation which might lead to stress. In turn, this situation also means that supervisors have high caseloads and are overburdened because they (supervisors) supervise social workers in the execution of their interventions with clients. This observation thus needs to be attended to adequately by authorities by means of providing appropriate staffing.

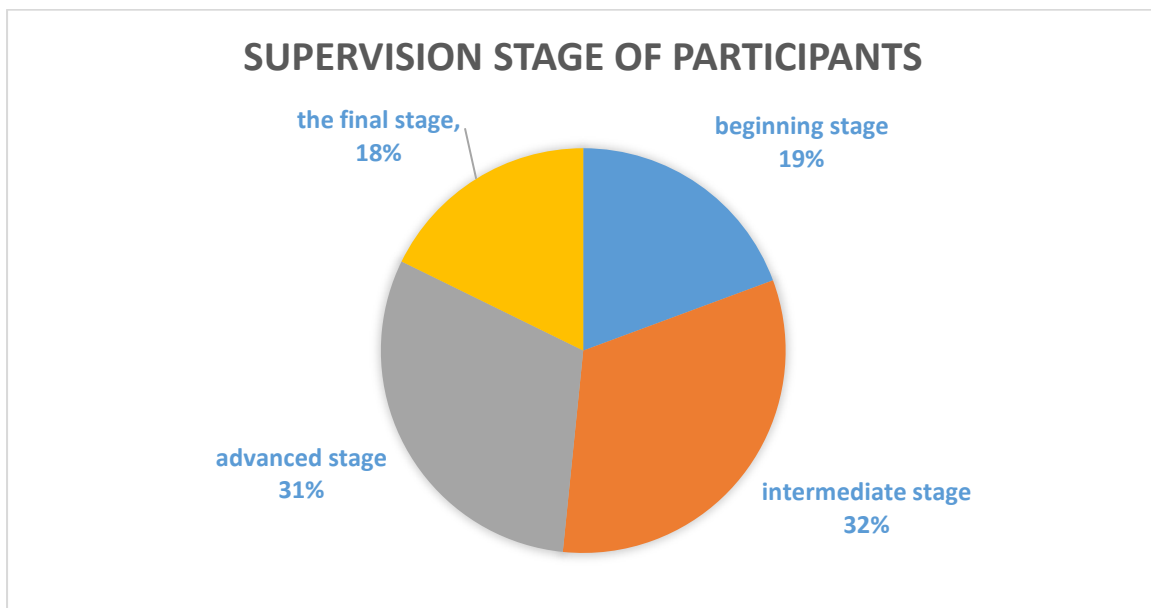
5.2.2.4 The supervision stage of respondents

The Department of Social Development (2013c:40) in its policy the Generic Norms and Standards for Development of Social Welfare Services prescribes that social welfare service provider should make available consultation and supervision to all social welfare service

professionals and practitioners. The Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South African (2012) cements this requirement and so do the promulgations by the Code of Ethics for Social Workers (SACSSP, [Sa]:37-38).

When supervised, as alluded to in Chapter 2, supervisees go through a series of stages to acclimatise to the supervision process and to the supervisor. According to Itzhaky (in Hughes & Wearing, 2013:134) supervisees go through the beginning stage, the intermediate stage, the advanced and the final stages of supervision. The respondents were required in this regard to locate themselves within the identified stages and all the (62) respondents responded to this question. Twelve (19%) respondents located themselves in the beginning stage, 20 (32%) in the intermediate stage, 19 (31%) in the advanced stage and 11 (18%) in the final stage of supervision. Their responses are presented below in terms of percentages:

Figure 5.3: The supervision stage of participants



It has been found in this study that all the respondents were being supervised as per statutory and ethical prescripts. From the statistics, the majority of respondents (32%) located themselves in the intermediate stage and very close by with a differential margin of 1% followed by the advanced stage at 31% of the sample. There was again a differential margin of 1% between the respondents who located themselves in the beginning and the advanced stages at 19% and 18% of the sample respectively. According to Itzhaky (in Hughes & Wearing, 2013:134), at the beginning stage the supervisee relies heavily on the supervisor while in the intermediate stage the supervisee feels more confident in their work and draws on a wide range of sources for knowledge from the environment. In the advanced stage,

supervision becomes a flexible learning environment and the supervisee takes initiatives while in the final stage the supervisee is independent, competent and confident in their job, and has developed an own professional identity and can also take on the role of a supervisor. These results thus imply that the respondents have acclimatized to supervision; that they have developed some level of confidence in their work; that they are able to draw from a variety of sources for knowledge and take initiatives and that they have developed their own professional identities and that they view supervision as a flexible learning environment.

It is surprising that the majority of respondents in this study located themselves in the intermediate stage of supervision because the majority of respondents have working experience ranging between zero and three years as established earlier. This raises a few questions: should the majority of respondents not locate themselves in the beginning stage? On the other hand, does this mean that social work supervisees within the first three years of being supervised move swiftly into the intermediate phase of supervision? Even with these questions unanswered, what is pertinent to note herein is that the respondents have been supervised and therefore were eligible to respond reasonably to the questions posed to them. It is also assumed that the respondents could draw on their experiences in responding to all the questions.

Overall, the subsystem of social work supervision, which is a social work supervisee, has been described. It was found that the majority of social work supervisees are females with very few males aged between 26 and 35 years; they hold a bachelor's degree in social work and hold an entry-level social work position and have commenced their social work career in the employment of the Department of Social Development. They have between 0 and 9 years social work experience and work to render services within a variety of social welfare programmes simultaneously and thus can be referred to as generic social workers. These social workers also receive social work supervision and can be located either in the intermediate or the advanced stages of social work supervision. It was critical to capture this information about the respondents in this study because it presents a picture of the work environment of the respondents. It was equally important to also understand who supervises the respondents as shown below.

5.3 Questions regarding the supervisors of respondents

The intention in this section was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the supervisors that supervise the respondents and all 62 responded to this question. This information is crucial because it determines ultimately the kind of support that the respondents get from their

supervisors. The biographical information of supervisors needed to be explicated in terms of their gender, age, educational details and their ranks, including their qualifications. The following information about the supervisors was extracted from the questionnaires completed by the respondents:

5.3.1 The gender and age of supervisors

All the respondents answered this question and according to the respondents, the genders and ages of their supervisors as are as follows:

Table 5.4: The gender and age of supervisors

Gender of supervisors	No. of supervisors	Percentage
Females	49	79%
Males	13	21%
Age of supervisors	No. of supervisors	Percentage
Between 26 and 35yrs	1	2%
Between 36 and 45yrs	40	65%
Between 46 and 64yrs	21	34%

The majority (49) of social work supervisors that supervise the respondents are females, whilst their male counterparts are 13, constituting 79% and 21% of the sample respectively. The majority of supervisors (40) are between the ages of 36 and 45 years constituting 65% of all the supervisors in this study. Following at a distant are 20 supervisors aged between 46 and 64 years, which translates to 32%. In the study by Sokhela (2008:65) the age of supervisors was also recorded to be around 30 years, ranging between 29 and 32 years of age to be precise. This result is also consistent with the findings by Bradley et al. (2010:780) who found that in South Africa and England a social work supervisor is usually a woman aged 30 years and over. It can thus be said that this result mirrors a true reflection of the social work supervisor workforce found in South Africa and within the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development.

5.3.2 The educational levels and qualifications of supervisors

All the 62 respondents answered to this question. According to the respondents, their supervisors (100%) have a bachelor's degree in social work, with only one (2%) who also holds an additional Master's degree in social work as revealed hereunder.

Table 5.5: The educational levels and qualifications of supervisors

Education levels	No. of supervisors	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	62	100%
Master's degree	01	2%
Qualifications	No. of supervisors	Percentage
Social work qualification	62	100%

Deduced from these results, social workers are supervised by other social workers. This result is in keeping with the SACSSP Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers, which stipulates that a social worker should be supervised in social work matters by a supervisor who is registered as a social worker (SACSSP, [Sa]:38).

These results also show that the social work supervisors do not have any formal qualification in social work supervision. Similarly, none of the supervisor respondents in the study by Sokhela (2008:66) had a supervision qualification. Bradley et al. (2010:780) also found that in South Africa a social work supervisor normally has a professional social work qualification and that they usually have no formal training in supervision. A report from the Think Tank Symposium also revealed that social workers often become supervisors without adequate training and understanding of their role (Social Work Policy Institute, 2011:7). This, according to the researcher, may be attributed to the fact that in most instances in South Africa the social worker is promoted into a supervisory role based on the years of experience in practice and not on any specialised qualification in supervision. Mokoka (2016:122) found this to be the case; that social work supervisors within DSD in the Johannesburg Region were not trained to perform supervision but that they were promoted to be supervisors based on their years of experience as social workers. Bradley et al. (2010:781) also reported a similar situation in England where a social work supervisor in a statutory child welfare agency has five years of supervisory experience in the same agency where she was a social worker with no formal qualification in supervision but might have undergone in-service training on supervision. This practice thus leads to a situation wherein supervisors have limited preparation for the position and little educational support available following assignment to the position (Kaiser & Kuechler in Kadushin & Harkness, 2014:208).

For South Africa, this trait might be even more precarious because historical practices assigned supervisory functions to new white social workers over experienced black social workers (Department of Social Development, 2007:33). In South Africa, in some cases,

supervisors were non-existent, with new social workers not being able to receive guidance/mentorship (Department of Social Development, 2007:33). Therefore, there is a risk that some of the supervisors who are being promoted were never trained on how to supervise or were themselves never supervised. The more adverse effect according to the researcher will thereby be felt by the social work supervisee because it means supervisors would use supervision sessions for trial and error instead of providing the much needed support, care and advice to counteract their turbulent working environments.

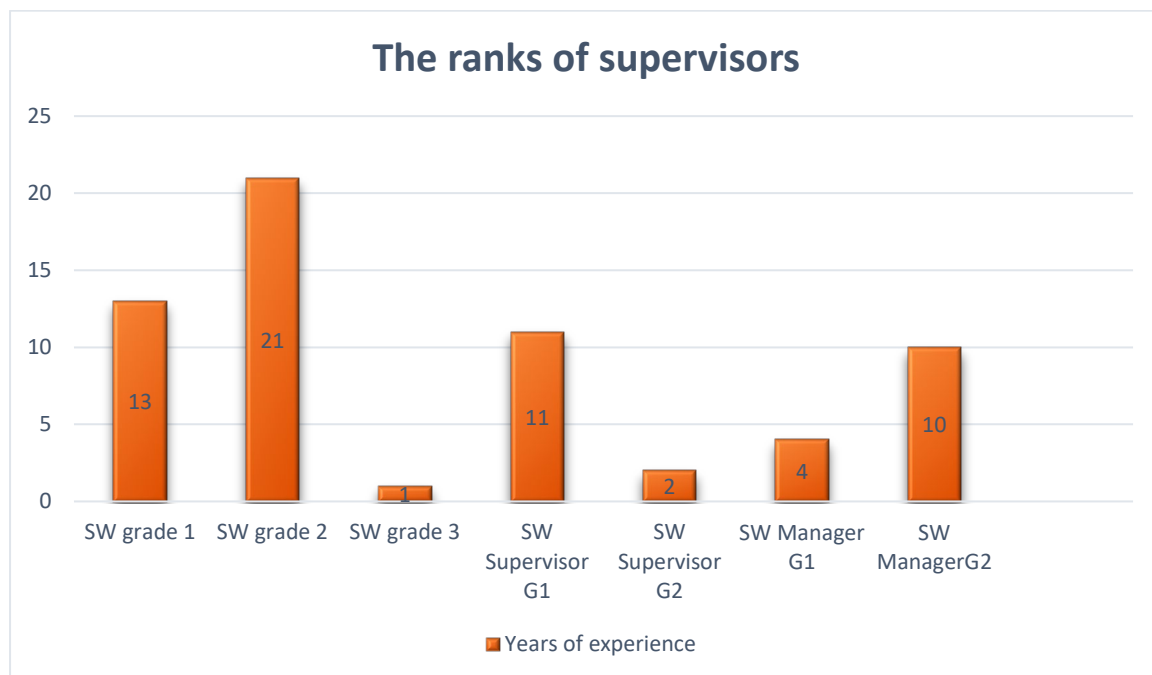
Recognising and acknowledging their challenges, supervisors in previous studies have also reiterated the need for formal training in providing social work supervision. All the supervisor respondents in the study by Moss (2001:64) echoed the crucial need for training of prospective supervisors before making the role transition. Respondents in the study by Hair (2012) also voiced the need for training of supervisors in the modalities and practices of supervision.

The National Department of Social Development (2007:33) at the time further highlighted the supervision challenges in South Africa, citing that supervision lacked structure, was of poor quality and that supervisors lacked the capacity to conduct professional supervision. In an effort to address this shortfall, the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa was introduced (Department of Social Development, 2012). The researcher is thus convinced that much more needs to be done in this regard than just introducing a framework. This is because the researcher has read the said framework and its shortcoming is that it does not necessarily tell supervisors how to supervise but informs them what supervision is and how it can be conducted. The researcher thus echoes the resolution proposed by Engelbrecht (2013:464) that academic institutions must collaborate with practice institutions to introduce or extend supervision training in some dynamic form.

5.3.3 The ranks of supervisors within Department of Social Development

Similar to social work positions as presented earlier, the positions of social work supervisors within the Department of Social Development are ranked according to grades. Resolution 1 of 2009 of the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) articulates the following social work management career path or positions: social work supervisor grade (01) and social work supervisor grade (02). The social work managers also have two levels, a social work manager grade (01) and social work manager grade (02) as stipulated in PHSDSBC, 2009. All the respondents answered this question and reported the following:

Figure 5.4: The ranks of social work supervisor



It has been established in this regard that social work supervisors occupy different positions. According to the respondents the majority (21) of their supervisors occupy grade (02) social work posts at 34%, followed by 13 grade (01) social workers who constitute 21%. The social work supervisor grade (01) are (11) (18%) and social work manager grade (02) are (10) (16%). These results show that social work supervision cuts across all social work positions, that is, within the Mpumalanga Department of Social Development all social work practitioners, from grade (01) social workers until managers' grade (02) are involved in the provision of social work supervision. Furthermore, the results validate the findings by Gunda (2018:153) whose participants at the management level also indicated that they were also heavily involved in the supervision of practitioners.

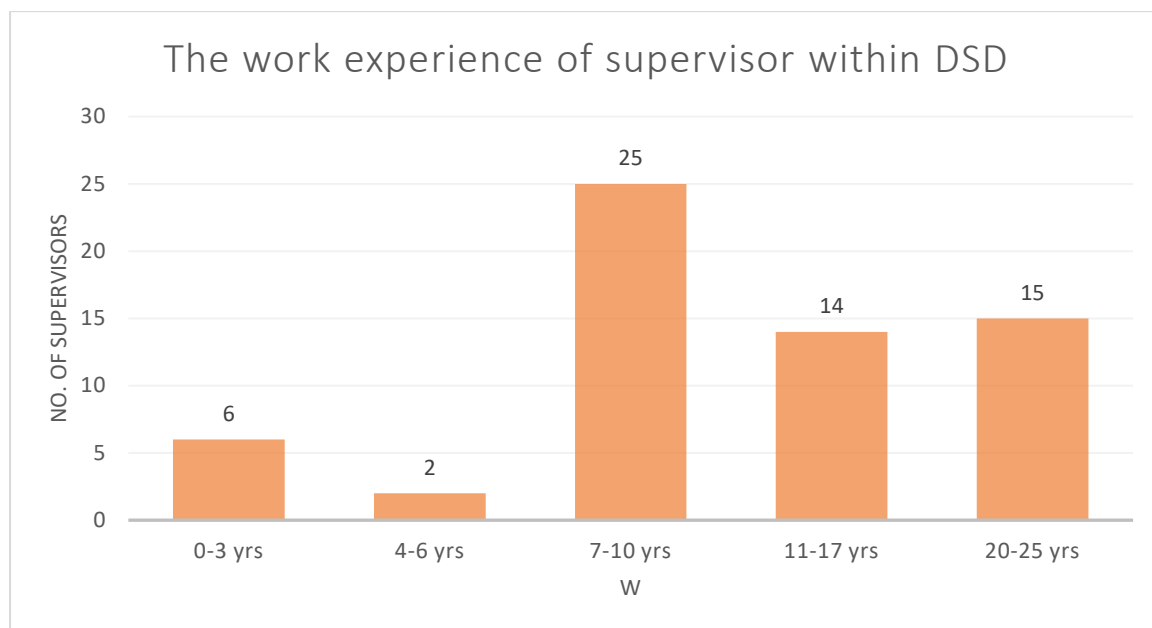
These results raise questions especially because the span of control on supervision according to the Norms and Standards for Development of Social Welfare Services specify that supervision should be limited to middle management to supervisor, supervisor to practitioner, probation worker to assistant probation officer, social worker to social auxiliary worker, and social worker to administrator (Department of Social Development, 2013c:40-41). Therefore, the question is why social work managers are supervising practitioners and not supervisors as prescribed by the Norms and Standards for Development of Social Welfare Services. Similarly, another query emanates from how grade (01) social workers are also supervising other social workers instead of supervising auxiliary social workers as prescribed by the Norms and Standards for Development of Social Welfare Services. The major concern is that social

work managers may not be able to supervise practitioners comprehensively and not because they are incompetent, but because they have many other administrative duties that they attend to on a daily basis. Likewise, grade (01) social workers may be having their own caseloads and as a result may not comprehensively supervise fellow social workers. In both instances, the concern is that the quality of supervision offered to practitioners is compromised.

5.3.4 The work experience of supervisors within Department of Social Development

The Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa stipulates that a supervisor of a social worker must have a minimum of five years' experience as a social worker (Department of Social Development, 2012:31). The respondents were required to select from the following: between (0) and (3) years, (4) and (6) years and (7) and (10) years and wherein the supervisor's experience was outside the given age ranges, the respondents could then specify. From the responses, two more ranges were added, a range between 11-17 years and that of between 20-25 years. The following was thus established with regard to the years of experience of the supervisors according to all 62 respondents.

Figure 5.5: The work experience of supervisors within DSD



It was established in this study that the majority of the supervisors of the respondents (25) 40% have between (7) to (10) years social work experience within the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development, followed by 15 (24%) supervisors with between 20 and 25 years of experience while 14 (23%) have experience of between 11 and 17 years. In addition, 6 (10%) supervisors apparently have 0 to 3 years' experience while 2 (3%) have 4 to

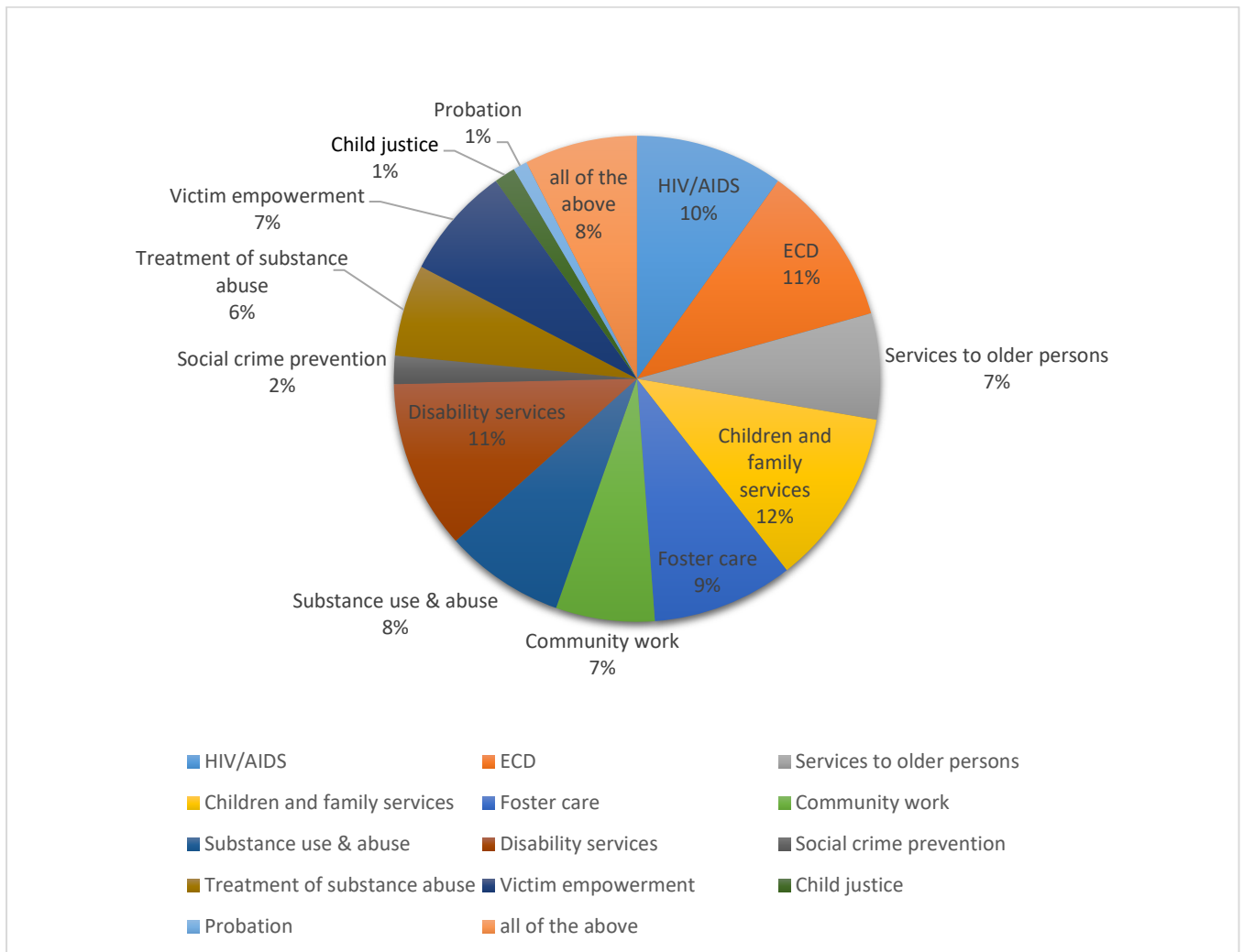
6 years' experience. Evidently, the majority of supervisors in this study had more than 5 years social work experience, which means that DSD Mpumalanga complies to a large extent with the prescripts that in South Africa a supervisor of a social worker should have a minimum of five years' experience as a social worker. This result validates Bradley et al. (2010:780) who found that in South Africa a social work supervisor had at least five years of experience as a front line worker and was registered with the SACSSP.

It was established in the discussion of the ranks of social work supervisors that there were 13 grade (01) social workers, at 21% of the sample, who had been supervising other grade (01) social workers. An assumption can therefore be made in this regard that of the 21% grade (01) social work supervisors, 6 have between 1-3 years of experience. The question that arises to the researcher is whom are they supervising? Moreover, why are they supervising? As alluded to earlier, one cannot help but ask what could have happened such that these individuals became supervisors? This question is vital because the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa clearly stipulates that newly qualified social workers must have three years of supervision on a fortnightly basis (Department of Social Development, 2012:32), which means that they themselves still need to be supervised. Again, as alluded to earlier, the major concern for the researcher is the quality of supervision that they are offering. This finding thus challenges DSD in Mpumalanga Province and in South Africa to conduct an audit of who is a social work supervisor so as to make sure that social work practitioners are appropriately supported.

5.3.5 The programmes supervisors are responsible for

The supervisors, as was the case with the respondents, are responsible for a combination of programmes. All respondents (62) cited more than three programmes, which their supervisors are responsible for. In this regard, there were also respondents who recorded that their supervisors were responsible for all the programmes. This is what the respondents shared:

Figure 5.6: The programmes supervisors are responsible for



According to the respondents most supervisors (25) oversee the provision of children and family services, closely followed by services to people with disabilities which was cited by 24 respondents, which is also narrowly followed by ECD services cited by 23 respondents, HIV/AIDS by 21 respondents and foster care services cited by 20 respondents. Children services thus constitute 12%, services to people with disabilities 11%, ECD has a similar 11%, HIV/AIDS with 10%, and foster care services 9% of the sample. According to some respondents, 8% of the sample to be specific, their supervisors are responsible for all the programmes.

These results prove two things in this regard, that similar to social work supervisees, social work supervisors are overworked and that supervision is a secondary role for most social work supervisors. This is because in this study it has been established that some 10% of the respondents are supervised by social work manager’s grade (02) and others by grade (01) social workers. Consequently, how can a supervisor with a number of supervisees under

her/his belt, who is also a manager, be expected to render supervision daily to supervisees who would need to consult with him/her at any given time during the day with varying casework, group work and community work related problems, including other fields of specialisation? Similarly, how can a social work practitioner with his/her own caseload supervise a fellow social worker?

Unfortunately, literature clarifies that this is an old age phenomenon which remains unresolved. This is because the supervisor respondents in the survey by Kadushin (1992:13) on social work supervision also revealed that supervisors did not devote their duties to supervision solely and attributed this to their job titles such as administrators, directors, coordinators, chief social workers and managers, which came with other responsibilities other than supervision. Gibleman and Schervish (1997:7) at the time of their study found a significant number of NASW members with a secondary as opposed to a primary supervisory function and that the supervision function was sometimes combined with direct/clinical practice or management. Of the 14 participants that were interviewed in the study by Moss (2001:46) only 7 participants were solely supervising, the other 7 had additional tasks. The participants in the study by Mokoka (2016:102) revealed another issue, that their supervisors had too many supervisees. The participants in a study by Gunda (2018:153) also cringed about a high supervisor-supervisee ratio. For example, one of the participants in the study by Gunda indicated that she supervised twelve (12) supervisees alone. According to Ellet et al. (2006: 273), extremely large case/workload compel social work supervisors to work between 50 –60 hours per week and in some cases more than 70 hours per week.

From the discussion, it can thus be categorically stated that social work supervisors are overloaded. She has multiple supervisees under her belt and also has many other duties that come with her post such as administration, directorship, coordinator, chief social worker and manager. Specifically in Mpumalanga DSD, those supervisors who are supervising with grade (1) job titles are no doubt also inundated with high caseloads. In the study by Yürür and Sarikaya (2012:457) this role ambiguity was positively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, because when social workers experience greater role ambiguity, they tend to experience higher levels of burnout. Against this backdrop, one can therefore understand that it is this cross delamination of responsibilities by practitioners and the role ambiguity experienced by supervisors which lead to the participants in the study by Naidoo and Kasiram (2006:122) and Mokoka (2016:95) stating that supervision lacked structure and that it was poorly conducted, which resulted in it being ineffective. Furthermore, echoing Kim, Ji and Kao (2011:264) and Shier and Graham (2010:411), it can also be concluded that working long

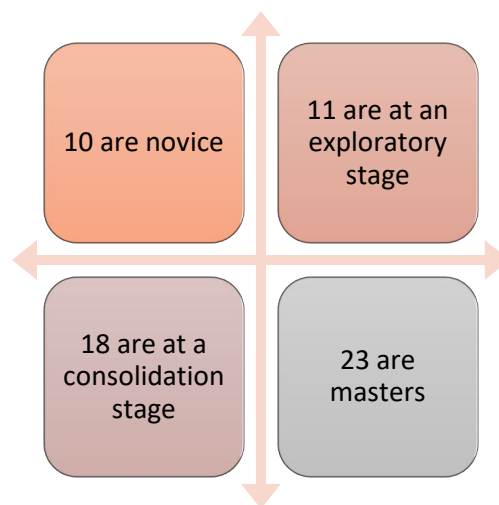
hours have adverse effects for the supervisor, professionally, socially, psychologically and health wise.

To curb the adverse effects mentioned above, the researcher suggests that supervisors will need to be adaptive to their work environments because service delivery to clients by social workers is influenced by their supervision actions.

5.3.6 The supervision stage of supervisors

The respondents were required to locate the supervision stage of their supervisors from a series of supervision stages. Tsui (2005:108-111); Wonnacott (2012:14) and Engelbrecht (2014:131) provide tables of varying transitional stages from frontline social workers to supervisor. Their provisions have been consolidated in chapter 2 of this thesis to formulate four stages, namely, the novice stage, the exploration stage, the consolidation stage and the master stage. All the respondents 62 responded to this question and located their supervisors as follows:

Figure 5.7: The supervision stage of supervisors



It has been established from this study that (32) (51%) of the supervisors were said to have mastered their supervision role; (18) (29%) were thought to be making sense of the supervision role, they were located at the consolidation stage; (11) (17%) were exploring their supervision roles and (10) (16%) were said to be novices. The results mean that the supervisors, at an exploratory stage, are still uncertain about their role and depend on superiors and peers for guidance; at a consolidation stage the supervisors have begun to define themselves in their supervision role and they are adjusting and have gained some level

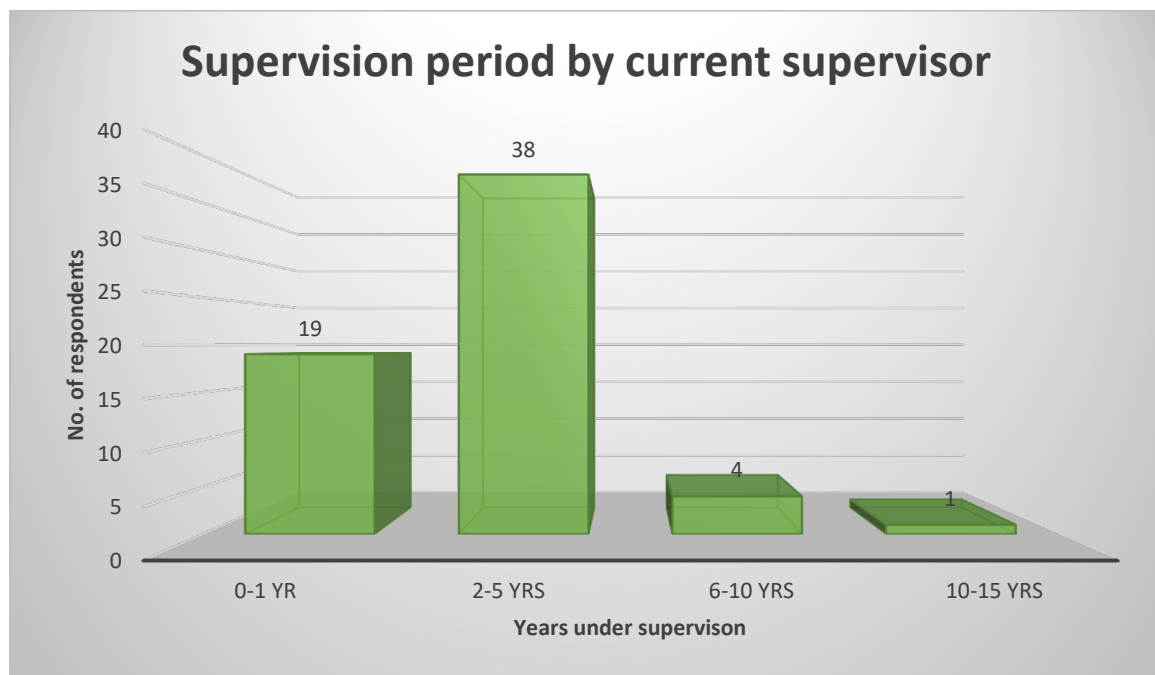
of confidence and independence. Those supervisors who have mastered their supervision duty have clear role awareness; they have cemented their role and because they have many years of experience maintain a healthy balance between own work and the supervision relationship.

Because earlier it was found in this study that the majority of supervisors of respondents (87%) had more than 5 years' experience as social workers, it was thus not surprising that they would be located in the latter stages of supervision, i.e. at the consolidation and the master stages. Further to the above, it can also be stated that the 6 supervisors who are supervising with (0) to (3) years social work experience are probably located in the novice stage. Being located at the novice stage may thus imply, as alluded by Watkins (in Tsui, 2005:110), that the supervisors are highly motivated but lack experience and consequently confidence. They are faced with shock at their own weaknesses and inadequacies and require a lot of assistance from seniors to help them adjust to their role.

5.3.7 Supervision period by current supervisor

All the respondents responded to this question. This question sought to identify the number of years that the supervisees were supervised by their current supervisors. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.8: The supervision period by current supervisor



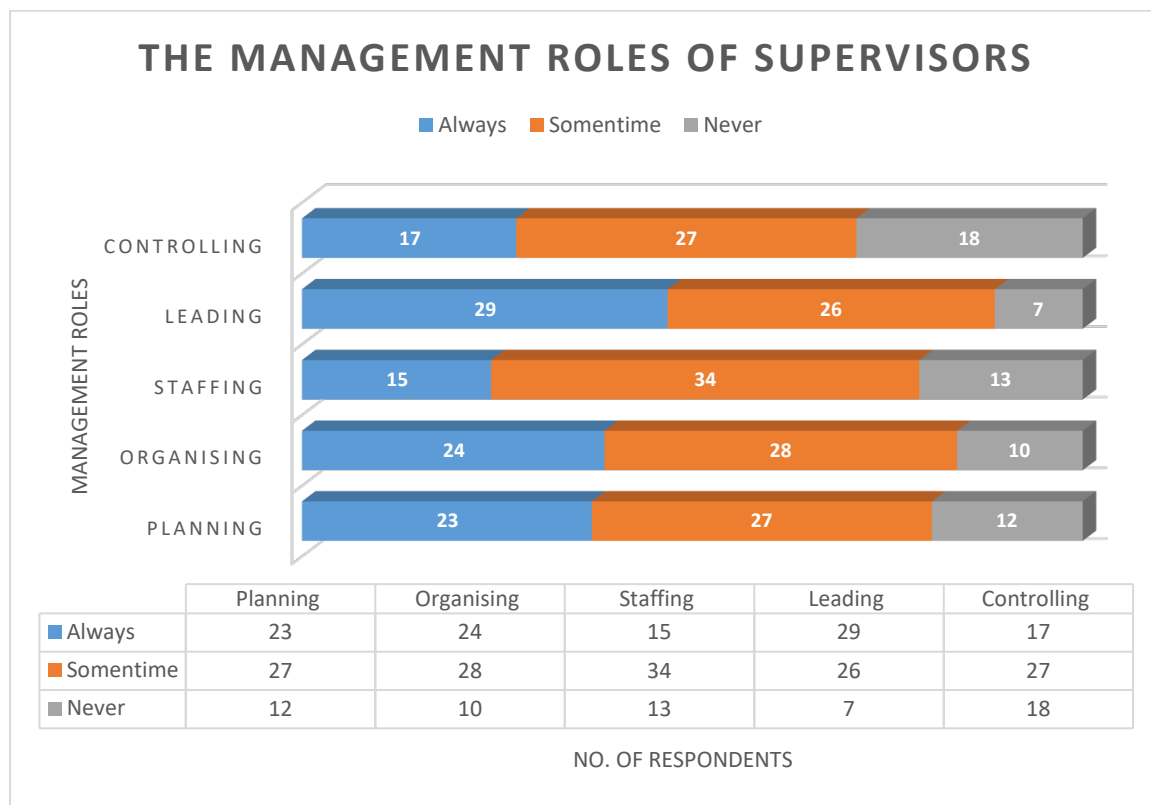
It has been found in the study that the majority of respondents 38 (61%) have been under the supervision of their current supervisor for between (2) and (5) years while 19 (31%) respondents have been with their current supervisors for less than a year. These results coincide with the number of years of experience of the respondents. It has been established in this study that the 25 respondents are entry-level social workers with (0) to (3) years of experience and therefore explains why in this regard the majority of respondents have been under the supervision of their current supervisors for less than 5 years.

Further comparing the years of experience under the supervision of their current supervisors with the number of years of employment of respondents within the Department of Mpumalanga Provincial Social Development, it can be deduced that over 50 respondents with the experience of between (0) and (10) years have been under the supervision of their current supervisor. This could be seen as a positive thing when considering the professional growth of the novice social workers, where continuity is maintained. This result also posits positivity in that there seems to be minimal exodus of social workers from the profession and/or the emigration of social workers from the profession as opposed to earlier findings by Tham (2007), Welbourne, Harrison and Ford (2007), Department of Social Development (2007), Kasiram (2009) and Bowyer and Roes (2015).

5.3.8 The management roles of supervisors

The systems approach amplifies that there should be clear boundaries (termed roles) that each subsystem in a system should play so that intervention is delivered efficiently and effectively to all clients alike. In this regard, respondents were asked to rate the provision of planning, organising, staffing, leading and controlling management roles of their supervisors. According to Certo (2013:11) planning involves setting goals and determining how to meet them; organising involves setting up the group, allocating resources, and assigning work to achieve the goals; and leading involves influencing people to act (or not to act) in a certain way. Staffing, on the other hand, entails the recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, and training of employees while controlling entails ensuring that actual performance is in line with intended performance and taking corrective action, if necessary (Leonard & Hilgert, 2007:335,541). The respondents used the rating scale of “always”, “sometimes” and “never” to indicate the level at which their supervisors fulfil these roles. The following was gathered from the respondents:

Figure 5.9: The management roles of supervisors



The respondents are largely of the view that their supervisors do not comprehensively undertake any of the identified management roles. This is because the option “sometimes” was rated highest of the three ratings for all the management roles, followed by “always”, and trailing at the end was “never”. Thirty-four (55%) respondents cited staffing as the role least undertaken by the supervisors; 28 (45%) respondents cited organising; followed by planning and controlling, which were at a tie with 27 (44%) responses each. With regard to those roles which are undertaken always, the respondents cited leading as the most frequently undertaken management role with 29 (47%) responses, followed by organising with 24 (39%) responses and planning closely at 23 (37%) responses. ‘Never’ was the lowest rated scale overall. Seven (11%) respondents recorded that they have never been led; 10 (16%) cited never having experienced organising by their supervisors; planning was next with 19% responses and controlling was at 18 (29%) responses. These results validate the findings by Gunda (2018:140-146) whose participants, who were social work managers and supervisors employed in the welfare sector in Witbank located in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa, regarded the management roles of planning, organising, staffing, leading and controlling as critical and an integral part of their execution of their supervision duties. The critical nature of these roles for social work supervisors is also emphasised by Engelbrecht (2015:325) who

states that an ideal social work manager and supervisor is one that combines expert social work education with managerial roles.

It can therefore be deduced from the results that social work supervisors within the Department of Social Development do undertake, to varying extents, the management roles in their provision of social work supervision. This situation is not ideal and has negative connotations because it implies that sometimes social workers commence with their duties or have undertaken their current duties without any training; that supervisors sometimes do not assist social workers to set work targets and also do not assist them to determine ways of achieving the work goals. The situation also implies that supervisors do not point social workers to useful resources, that they may need to assist their clients; and that they do not monitor frequently the actions of social workers. It is the opinion of the researcher that all these shortcomings culminate in social workers sometimes not being led but left to fend for themselves. According to Gunda (2018:181) this situation is caused by the fact that social work managers experience an acute shortage of basic physical resources and lack of adequate knowledge and skills to manage social work organisations because social work managers are not effectively prepared for managerial positions. Echoing Gunda (2018:183), there is thus a dire need for DSD to institute capacity building training opportunities for social workers on management level to equip them with essential skills, which will enable them to effectively execute their management functions.

Overall, in this subsection, the complexity of the work environment of the supervisor and also how the working environment of the supervisor influence the supervision process has been evidenced in this regard.

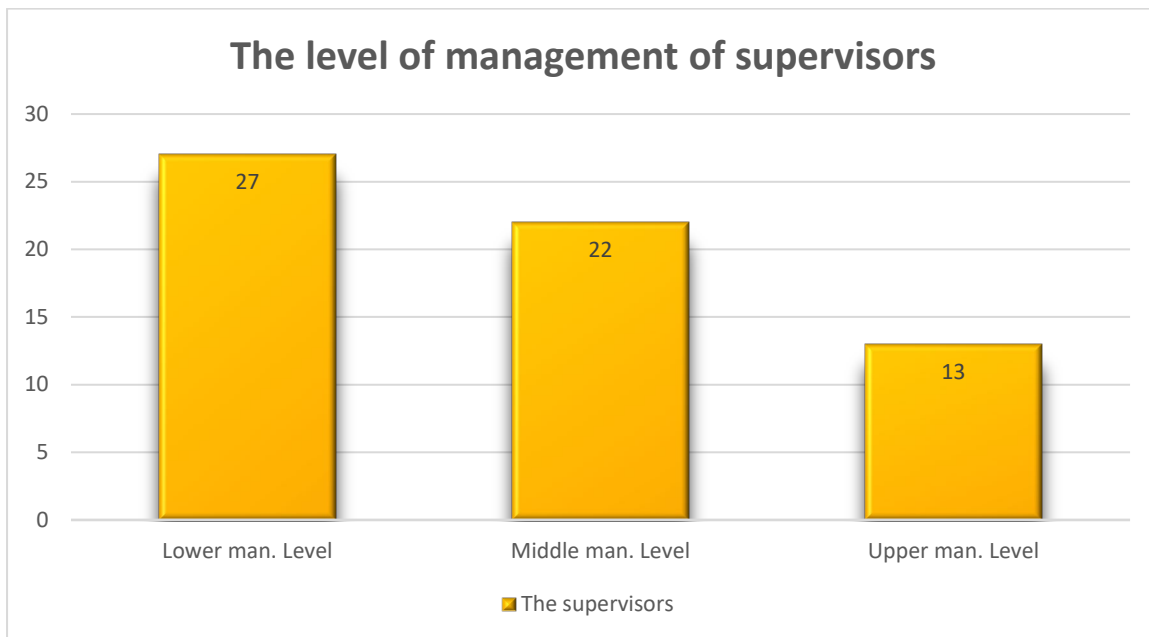
5.4 QUESTIONS ON GENERIC SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

This section was aimed at uncovering the respondents' generic knowledge and understanding of social work supervision. The section consisted of fourteen (14) questions, each with a different instruction from the next. Amongst others, the respondents were expected to locate supervision in the different levels of management; they needed to indicate the frequency that they are exposed to social work supervision; and to account on their exposure to various social work supervision methods. As alluded to in the introductory remarks, the questions constitute the subheadings in this section.

5.4.1 The level of management of supervisors within the organisation

As indicated earlier, because social work supervision forms the structure of management in social work, the respondents were asked to locate their supervisors within the upper, middle and lower management levels. All the respondents answered this question. The majority of respondents 27 (44%) cited that social work supervisors are located at a lower level of management; 22 (35%) respondents located supervisors at middle management level, whilst the rest 13 (21%) located them at the upper level management. The results are illustrated as follows:

5.10: The level of management of supervisors

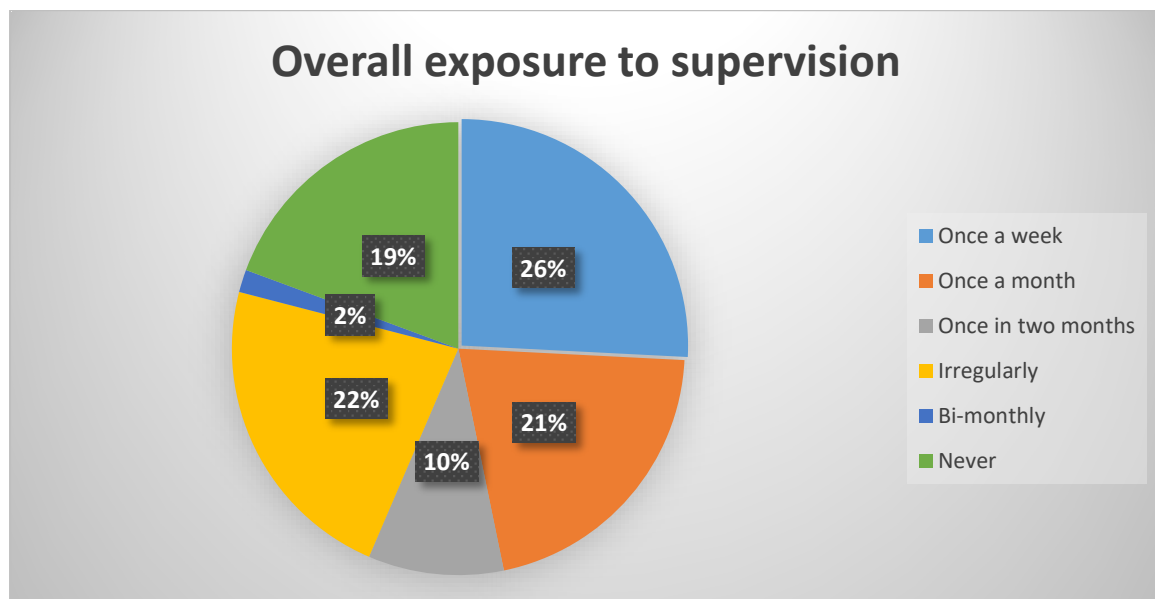


The generic belief in social work is that supervision is a middle-management position (Hall, 2009:14; Department of Social Development, 2012:24; NASW, 2013:7-8) and if this is so, then two conclusions can be arrived at: firstly, that social workers are not aware of the fact that their supervisors are middle managers; and secondly, it also appears that the results challenge the notion that social work supervision is a middle management position because the majority of the respondents placed supervision at the lower level of management. The notions of the respondents that social work supervision is a lower level management position is contested by the researcher, suggesting that the respondents in this study are not au fait with the exact level of their supervisors as managers. The implication of this lack of knowledge and ignorance may therefore allude to the fact that social workers do not consult their supervisors accordingly because they do not have a complete comprehension of what the duties of their supervisors are and what services they ought to receive from them.

5.4.2 Exposure to supervision

For supervision to be effective Munson (2002:12) writes that it must have the following characteristics: it must be structured, regular, consistent, case oriented and evaluated constantly. Likewise, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency, in a period of three months, at which they were exposed to supervision by their supervisors. The respondents were asked to indicate their exposure by selecting one of the following options: once a week, once a month, once in two months, irregularly, bi-monthly and never being supervised. All the respondents responded to this question and this is what they have shared:

5.11: Overall exposure to supervision



The results of the ratings are closely linked. The majority of the respondents 16 (26%) reported to having been supervised once a week, followed by 14 (22%) respondents who reported that their supervision was irregular, whilst 13 (21%) reported to having been supervised once a month. There is a plethora of research studies in South Africa either in the form of dissertations/theses such as those by Harmse (2000); Malima (2003); Moss (2001); Sokhela (2007); Deonarain (2012) and a number of journal articles by Engelbrecht (2004, 2006, 2010, 2014) and Kagee (2007); all which attest to social workers being supervised and that the supervision had challenges.

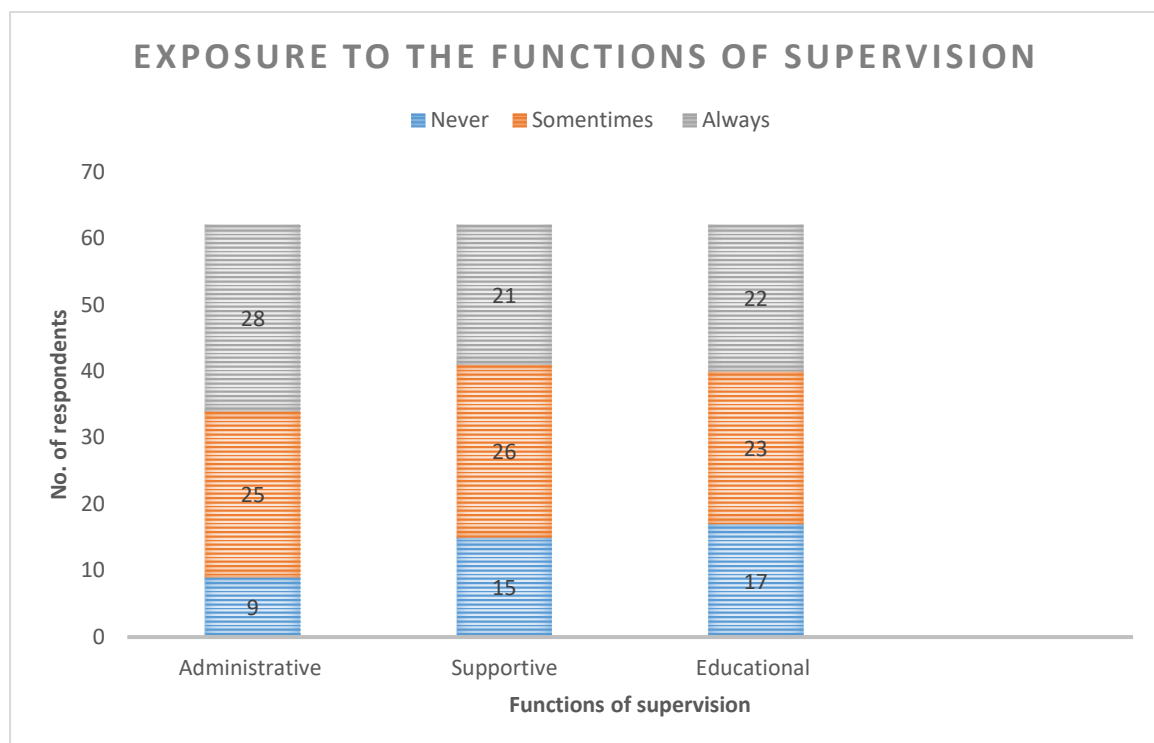
Of the 62 respondents, there were also 12 (19%) who had reported that they had never been supervised. In the mid 90's, Mudau (1996:1) also identified an absence of supervision in social work in region (4) of the then Northern Province (currently known as Limpopo Province) of South Africa. Most recently, the participants in the study by Mokoka (2016:90) had also reported that in the DSD Johannesburg region there was no supervision, a situation that

prompted social workers to resort to peer consultation when they require some guidance in their daily work responsibilities. Contrary to the results of this study and the findings by Mokoka and Mudau, in the study by Turner (2000:34) there were no examples of supervision failing to take place. All the (30) respondents in the study by Mak (2013:35-36) reported to having being exposed to social work supervision. From the results, one can therefore deduce that whilst there are a majority of social workers exposed to supervision, the task itself is plagued with challenges and, in some instances, there continues to be pockets of social workers who are not being supervised.

5.4.3 Exposure to the functions of supervision

The traditional functions of social work supervision are administrative, educative, and supportive (Kadushin, 1992:19; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:19; Tsui, 2005:485-486, Engelbrecht, 2014:129). The administrative function emerged first, and the educational and emotional support soon followed (Tsui, 1997:193). Herein, the respondents were asked to rate their overall exposure to the administrative, supportive and educational functions of social work supervision using the rating scale of “never” been exposed, exposed “sometimes” and “always” exposed. All the respondents responded to this question and submitted the following:

5.12: Exposure to the functions of supervision



From the results it is clear that the rating scale of “sometime” scored the highest responses overall, followed by “always” with “never” receiving the lowest ratings. Of the (62) respondents, the majority of respondents 28 recorded to be always exposed to administrative supervision, followed by educational supervision with (22) responses and (21) responses for supportive supervision constituting (45%), (35%) and (34%) of the sample respectively. In this regard, (26) respondents, (42%) of the sample, reported to being exposed sometimes to supportive supervision; (25) respondents, (40%) of the sample, cited administrative supervision and educational supervision followed with (23) responses, (37%) of the sample. The highest rating of never was cited on educational supervision by (17) respondents, followed closely by supportive supervision with (15) responses constituting (27%) and (24%) of the sample respectively. Similar to this result, the participants in the study by Gunda (2018:157) also reported that general administrative duties occupied much of their time and energy. However, contrary to these results, (44%) of the respondents in the study by Kadushin (1992:16) cited educational activities as the most important function that they perform; (32%) of the supervisors cited administrative supervision, while (24%) saw the supportive function as the most important. This was also the case in the study by Turner (2000:234), where every interviewee also described supervisory activities that were educative in nature and of these (7) respondents failed to make reference either implicitly or explicitly to the supportive function of supervision.

It is also noted in this regard that supportive supervision was ranked lowest of the two other functions, with (42%) respondents in the sample citing being exposed to supportive supervision “sometimes” and (34%) reported to “never” having been exposed to it. This low ranking of supportive supervision has negative implications that social workers are not adequately supported. This should not be the case especially because “social work practitioners worldwide are stressed out” (Munson, 2002:81). The social workers are also subjected to depression and anxiety (Dlamini, 2017) because they (social workers) also have to manage organisational challenges of fiscal constraints and workloads increase (Munson, 2002:81) while simultaneously managing the “emotional dimensions of their work” (Wonnacott, 2012:13). It is thus against this backdrop that the researcher submits that supportive supervision within DSD Mpumalanga should be revitalised to ensure that social workers are always supported, failing which the practitioners will leave the organisation and/or the profession.

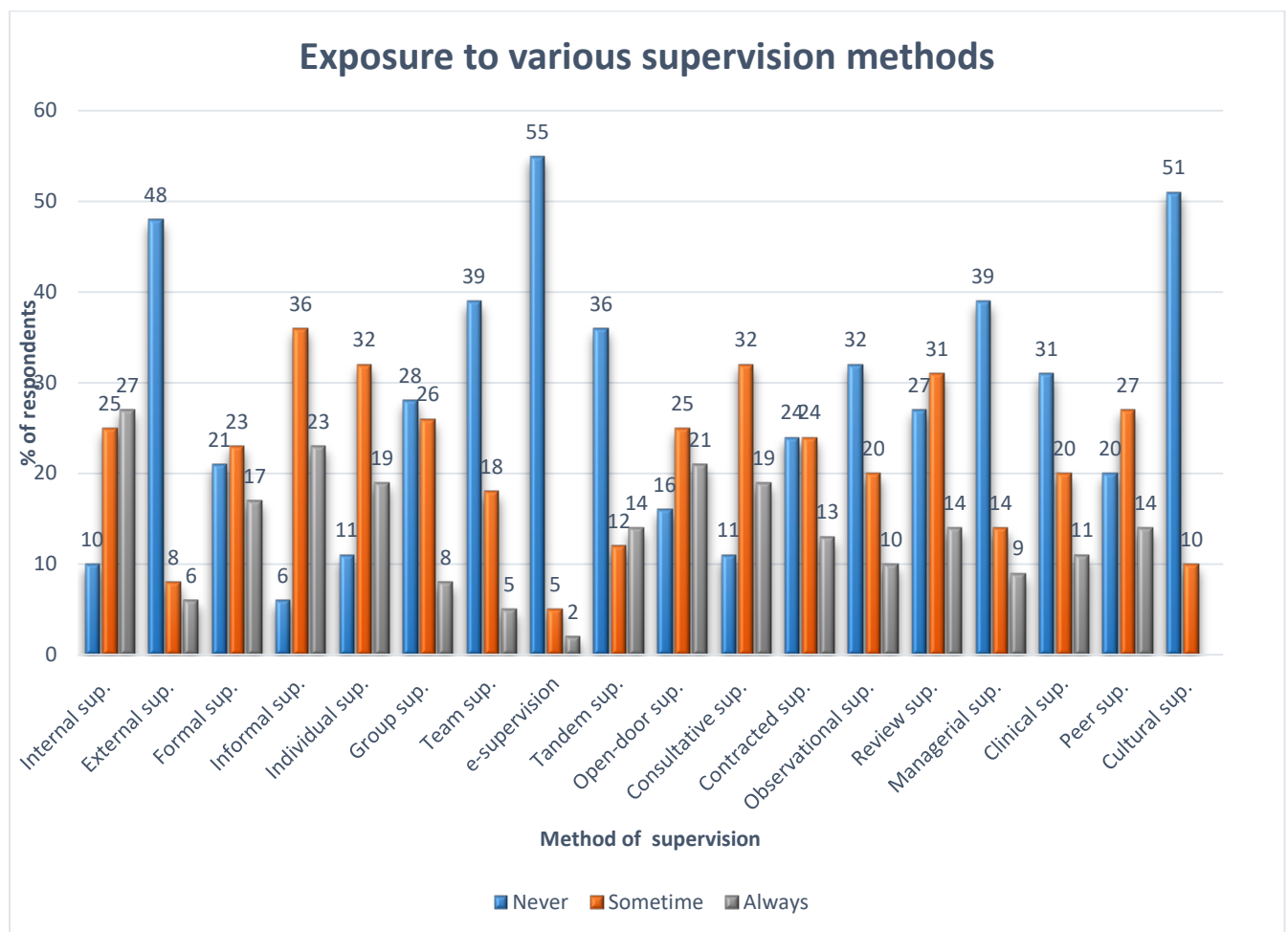
Furthermore, irrespective of which function is rendered most or the least, it can be deduced in this study that social work supervisors do carry out the functions of supervision when supervising social workers. The studies by Turner (2000:233-234) and Hung et al. (2010:375)

also attested to social work supervisors using the functions to supervise their supervisees at varying degrees.

5.4.4 Exposure to various supervision methods

Social work supervision is carried out through various ways and means, which in this study as articulated in chapter (2) are referred to as methods. The concept of different methods being used is supported by Ward (in Scott, 2009:37) who states that “people need a whole spectrum of support and supervision opportunities which may vary from formally planned sessions to peer support group meetings and on the spot support”. The graph hereunder presents the level at which respondents are exposed to the different methods of supervision. Again, the rating scale of “never”, “sometimes” and “always” was used by the respondents to rate their level of exposure to each method.

5.13: Exposure to various supervision methods



From the graph, it can be deduced that most respondents were “never” exposed to the majority of methods as compared to the ranking of “always” and “sometimes”. In the same token, the ranking of having been exposed to the methods “sometimes” also scored a bit higher than “always”.

The respondents rated the following methods as never been exposed to them: e-supervision, cultural supervision and external supervision, which were cited by (55), (51) and (48) respondents constituting (89%), (82%) and (77%) of the sample respectively. E-supervision is supervision that is delivered online in the form of telephone, video and by e-mail (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012:72). External supervision takes place between a practitioner and a supervisor who do not work for the same organisation (Beddoe, 2012:199). Cultural supervision can materialise if the supervisor initiates conversations with supervisees regarding their biases and prejudices towards each other, against fellow team members, and against the different client systems they work with, with the ultimate aim of addressing their issues. Closely rated as fairly high in this category are team supervision and managerial supervision both cited by 39 (63%) respondents each, which are closely followed by 36 (58%) respondents that cited tandem supervision.

Further, the respondents reported to having been exposed to a large extent to internal supervision, informal supervision and open-door supervision, which were cited by 27, 23 and 21 respondents respectively. Internal supervision is supervision provided within an organisation by fellow employees while open-door supervision is an informal ad hoc type of supervision that occurs as and when required (O’Donoghue, 2002:6). Informal supervision is unplanned. It may include ad hoc conversations such as speaking on the phone after a visit and corridor discussions (Wonnacott, 2012:65). On the other hand, the methods that scored high on having been exposed to sometimes include informal supervision, which was recorded by 36 (58%) respondents, individual and consultative supervision neck and neck cited by 32 (52%) respondents which are closely followed by review supervision cited by 31 (50%) of the respondents. In individual supervision, the meeting is held with an individual supervisee. Consultation refers to sourcing the expert services of another social work practitioner with “greater expertise, greater knowledge, and greater skill in the performing of some particular specialised function” (Kadushin,1977:25) whilst review supervision entails checking periodically if the supervisee will meet some key performance expectations in each year.

Overall, what is certain in this regard is that supervision of social workers within DSD Mpumalanga is carried out and that it is conducted largely internally and informally and that respondents are seldom supervised electronically. The fact that supervision within DSD

Mpumalanga is carried out informally goes against calls by Sokhela (2008:96) and NASW (2012:13-14), who have advocated for social work supervision to be contracted. Against this backdrop the researcher is thus of the view that supervision provided to social workers within DSD Mpumalanga has shortcomings. This is because social workers and supervisors are all missing out on the benefits of formal supervision which according to Wonnacott (2012:64-65) includes consistency, predictability and regularities; the facilitation of the development of positive relationships; which also allows on-going reviews on practice issues; and maintains a focus on developmental needs. Contracting, on the other hand, would benefit DSD Mpumalanga because it sets rules and expectations; it protects both parties, and addresses needs and contributes to effective supervision (Sokhela, 2008:71).

5.4.5 Exposure to international instruments and national legislative frameworks

The social work profession is regulated globally and nationally. As previously indicated in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the global regulations of social work practice are rooted in the treaties and conventions steered by the UN; it is also regulated by the IFSW and the IASSW. Regionally, social work is entrenched in the provisions of the AU and ASSASWEI. In South Africa, the SACSSP and the National Department of Social Development use legislations to regulate social work training and practice. A list of several treaties and national legislations was provided to the respondents in this question. The respondents were required to indicate if the cited conventions and legislations were applicable to generic social work supervision. Due to the voluminous numbers of treaties and conventions applicable to social work practice, not all treaties and conventions by the UN and the AU could be included in this study nor could the legislative frameworks of South Africa. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, 7 international instruments by the UN, 6 AU instruments, including 5 South African legislations were included in the survey.

The conventions discussed in this segment are not legally binding but serve as guidelines for social work practice. The South African legislations, on the other hand, are legally binding and must be adhered to. The provisions contained in all frameworks mandate the promotion of human rights and the exploration of civil and political rights in supervision. The various rights also mean that supervisors should advocate for supervisees; and demand equity and culturally relevant and culturally sensitive practice on the part of the supervisor and supervisee relationship. All the respondents (62) in the sample responded to this question and they rated the frameworks as follows:

Table 5.6: The applicability of conventions and legislations to supervision

Applicability of conventions and legislations to supervision									
UN International instruments	Appli cable	Not applic able	The AU Conventions	Appli cable	Not Applic able	The South African Legislations	Appli cable	Not Appli cable	
Universal Declaration on Human rights	45	07	Africa (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples Rights	53	9	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996 as amended	61	01	
International covenant on Civil and Political Rights	43	19	Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Cultural charter for Africa	51	11	The Labour Relations Act, Act No. 66 of 1995 as amended	58	04	
International Covenant on economic, Social and Cultural Rights	48	14	Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa	49	13	The South African Social Services Professions Act, Act No. 110 of 1978 as amended	62	00	
The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination	55	07	Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	59	03	The Children's Act, Act No. 38 of 2005 as amended	60	02	
The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women	58	04	Protocol to the African charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	58	05	The Child Justice Act, Act 78 of 2008	58	04	
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention	45	16	African charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration	55	05				
Convention on the Rights of the Child	58	04	supervision						

Overall, the respondents cited the South African legislation as the most applicable to social work supervision compared to the UN and AU treaties. Of the 62 respondents, 43 (69%) respondents for each UN instrument recorded that it was applicable to social work supervision. With regard to the AU conventions, 49 (79%) respondents recorded that each convention was applicable to social work supervision. This was also the case with regard to South African legislation; a minimum of 58 (94%) respondents in each legislation recorded that it was applicable to social work supervision. The high score on South African legislation can be attributed to the fact that the respondents are more familiar with the South African legislative frameworks, because they work within their parameters in executing their daily responsibilities and as a result relate better with them compared to the international treaties, which seem far-fetched and distant from their day-to-day operations. Consequently, it can thus be concluded that the respondents were all of the opinion that the UN instruments, the AU instruments and the South African legislation are all applicable to social work supervision. The results validate the views by Witkin (1998:197) that human rights are inseparable from social work theory, values and ethics, and practice because rights corresponding to human needs have to be upheld and fostered, and they embody the justification and motivation for social work action. This result also validates the views of Lundy and van Wormer (2012:735) that the human rights value base, as articulated in various legal documents, constitute the foundational values of social work.

The global impact of all the conventions is further clearly articulated in the global definition of social work as construed by IFSW (2014). The definition denotes social work as “a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures in addressing life challenges and enhancing wellbeing”. The pronouncements on the promotion and protection of human, cultural, and political rights; the emphasis on empowerment and sustainable development including the recognition for diversities are some of the issues promoted by the conventions contained in the table above. Echoing Reichert (in Lundy & van Wormer, 2012:735) adopting a human rights perspective helps social work supervisors to more readily identify structural difficulties in planning appropriate interventions with supervisees.

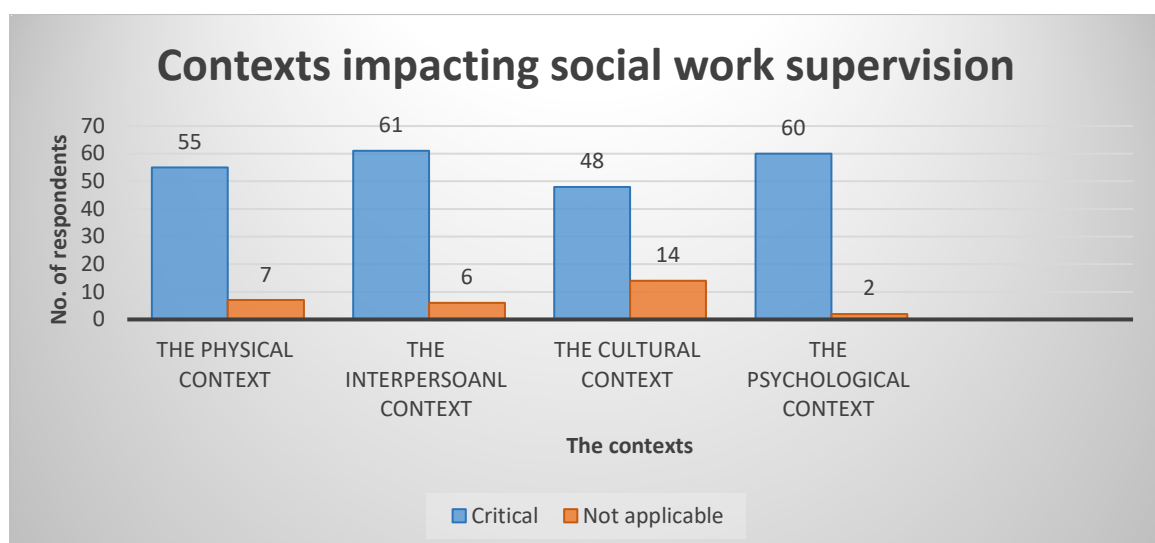
Against this backdrop, two further assumptions can be made in this regard; that the social workers within DSD Mpumalanga province struggled to make the global connection of social work supervision with the conventions hence the lower ranking on all the conventions as

compared to the South African legislative frameworks. Secondly, it can also be that the supervisors themselves are not familiar with these conventions and treaties especially because it has been earlier established that supervisors are not trained to do supervision. These suppositions are further backed by the fact that the recently developed Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa is also mum about the supervision legal frameworks within the intercontinental context. Consequently, for this situation to be rectified, the sought training of social work supervisors alluded to earlier in the text should encompass international legal frameworks influencing the national, regional and global impact of supervision. Similarly, supervisors should also have discussion with supervisees on the laws influencing their national, regional and global interventions. The onus is on supervisors to make sure that supervisees think globally and tap into global resources in the provision of social work services.

5.4.6 The impact of contexts on social work supervision

A context according to Johns (2006:386) refers to situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour as well as functional relationships between variables. Tsui (2005:49) cites various contexts, which in his opinion influence the operations of welfare organisations. This includes the physical context, the interpersonal context, the cultural context and the psychological contexts. These contexts were tabulated for the respondents with the hope to determine the impact of each context on social work supervision. The respondents were required to rate each context as either “critical” or “unimportant”. The respondents were also given an option to cite other contexts, which have an impact on their service provision and this is what they had to say:

Figure 5.14: Contexts impacting social work supervision



Of the 62 respondents, the majority, 61 (98%) of the sample, scored interpersonal context with supervisors as the most critical context to social work supervision. The psychological context followed second as critical with 60 (96%) responses, which was followed by the physical context at 55 responses and cited last was the cultural context at 48 responses, which constituted (88%) and (77%) of the samples respectively.

The physical context refers to the venue, the seating arrangements, and the atmosphere where the supervision session is held and the interpersonal context refers to the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee (Tsui, 2005:49-59). The cultural context refers to the norms and values of the society in which the supervision takes place and the psychological context refers to the way in which the supervisor and supervisee perceive the supervisory process (Tsui, 2005:59). Noble and Irwin (2009:354-355) concurs that there are many perspectives or 'stories' that are always present in the supervisory process. These many stories include the social story, the supervision story, the supervisor's story, the supervisee's story as well as the stories of various other players such as the clients, other workers, the many and varied situations in society and the ever-changing socio-political, cultural context of human service work.

In this study, some respondents however regarded all the contexts as unimportant to social work supervision. With regard to those respondents, the highest responses recorded was cultural context, which was cited by 14 (23%) respondents, followed by the physical context, which has been recorded by 7 (11%) respondents. The psychological context and the psychological context were recorded lower in this regard, with 6 (10%) and 2 (3%) responses respectively. It can therefore be said that these particular respondents are not in-tune with the environment in which social work supervision occurs.

The respondents were further given an opportunity to cite other contexts which they deemed to have a critical impact on the supervisory process. Five respondents, (8%) of the sample added that the religious contexts had an impact on the supervision relationship, (2) respondents, (3%) of the sample cited the socio-economic context, and the organisational context was recorded by (1) respondent, (2%) of the sample.

Contexts matter to social work supervision. This is because they condition the manner in which a professional project is constituted and enacted (McDonald, Harris & Wintersteen, 2003:204-205). Consequently, the researcher admits that for supervision to be effectively rendered, the identified contexts need to be effectively managed by social work supervisors. In the words of Eisikovitz (in Bruce & Austin, 2000:86), the contexts of supervisory practice should be

managed and enhanced by ensuring that supervisors create a work environment that fosters task orientation, staff involvement, staff autonomy, and clarity of rules including the articulation of high levels of expectations on the part of the supervisor and supervisee. Noble and Irwin (2009:355) advise that in a supervisory relationship both the supervisor and the supervisee should develop a critical focus, which require supervisors and supervisees to focus on the interactive aspects of these many perspectives.

According to Noble and Irwin (2009:255) another important dimension of critical focus includes the joint and equal exploration of how to democratise the supervision process so as to move towards a more equal and socially enlightened experience for both the supervisor and supervisee. If to democratize entails introducing a democratic system or democratic principles and also as making something accessible to everyone, then it can be deduced that democratising supervision implies that supervisors should be readily accessible. In addition, the democratisation of supervision implies that supervisors should include supervisees in decisions pertaining to their work; they should treat all their supervisees equally; and should allow for maximum interaction during each contact with supervisees.

Based on the theoretical framework that was adopted in this study, the intrinsic nature of social work supervision in South Africa has been articulated in this subsection. This is because it has been established that social work supervision may be carried out through various functions and methods and that the respondents' exposure to the functions and the methods varies. It has also been established herein that context have a bearing on the ability or inability of social work supervisors to offer supervision. Also, the (PIE) construct of the ecosystems theory in this regard has been revealed by the exposition that social work supervision is practiced within various milieus.

5.5 QUESTIONS REGARDING SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

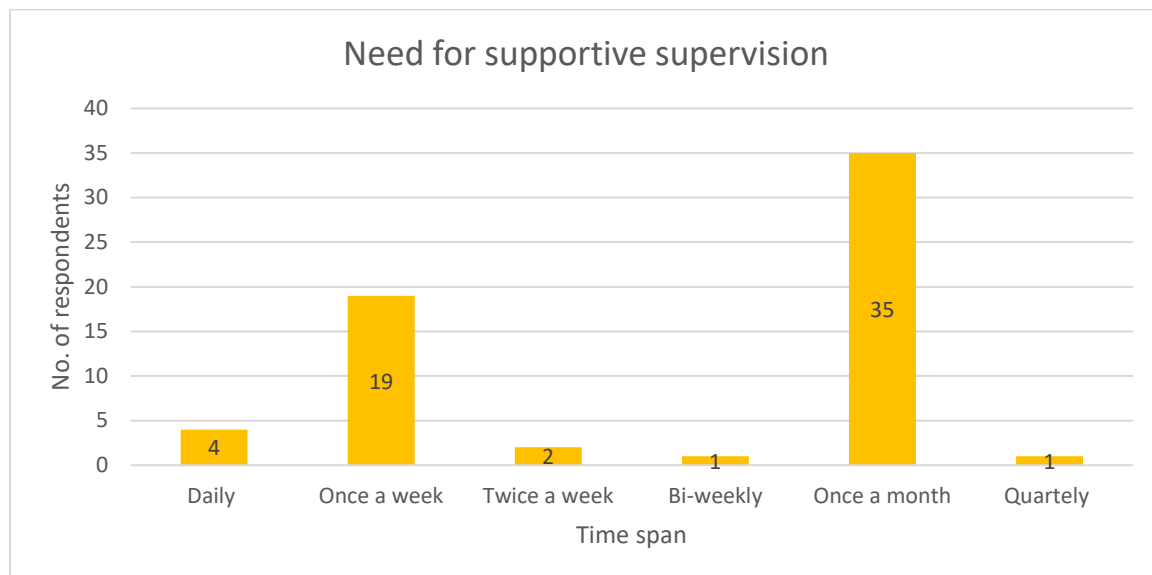
The provision of high quality social work services relies upon a well-trained, supported and motivated workforce (Bowyer & Roe, 2015:2). It is therefore against this notion that this subsection is dedicated to the exploration of supportive supervision that the respondents received from their supervisors. The goal of supportive supervision is to promote the psychological well-being of supervisees (Hoffmann, 1990:220); it is also to enhance staff morale (Gibleman & Schervish, 1997:3) by providing emotional support, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job (Coulshed et al., 2006:164). Supportive supervision in this study is considered a supervision method used by supervisors to provide psychosocial support to

supervisees. The respondents were asked to keep the preceding descriptions in mind as they answered questions that were contained in this section. The discussion commenced with establishing if the respondents do require supportive supervision.

5.5.1 Determination of the need for supportive supervision

To establish if social workers do need supportive supervision, three kinds of questions were asked. The respondents were asked to indicate how often they had required supportive supervision in the past two months prior to them having completed the questionnaire. In response to this question, the respondents shared the following:

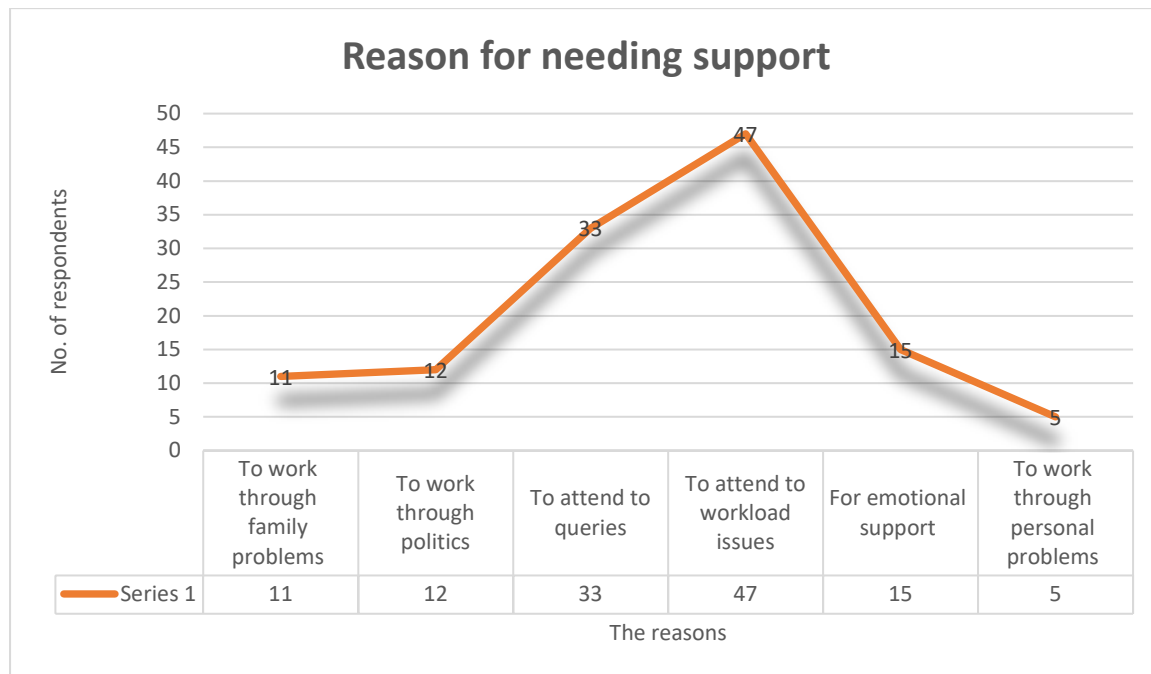
Figure 5.15: The need for supportive supervision



All the respondents reported that they did require supportive supervision from their supervisors in the past two months prior to them completing the questionnaire. Of the (62) respondents, 35 (56%) reported needing support from their supervisors once a month, 19 (31%) reported to have required it once a week and the need for support daily, weekly, bi-weekly and twice a week ranged from 1 (2%) to 4 (6%) responses. Contrary to these results, only (24%) of the respondents in the study by Kadushin (1992:15) regarded supportive supervision as the most important function of supervision, falling far short from the (44%) that cited educational supervision as important and the (32%) that cited administrative supervision as important. It can therefore be deduced from this result that the overwhelming need for supportive supervising once a month and only once a week implies social workers have developed some form of coping mechanisms on how to deal with the pressures of practice.

Secondly, the questionnaire contained a list of possible problems, which the respondents may have needed support on and the respondents were asked to indicate two issues from the list. The respondents thus reported to be in need of support with regard to the following issues:

Figure 5.16: Reasons for needing the support



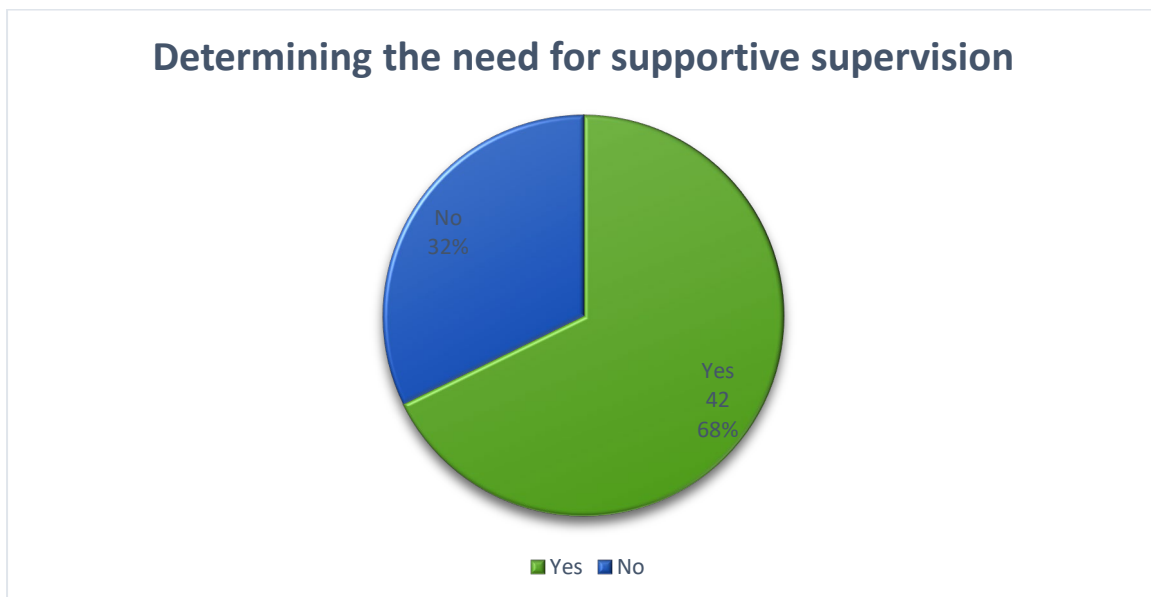
The majority of the respondents, 47 (76%) of the sample, reported that they mostly required support for attending to workload issues, 33 (53%) required it for assistance with client queries; 12 (19%) to work through work politics and 11 (18%) to work through family problems. These results, although slightly higher, validate earlier results that indicated that of the (62) respondents 32 (52%) had reported to being exposed sometimes to the supportive function of social work supervision. The respondents in this regard reported to be in need of support because, as revealed by Hughes (2010:61), supervision plays a key role in good social work practice. The respondents further required the support because through supportive supervision, as revealed by Hoffman (1987:220), their psychological well-being would be promoted. And according to Tsui (2005:86) the required support should be offered in terms of emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental supervision and informative supervision. Furthermore, Tsui states that emotional support is expressed by an attitude of warmth and caring; appraisal support involves the supervisor affirming the work done by the supervisee; instrumental supervision involves a process whereby the supervisor guides and assists supervisee towards effective service delivery and with informative supervision the supervisor imparts relevant information for quality service delivery.

It is thus submitted that social workers can only be adequately supported if the supervision session as alluded to earlier can be democratised. The researcher is further of the opinion that supervisors should schedule formal supportive supervision sessions to afford practitioners opportunities to vent about all the frustrations they maybe encountering in relation to work politics, client issues, family problems, workload issues and personal issues. Both parties will have to be physically and emotionally present for the support to be effective.

Further, the fact that the need for supportive supervision in dealing with familial and personal problems were cited the least by the respondents in this regard cannot be ignored. The researcher concludes that the low score suggests that respondents might have been not comfortable in sharing their personal and familial problems with their supervisors.

Furthermore, the respondents were also asked if they did receive the support, which they required. Two categories of responses were sought with this question, those respondents who were supported and those who were not. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.17: Determining the need for supportive supervision



All the respondents reported that they did require supportive supervision from their supervisors. The majority of the respondents 47 (76%) reported that they mostly required support for attending to workload issues, 33 (53%) required it for assistance with client queries; 12 (19%) to work through work politics and 11 (18%) to work through family problems. In this regard, of the (62) respondents, 42 (68%) reported that they did receive the support, while 20 (32%) reported that they did not receive the support.

It is critical to note herein that failure by the supervisors to provide the support needed by the (32%) social workers in this study may have detrimental effects for the social work supervisee, and the organisation as a whole especially because social workers, in the public domain are overworked. They handle very high workload consisting of casework, group work and community work and each intervention method is associated with administrative demands. During the 2016 Social Work Indaba held at Durban, South Africa's social work practitioners informed the former Minister of the Department Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini that they were under tremendous pressure because they attend to high caseloads with an estimated ratio to the South African population countrywide at 1:5000 (Department of Social Development, 2016). During the Social Work Indaba the social workers also linked the high caseloads to stress, which sometimes may lead to depression because practitioners are often confronted with traumatic situations in the field (Department of Social Development, 2016). Mathonsi and Makhubela (2016:53) in their study also found this to be the case. They uncovered that social workers within the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Sub-District of South Africa experience occupational stress due to high workload, lack of human resources, lack of resources and lack of supportive supervision. Consequently, such a social worker cannot be left on a ledge to fend for herself but needs to be supported because supervision is the key to avoiding burnout (Mani, 2015).

In addition, and as discussed earlier, the researcher submits that lack of support may result in social workers leaving their positions and even the profession. This is because Tham (2007:1225) had found that the greatest reasons why social workers were leaving child welfare in Sweden was that they complained about the extent to which personnel are rewarded for a job well done, and they did not feel well taken care of and that management was not interested in their health and well-being. Participants in the study by Ellet et al. (2006:274) also cited, amongst other reasons, feeling personally and professionally undervalued by the organisation as the reasons for high staff turnover in child welfare service.

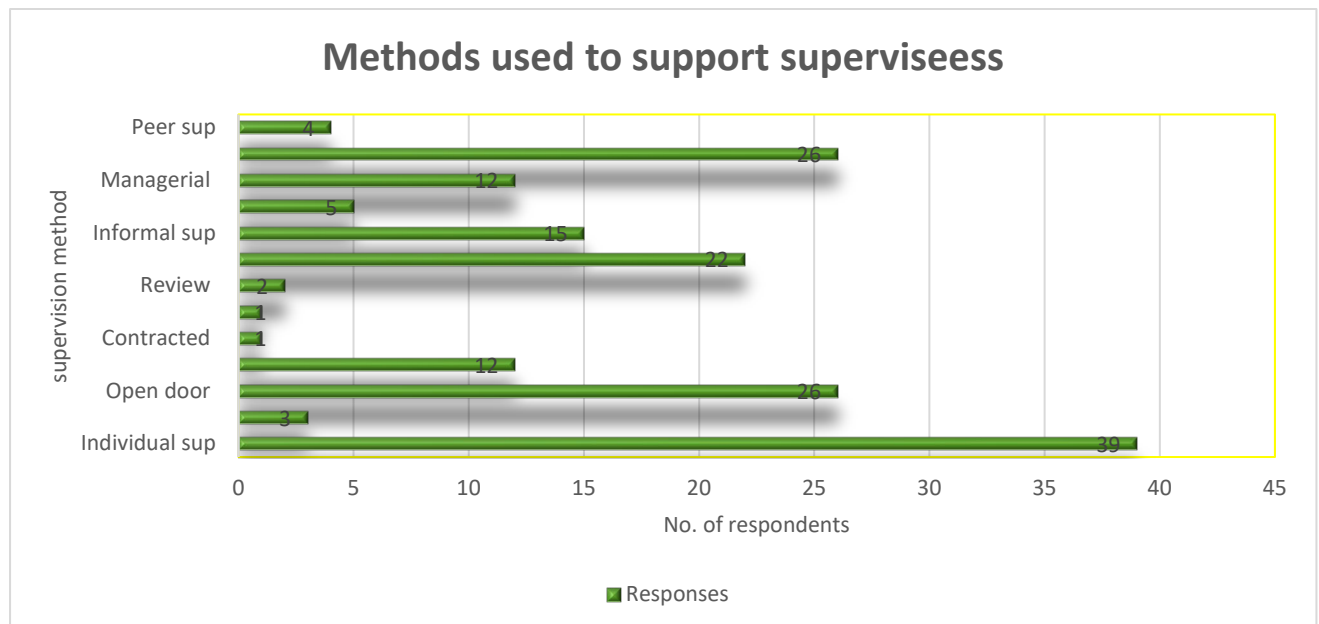
Lapierre and Allen (2006:169) introduces a different dimension to this discussion. They suggest that for an employee to be fully supported it cannot only be the responsibility of supervision but that it will take a combination of family support and one's supervisor in order to deal decisively with work-family conflict and/or decreased well-being. Ayree, Chu, Kim and Yyu (2012:792) also encourage the focus on family support as a strategy that must be explored by supervisors in their endeavour to support supervisees. This caution is thus heeded in this study.

Further, it was imperative in this study to establish how those respondents who had been supported were supported and also to determine how those respondents who reported not having been supported would have wanted to be supported. The presentation of the results from the former inquest follows accordingly.

5.5.1.1 The method of supervision used to support respondents and its effect

Forty-two respondents, (68%) of the sample, reported that they had been supported by their supervisors when asked at sub-heading (4.5.1). Due to an array of supervision methods available for use by social work supervisors in supporting the respondents, the methods were compartmentalised into four questions. For the purpose of variation and also as alluded to in chapter 2 of this thesis, due to the inconsistency amongst scholars on what to refer to the various avenues used to carry out supervision, the plurality of forms, modes, kinds, and types of supervision as discussed by O’Donogue (2002:6) were adopted in the questionnaire. Consequently, this meant that respondents selected and rated (4) methods which were used by their supervisor to support them. Four methods were sought in this study because the researcher is of the view that supervisors use a combination of methods according to need to offer support. The graphical presentation hereunder thus presents only those methods that were cited by the respondents, which include the following:

Figure 5.18: Methods used to support supervisees



Of the 42 respondents who reported to having been supported, 29 (69%) recorded individual supervision to having been the most commonly used supervision method for supporting them. The other methods following were clinical supervision and open door supervision both cited

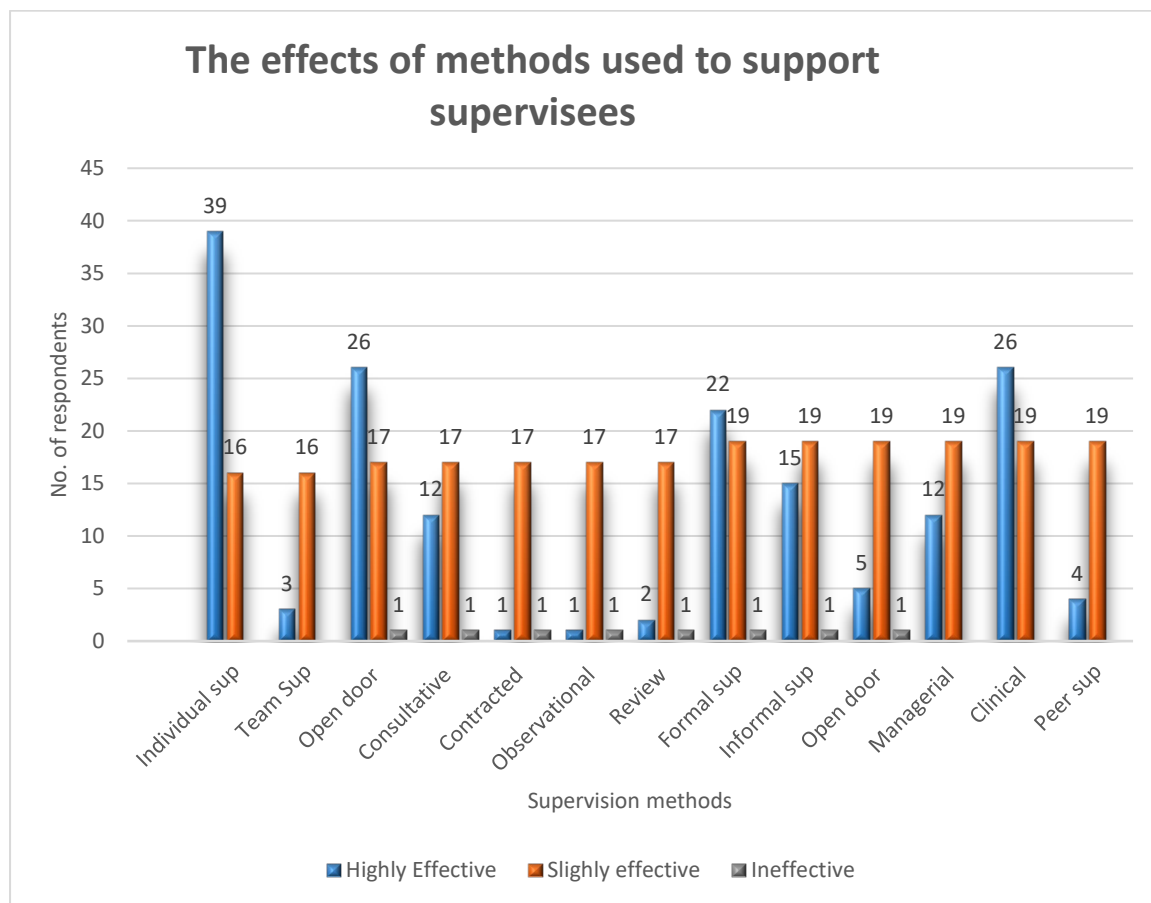
by 26 (62%) respondents with formal supervision trailing slightly back with 22 (52%) responses from 42 respondents. The least used methods according to the respondents were team, review, contracted and observational supervision, they ranged between 1 (2%) and 2 (5%) citations each.

These results validate the earlier supposition that the majority of respondents are exposed to supervision. On the other hand, although not in conflict, these results are slightly different from earlier results recorded at subheading “4.4.4: *exposure to various supervision methods*” wherein the respondents recorded the types of supervision methods they were exposed to. Therein the respondents reported to having been exposed to a large extent to internal supervision (27%), informal supervision (23%) and open door supervision (21%).

In this regard, there were also those methods, which were not selected by the respondents. These included the following: group supervision, tandem supervision, external supervision, e-supervision, observational supervision, and cultural supervision. These results correspond with the earlier result at subheading “4.4.4: *exposure to various supervision methods*” wherein the majority of respondents 52% had recorded that they were never exposed to tandem supervision, external supervision, e-supervision, observational supervision, and cultural supervision. During the earlier results, group supervision had also been cited by 45% of the sample as never being exposed to it.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of each method they selected using the following ratings: “ineffective”, “slightly effective” and “highly effective”. Of the three ratings, “highly effective” was rated the highest. Over 22 (52%) respondents of the sample of 42, reported that the methods were highly effective. Of the 42 respondents, over 15 (36%) respondents indicated that the methods used to support them were slightly effective. A very small margin of respondents, 2 (5%) of the 42, cited ineffectiveness as a response herein. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.19: The effects of methods used to support supervisees



The most highly effective methods, which had been used by supervisors to support respondents with the issues identified at subheading (4.5.1) was individual supervision with 39 (93%) responses from the 42 respondents, followed by open-door supervision and clinical supervision at a tie with 26 (62%) responses each and formal supervision cited by 22 (52%) respondents. The methods that were recorded high on having being slightly effective include team supervision with 16 (38%) responses from the 42 respondents; consultative, contracted, observational and review supervision all with 17 (40%) responses each of the 42 respondents including clinical and peer supervisions, which were both cited by 19 (45%) respondents. Furthermore, the methods that were perceived ineffective include open-door supervision, consultative, contracted, observational, review, formal and informal and open door supervision and each method was cited by one (2%) responded each of the 42 respondents.

By being supported, it is assumed in this study that the respondents were helped to deal decisively with job-related discouragements and discontentment, which in turn invigorated their morale. As suggested by Tsui (2005:491), it is also assumed that as a result of the support the respondents feel good about doing their job, they have a sense of worth as

professionals, and they have developed a sense of belonging in the agency and a sense of security in their performance. In addition, these results continue to cement the views deduced earlier that supervision is rendered irregularly and inconsistently within the Department of Social Development in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

Further, it is critical that the option of open-door supervision was repeated; it was inserted at questions (5.6) and (5.8) (refer to questions) and the respondents could select open-door supervision as one of the methods, which had been used to supervise them. Interestingly, the first cited open-door supervision was recorded by 26 (62%) respondents, of the 42 respondents, as having been used by their supervisors to support them with their issues while the second citation received 5 (12%) responses. It is also interesting to uncover that on both accounts open-door supervision was said to be highly effective. In this regard, the first listed open-door supervision was said to have been highly effective by 26 (62%) respondents whilst the second citation was said to be highly effective by 5 (12%) respondents from the sample of 42. It continues to be interesting that the margins were slightly close for both citations wherein open-door supervision was thought to be slightly effective having being cited by (17) and (19) respondents, constituting (40%) and (45%) of the sample of (42) respondents respectively. In both citations, again, open-door supervision was experienced as ineffective by (1) respondent, (2%) of the (42) respondents.

The aim of citing open-door supervision twice was intended to check the veracity of answers and the honesty of participants as advised by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:118). Consequently, this particular result hearkens to the fact that the respondents were vigilant and they paid enough attention in their response to questions because 21 (50%) respondents from the 26 (62%) respondents that had initially indicated that open-door supervision was used in supporting them did not pick it the second time around. Secondly, presuming that the (5) responses recorded in the second citation were from the (26) respondents who had recorded open-door supervision the first time around, it can be said that these respondents were not attentive in their selection otherwise they would not have selected the same method twice.

Checking the veracity of results provided by the respondents also has implication for this study. It speaks to the honesty and awareness of social workers regarding their work, family and personal environments. In relation to the results herein, it can therefore be deduced that most of respondents are aware of their work contexts and situations while a small margin is not. With regard to the respondents who were vigilant, it is also assumed that when they have problems or challenges they can deal with them and/or seek assistance. For those respondents who responded to the question twice it is assumed that they are not quite in-tune

with themselves and their working conditions and as a result may run the risk of burnout and stress.

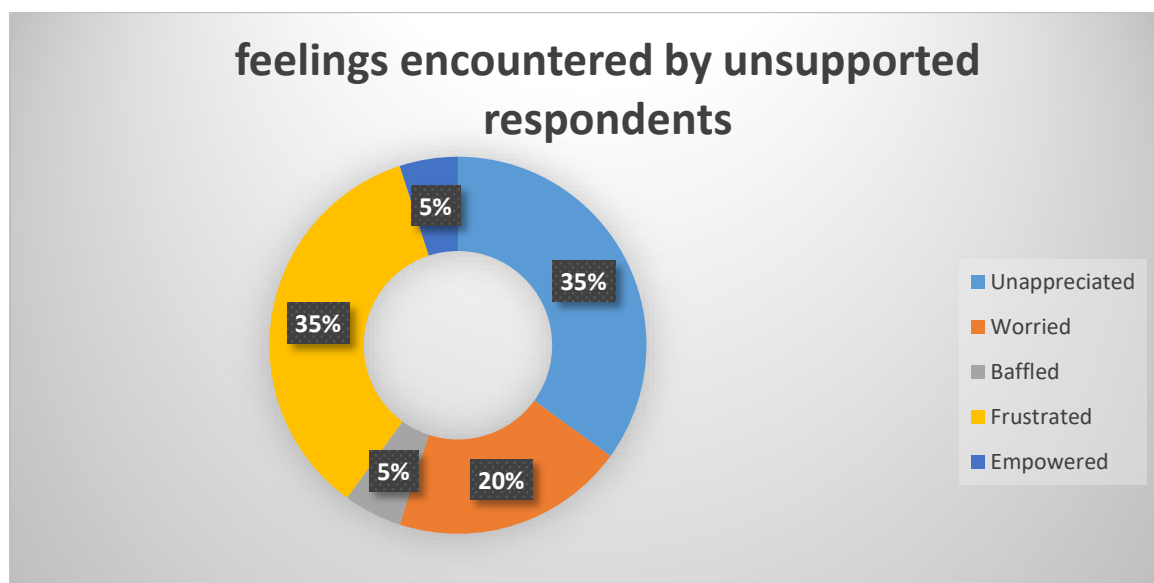
5.5.2 The experiences of respondents that were not supported

At subheading “4.5.1: determination of the need for supportive supervision” it was established that all the respondents, 62 (100%), had reported that they needed supportive supervision to work through family problems, to work through work politics, for attending to client queries, to attend to workload issues, for emotional support and to work through personal problems. In the same subheading 4.5.1 the respondents were also asked if they had received the support they required from their supervisors. It was thus established that 20 respondents, (32%) of the sample, reported that they were never supported. This subsection is thus intended to establish the reasons thereof, the impact of no support and also to uncover how these respondents would have wanted to be supported by their supervisors.

5.5.2.1 The feelings encountered by the respondent for no support

Twenty respondents reported that they had never been supported when asked at sub-heading 4.5.1. These respondents were thus required to indicate how not being supported made them feel. They were given a variety of words denoting different feelings to select from. This constituted both positive and negative feelings. Overall, the majority of the respondents 19 (95%) of the sample of 20, indicated to have not been supported experienced negative feelings to not being supervised. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.20 Feelings encountered by unsupported respondents



From the sample of 20 respondents that reported to not have been supported, 19 (95%) recorded a negative response. Of the (95%), 7 (35%) recorded that they felt unappreciated, another 7 (35%) felt frustrated, 4 (20%) recorded being worried and 1 (5%) being baffled. There was also another respondent, 1 (5%), who recorded a positive response, that having not being supported made her feel empowered. It is understandable why the majority of respondents from 20 would feel unappreciated and frustrated because they did not receive the care and support they required with the issues identified at subheading (4.5.1.). With regard to the respondent who reported that not being supported made her feel empowered it can be assumed that she/he drew strength from within and discovered that she/he has to learn coping mechanisms that will sustain her/him in the profession even in the future.

These results tally with the findings by Mokoka (2016:100-101), whose participants indicated that there was lack of support from their supervisors at the Johannesburg Department of Social Development. These results also validate the findings by Mathonsi and Makhubela (2016:53) who also uncovered that in the Polokwane sub-district office of the Department of Social Development there was lack of supportive supervision provided to practitioners. Although these results are slightly higher, they also affirm earlier results which enquired about the respondent's exposure to supervision at subsection (4.4.2) wherein 12 respondents, (19%) of the sample, reported to never being supervised.

Having discussed the issue, the researcher felt that it was imperative to unearth the reasons that could have made supervisors not to be able to provide supportive supervision to subordinates, leaving them feeling the way that they did. In this study, the challenging workloads of supervisors as revealed during the discussion on the positions of supervisors within DSD Mpumalanga and the inadequate training of social work supervisors on how to supervise evidenced when discussing the educational qualifications of supervisors could be directly associated with the inability of some of the social work supervisors to provide supportive supervision in this study. This is because a social work manager is most likely to put supervision at a back burner and to concentrate on her core activities. Similarly, a grade (01) supervisor is also likely to treat supervision as a secondary duty because she herself has a high workload of her own. Nkomazana, Mash, Wojczewski, Kutalek and Phaladze (2016:5) in their study also revealed hindrances to providing supportive supervision to human service practitioners, i.e. health care workers, in Botswana. They reported that the hindrances include inadequate supervisory skills, lack of support from the National Health Ministry and being inadequately prepared to deal with difficult and uncooperative subordinates. Djibuti, Gotsadze, Zoidze, Mataradze, Esmail, Kohler (2016:1) in their study documenting the effects of "supportive" supervision on the performance of the immunization programme at the district

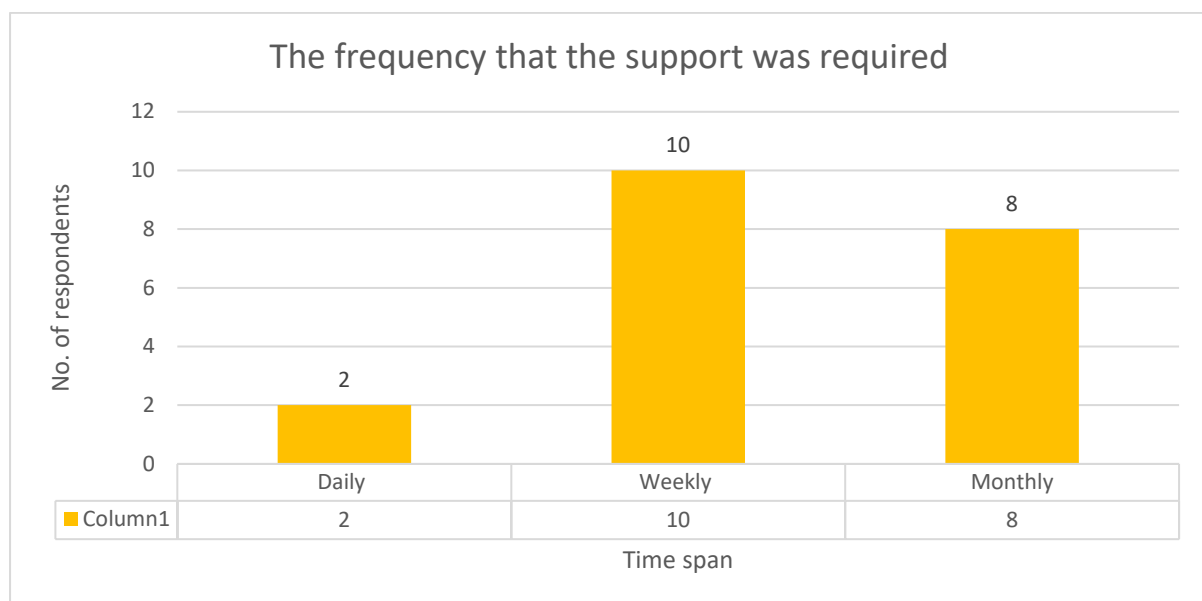
level in Georgia also reported that some barriers to supportive supervision may include lack of a clear format for providing supportive supervision, and lack of recognition among providers of the importance of supportive supervision. Asante and Roberts (2011:1), amongst other findings, also cited inadequate skills for supportive supervision, low motivation, and heavy workload as some of the challenges that the Pacific must overcome in the provision of supportive supervision to improve health care workers' performance.

As indicated previously, not supporting social workers compromises their well-being because they are likely to be subjected to stress, which may then lead to burnout and depression. At times unsupportive work environments can push social workers to leave their posts and/or the profession. Consequently, no social work practitioner should practise without being supported and the onus lies with employing organisation to ensure that social workers are adequately supported. The researcher is thus of the view that for this to be attained, employing organisations should ensure that staff are correctly placed, i.e. they must take note that entry level social workers and managers do not supervise.

5.5.2.2 The frequency that the support was required.

As earlier indicated, the majority of respondents, 10 (50%) of the 20 who reported not to have been supported reported that they would have required to be supported weekly, while 8 (40%) cited monthly, while the remaining 2 (10%) felt they needed to be supported daily. The responses are captured as follows:

Figure 5.21: The frequency that the support was required



These results are consistent with earlier findings on subsection 4.5.1 where the need for supportive supervision was determined. On subsection 4.5.1 (19) (31%) respondents had reported that they require supportive supervision weekly. These results exuded two emotions on the part of the researcher. Firstly, it is really shocking to learn that despite overwhelming evidence by thousands of social work literature and research studies by authors such as Hoffmann (1990); Tsui (1997); Gibleman and Schervish (1997); Bruce and Austin (2000); Coulshed et al. (2006); Naidoo and Kasiram (2006); Ellet et all. (2006); Ayree et al. (2006); Engelbrecht (2006); Tham (2007); Kadushin (2008); and Engelbrecht (2014:) who attest to the critical nature of supportive social work supervision, that one would still find social workers that are not supported.

On the other hand, these results speak truth of earlier results in this study. They affirm that the results obtained during the discussion of the respondents' generic exposure to social work supervision, that social work supervision, also inclusive of supportive supervision, is not rendered comprehensively and uniformly across the board and that while some subordinates are being supervised others are not being supervised. As alluded to earlier in the text, the absence of providing supportive supervision can also be attributed to supervisors who were never trained on how to provide supervision, let alone supportive supervision. These results thus point to a possible vicious cycle because if the current social work respondents remain unsupervised, it means that should they be promoted to supervision positions they would not know how to supervise.

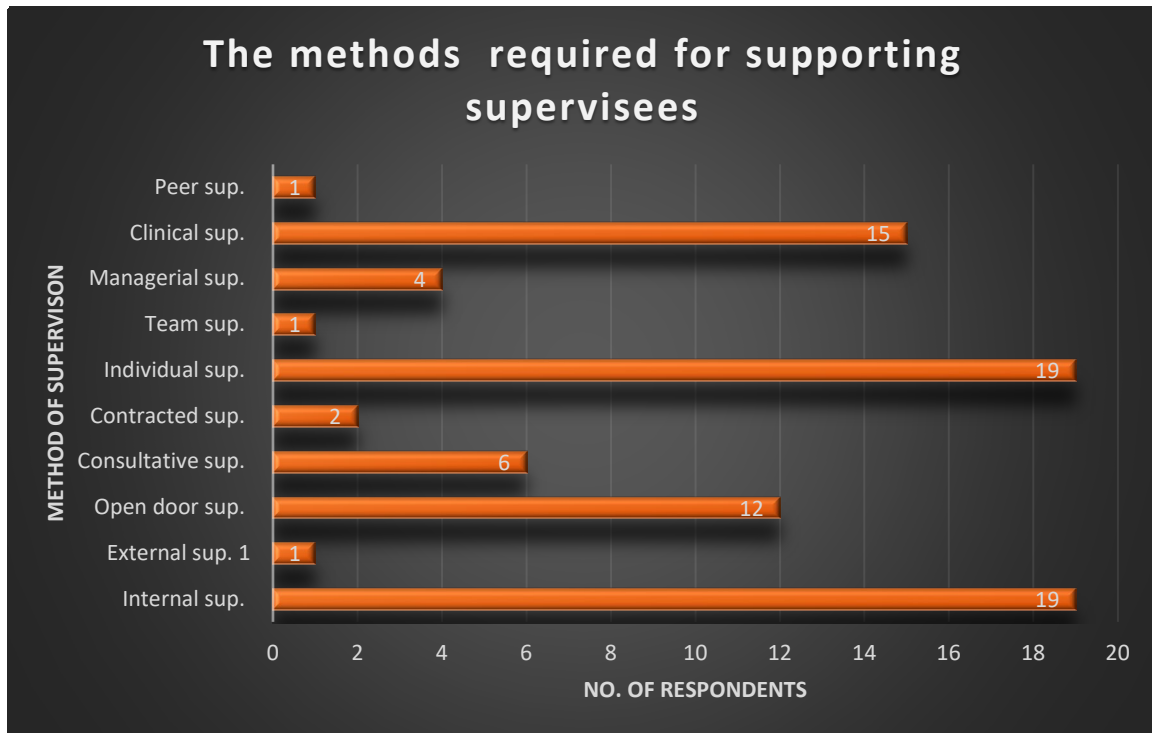
The researcher thus poses the following questions, which she cannot answer now: are the supervisors not encountering the same pressures as the social workers? On the other hand, could it be that they are also so stressed and overworked that they themselves need support? It was hoped that the second leg of collecting the qualitative data in this study from social work supervisors would shed light on some of these questions, and this is confirmed later when the qualitative findings are discussed.

5.5.2.3 The method of support that was required by the respondents

The respondents were provided with a list of different methods in this regard. As alluded to earlier, the methods were categorised into forms, modes, kinds, and types of supervision as recommended by O'Donogue (2002:6). In each question, the respondents were required to select a method, which they would have preferred to be used by their supervisors when supporting them in addressing the challenges identified at 4.5.1. By implication, the respondents were thus required to selected (4) methods overall from those that were provided.

The selection of four methods is necessary because it gave a clear indication of which methods the respondents wish can be used to support them. The researcher also believes that supportive supervision can be offered using different methods hence the need for the selection of various methods. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.22: The methods required for supporting supervisees



The graph evidences that the majority of respondents would have appreciated being supported individually and that the sought support was carried out internally by their immediate supervisors; these responses were recorded by 19 (95%) of the 20 respondents respectively, who were never supported. The respondents also reported that they would have also appreciated if the support was clinical in nature and that there was an open-door policy allowing them to waltz into a supervisor’s office whenever they required assistance. Clinical supervision and open-door supervision were cited by 15 (75%) and 12 (60%) of the 20 respondents respectively. The respondents did not think that peer supervision, team supervision, external and contracted supervision could have been effective in this regard; these methods were recorded by between 1 (5%) and 2 (10%) of the 20 respondents.

This need for individual support, which must be clinical in nature and that must also be carried out internally and by means of an open-door policy, to some extent, confirms earlier results on the respondents’ generic exposure to the various supervision methods, wherein it was established that the respondents were seldom exposed to individual, clinical and open-door

supervision. Further, it can be deduced that the respondents required weekly supportive supervision and that they would have also settled for being supervised at least once a month. It can also be deduced in this regard that not being supervised made the respondents feel unappreciated.

Comparing the results of respondents who were supported and those who were not supported it can thus be concluded that all social workers do require support from their supervisors. In addition, it was found in this study that whilst all social workers require supportive supervision, there are those who are supported and those who are not supported. It was also established in this regard that, irrespective of whether they were supported or not, social workers mostly need to be supported by means of individual supervision, which must be clinical in nature and that must also be carried out internally and by means of an open-door policy. The majority of respondents reported that they mostly required support for attending to workload issues and for assistance with client queries. It has also been established in this regard that the respondents were not comfortable in sharing their personal and familial problems with their supervisors.

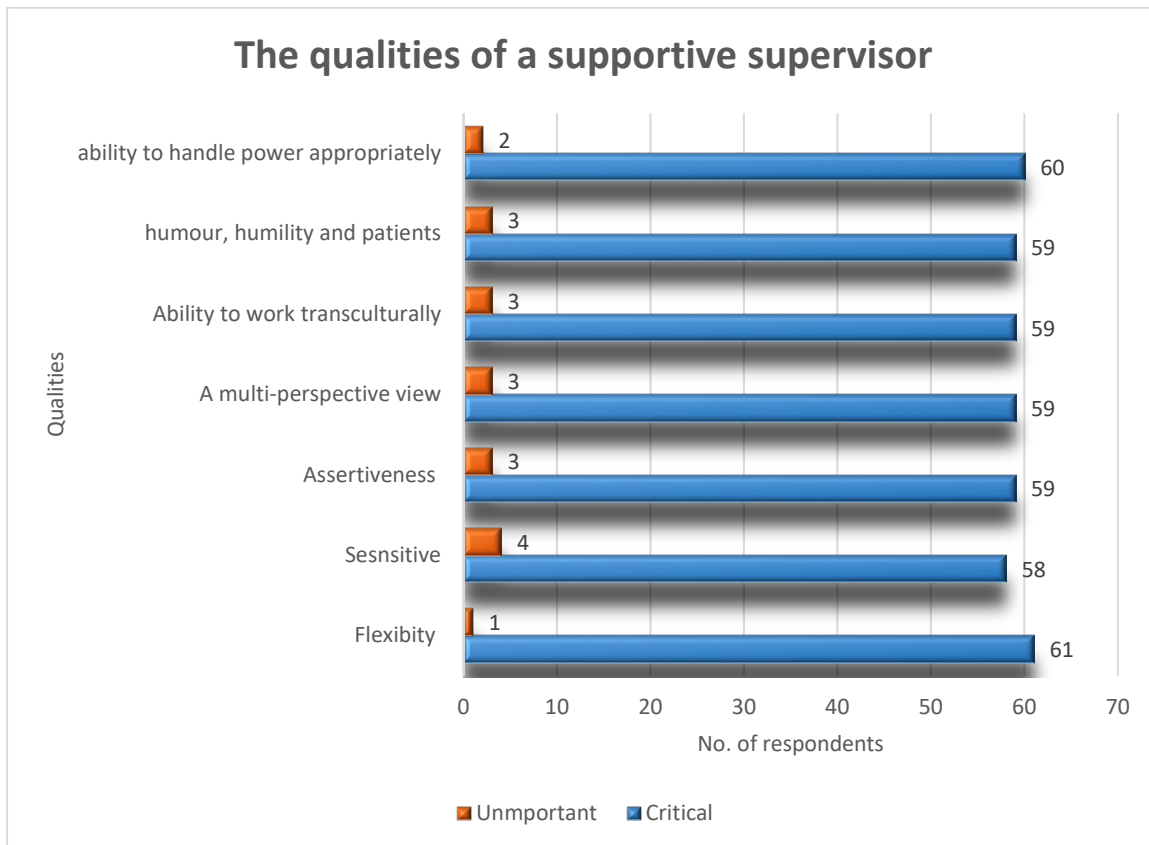
Further comparing the results of respondents who were supported and those who were not supported, it has been established in this regard that all the respondents require supportive supervision weekly. For those respondents who were supported it has been assumed in this study that the respondents were helped to deal decisively with job-related discouragements and discontentment, which in turn invigorated their morale. Lastly, it was also established that the failure by the supervisors to provide the supportive supervision to social workers may have detrimental effects for the social work supervisee and the organisation as a whole.

Following these results, it was critical to establish qualities sought from a supportive supervisor as perceived by supervisees, hence the next discussion.

5.5.3 The qualities of a supportive supervisor

All the respondents were asked to rate the qualities they required from a supportive supervisor. In an effort to contextualise and streamline the study, the social work qualities as outline by Hawkins and Shohet (2012:52) as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis were included in the questionnaire. The rating scale of “1/critical” and “2/unimportant” was used by the respondents to rate the identified qualities. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.24: The qualities of a supportive supervisor



All the given qualities were regarded as critical by the respondents, each quality received at least 59 and above responses out of 62, which represents 95% of the sample. Sixty-one respondents, (99%) of the sample, reported that a supportive supervisor should be flexible; 60 (98%) reported that a supportive supervisor must have an ability to handle power appropriately, whilst 59 (95%) reported that he/she should have humour, humility and patience; must be able to work transculturally, must have a multi-perspective view and must be assertive.

Furthermore, the respondents were given an opportunity to cite other qualities, which they deemed critical. Of these, 5 (8%) respondents each suggested one of the following qualities: the ability to maintain a positive attitude in supervision, emotional intelligence, taking initiative, controlled emotional involvement in supervision and understanding by the supervisors as additional qualities required from a supportive supervisor. These results empirically validate Albott, Aldrich, Hess, and Gitterman and Miller (in Carifio & Hess, 1987:245) who suggested that positive supervisor characteristics include flexibility, concern, attention, investment, curiosity, and openness.

As alluded to in Chapter 2 of this thesis, a supervisor may enter the supervision roles having developed the aforementioned qualities, whilst others may need to acquire them. Both, according to the researcher, may harness these qualities by or may acquire these qualities by heeding feedback from supervisees and other related colleagues; through experience in supervision; and by attending supervisory training opportunities.

For supervisors to offer support they undertake several roles and as a result it was pertinent to establish the various roles that should be undertaken by a supportive supervisor in this study hence the next discussion.

5.5.4 The roles fulfilled by supportive supervisors

As indicated in Chapter 2 of this research report, the middle management position of supervisors denotes that supervisors in their supervision endeavour also fulfil practice or supervision roles. The extent to which supervisors execute their practice roles was explored with this question. The question was also posed to the respondents because the ecosystems approach adopted in this study also advocates for the delimitation of clear boundaries (also referred to as roles) amongst organisms in a system, which in this instance was supervision, hence the question. The respondents were required to use the rating scale “always”, “sometimes” and “never” to rate the extent to which their supervisors fulfilled various roles. Of the three scores, the “sometimes” rating scored the highest overall, followed by “always”, with “never” not too far off at the back. All the respondents responded to this question and they shared the following:

Table 5.7: The roles fulfilled by supportive supervisors

The role	Always	Sometimes	Never
Coaching	21 (34%)	29 (47%)	12 (19%)
Mentoring	27 (44%)	23 (37%)	12 (19%)
Counselling	12 (19%)	20 (32%)	30 (48%)
Brokering	15 (24%)	26 (42%)	21 (34%)
Mediation	13 (21%)	33 (53%)	16 (26%)
Negotiation	18 (29%)	33 (53%)	11 (18%)
Facilitation	21 (34%)	29 (47%)	12 (19%)
Advocacy	21 (34%)	26 (42%)	15 (24%)
Managing	30 (48%)	25 (40%)	7 (11%)

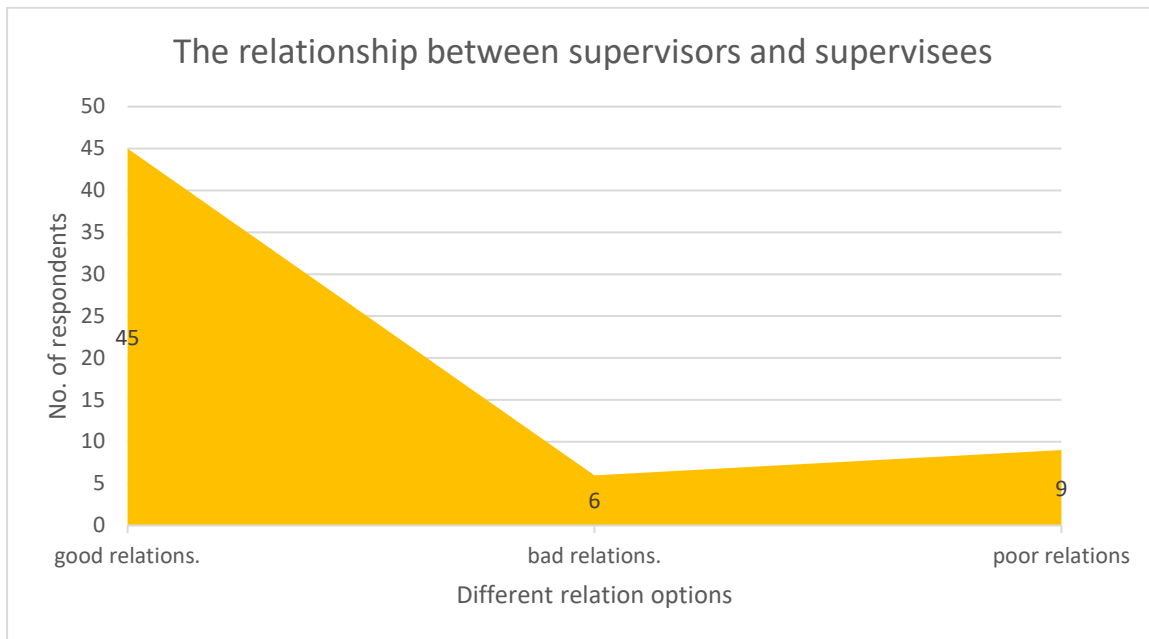
The roles, which are always performed by supervisors according to the respondents include managing at 30 responses; mentoring with 27 responses; advocacy, facilitation and coaching both at a tie of 21 responses; which constitute (48%), (44%) and (34%) of the sample. The mediation and negotiation roles were said to be used often than not at 33 (53%) responses each, closely followed by facilitation and coaching, which was cited by 29 (47%) respondents. The majority of respondents felt that counselling is never provided by their supervisors, 30 (48%) respondents cited this followed by brokering, which was recorded by 21 (34%) respondents. Managing, advocacy and mediation were cited by 7 (11%), 15 (24%) and 16 (26%) respondents respectively as never been carried out by their supervisors.

There are scientifically proven reasons on why the managerial roles are undertaken at varying degrees by supervisors. According to the researcher this is because the middle-management role of supervisors presents several challenges. According to Moss (2001:23) supervisors are frequently “pickle in the middle”, they are torn between the conflicting expectations of their managers and those who work under their supervision. Further on, the citation of mediation and negotiation roles, although by very few respondents in this study, could be attributed to the fact that supervisors are often called upon to reconcile expectations and policies of the organisations with the needs and concerns of their subordinates. It is therefore suggested that social work supervisors can only be truly effective in their endeavour to support subordinates only if they do not compromise one role over the other.

5.5.5 The relationship between supervisees and their supervisors

According to Munson (2002:10) a supervisor is assigned or designated by an organisation or statutes to supervise a supervisee’s practice and the supervisee is expected to be accountable to the supervisor. All the respondents, 62 (100%), responded to this question. The respondents were asked to rate their relationship with their supervisors because the researcher believes that in social work, the nuclear of supervision radiates from the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. The respondents were asked to rate the relationship as “good”, “bad” or “poor” and to thereafter give reasons for the rating. This is what they shared:

Figure 5.24: The relationship between supervisors and supervisees



Forty-five respondents, (73%) of the sample, recorded having a good relationship with their supervisors; 6 (10%) of the respondents recorded a bad response while 9 (15%) recorded a poor relationship with their supervisors. Two other respondents, (3%) of the sample, provided their own rating scales and reported that to having a “fair” and “moderate” relationships with their supervisors respectively. Inclusively, it can thus be deduced from these results that the majority of respondents have a good relationship with their supervisees.

The respondents who recorded a good response shared a variety of reasons for their option. Of the 45 respondents, 13 (29%) of the sample, reported that their supervisors were always there to assist them especially with difficult and challenging cases and that the supervisors were approachable when they had a need. Another 11 (18%) respondents reported that they had a good relationship with their supervisors because their supervisors were transparent, making it easier for them to openly have discussions with them. Further to that, 13 (21%) respondents reported that their supervisors were supportive and always willing to help, even though sometimes they have many supervisees and 5 (8%) stated that they are able to communicate with their supervisors. In this regard, there were also 3 (5%) respondents who did not provide a substantiation for the good response.

The 6 (10%) respondents who recorded a bad response 1 (2%) reported that the supervisor did not have knowledge of supervision and 2 (3%) others stated that their supervisors favour some supervisees over others. Another respondent, 1 (2%) of the (6) respondents, reported that at an interpersonal level his or her relationship was good but that at a professional level

it was bad. Two (3%) other respondents in this regard did not substantiate the bad response that they gave. Of the 9 (15%) respondents who recorded a poor response, 1 respondent reported that the supervisor has a high number of supervisees hence her/his inability to provide individual structured supervision. Another respondent 1 reported that her/his supervisor does not make time for supervision, with another having stated that her/his supervisor was unavailable to supervise because she (the supervisor) is situated in a different location from her office and that she came to see her occasionally. Poor communication was another reason why respondents had poor relationships with their supervisors. The respondents shared some of the following views, which are presented verbatim:

Table 5.8: The views of respondents regarding their relationships with their supervisors

Overarching view(s)	Reasons thereof
Views portraying good relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She is supportive and always willing to help.</i> • <i>We have a good relationship as she has played a huge role in grooming me to be the professional that I am.</i> • <i>We hardly differ on views.</i> • <i>The supervisor is always transparent in everything.</i> • <i>She is always there to assist.</i> • <i>I am able to talk to her.</i> • <i>He is supportive and always ready to educate, train and advocate where needed.</i> • <i>We have a good relationship, I am able to openly have discussions with her.</i> • <i>We can work together as supervisor and supervisee in resolving cases.</i> • <i>As a newly appointed social worker, my supervisor is very supportive towards me and she guides me throughout the process.</i>
Views portraying bad relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We don't have one.</i> • <i>At an interpersonal level the relationship is good but at the supervisory level it's poor.</i> • <i>The supervisor does not have knowledge of supervision. She is not approachable and does not have the ability to supervise. She sometimes take sides. She has her favourite people. In fact there is no supervision, we just consult her or do peer supervision.</i>
Views portraying poor relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The relationship is none existent.</i> • <i>My supervisor does not make time for supervision and is not supportive in terms of work.</i> • <i>Due to a high number of supervisees, the supervisor is unable to provide individual structured supervision.</i> • <i>The supervisor is always not available for consultation as she is situated in another office, therefore coming once in a while creates challenges.</i> • <i>My supervisor and I hardly see eye to eye.</i>

The respondents gave a variety of responses regarding their good, bad and poor relationships with their supervisors. The underlying message presented by the respondents who recorded a good relationship with their supervisors is that the supervisors were readily available to assist them whenever they need help. The underlying message presented by the respondents who recorded a bad response regarding their relationship with their supervisor is that their supervisors do not engage them in supervision because they do not know how to supervise. Lastly, the respondents who recorded a poor response attributed the poor relationship to the inability of supervisors to supervising them due to high workload and to having poor relationships with their supervisors.

As indicated, there were also (2) respondents who gave their own rating in this regard. One (2%) respondent recorded a fair rating. The respondent shared the following: "*my relationship with my supervisor is fair; I am able to express my feelings although sometimes nothing is done about it*". Contrary, the other respondent 1 (2%) that recorded a moderate relationship with his/her supervisor did not substantiate the reasons for the moderate ranking.

Interpreting the results from the ecosystems premise shows that the supervisor-supervisee relationship is not linear. This is because it has been evidenced herein that supervisors and supervisees can be characterised by a mixed bag of relationships. Some supervisor-supervisee relationships are good, some are bad and some are poor. If the supervisory relationship, as stated by Wonnacott (2012:13-14), is fundamental to the delivery of effective social work services and if there is a direct link between the quality of supervision and outcomes of services then it is the opinion of the researcher that all social work supervisor-supervisee relationships should be good. Both parties should work hard at ensuring that they relate to each other well and effectively. Wherein there are misunderstandings, confusions, disputes, grievances, both parties should air them to each other, and they must be resolved amicably failing which a third party should be involved and/or official grievance procedures must be followed accordingly.

The ever-changing relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee alluded to above is inevitable and according to the researcher, as alluded to earlier, denotes that both parties need to be adaptive in their relationship. In an attempt to unearth the adaptability of supervisors in this study, the respondents were further asked to suggest behavioural strategies, which if carried out by the supervisors, would make them feel more supported, hence the upcoming discussion.

5.5.6 Supportive strategies as suggested by respondents

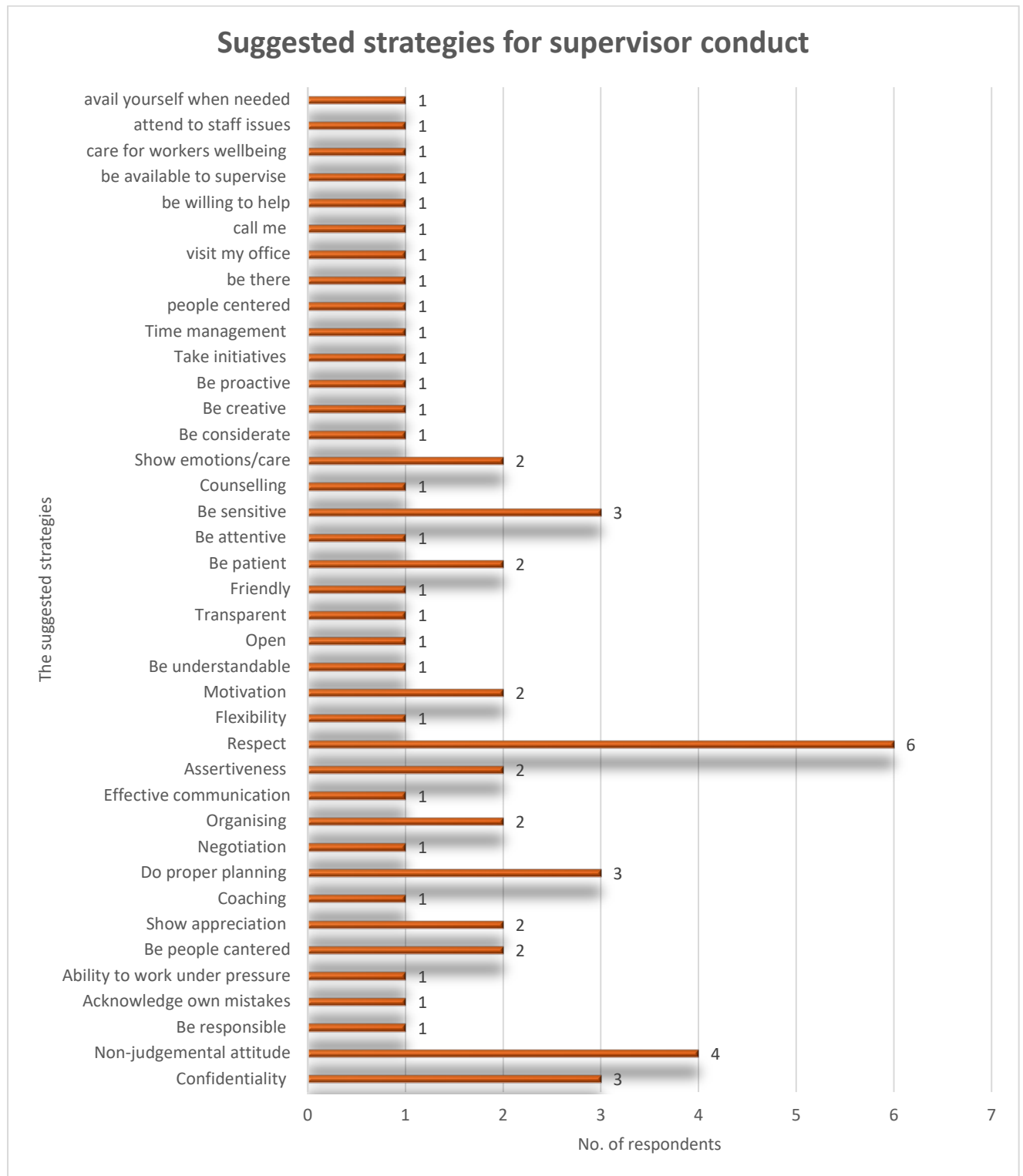
Over and above what has been uncovered thus far, in this question, the respondents were required to suggest three behavioural strategies which if carried out by their supervisors would make them feel supported. Following the identification of the strategies, the respondents were also required to rate the frequency they required the strategy to be implemented. The rating scale “1/daily”; “2/weekly”; “3/monthly” was used to rate the needed frequency. Fifty-eight (94%) of the 62 respondents responded to this question.

The respondents provided a mixed bag of suggestions. Through coding the suggestions were thus categorised into the following: strategies pertaining to supervision, strategies pertaining to client care, strategies pertaining to supervisor conduct, and strategies pertaining to the care of supervisees. Each category is discussed hereunder.

5.5.6.1 Strategies pertaining to the supervisor conduct

Overall, the highest listed strategies were those pertaining to supervisor conduct. All the respondents, 58 (94%) of the sample, who responded to this question provided a suggestion in this regard. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.25: Strategies pertaining to supervisor conduct



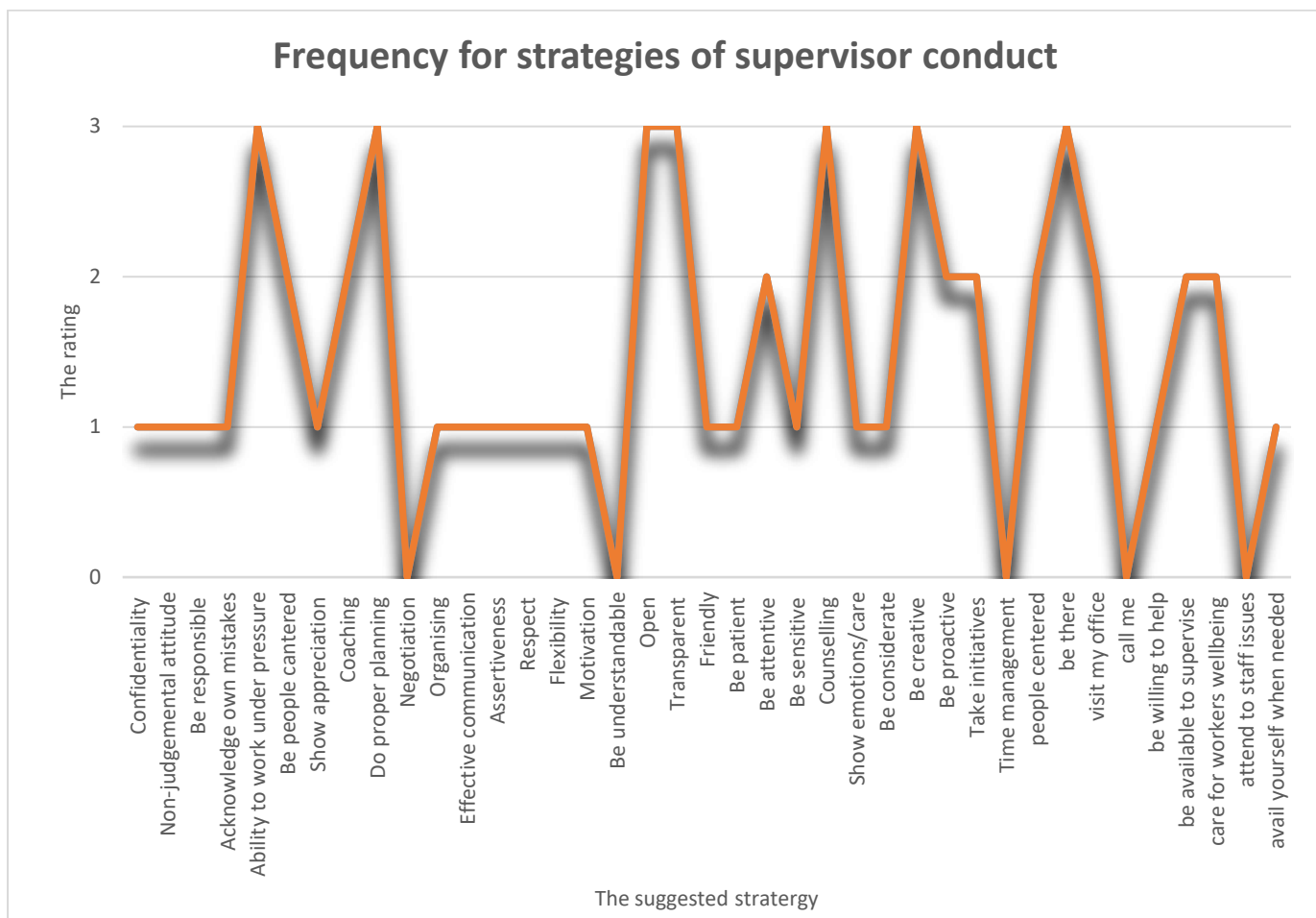
The majority of respondents, 6 (10%) of the (58), reported that they needed to be respected by their supervisors, followed by 4 (7%) who required non-judgemental attitude from their supervisors. The need for supervisors to uphold confidentiality, to do proper planning and to be sensitive was cited by 3 (5%) respondents respectively. Another batch of respondents, 2

(3%) of the (58) respondents respectively, held the view that their supervisors would be most supportive if they were people centred, organised, appreciative, assertive, motivational, patient and if they cared. Other respondents, a combined total of 27 (47%) of the 58 respondents, gave individual strategies which ranged from needing supervisors to be there for them, to being transparent, creative and flexible, to being available to supervise when needed, to visit supervisee offices, to calling them, to care about the workers wellbeing, and attend to staff issues.

The results confirming that the respondents wanted their supervisors to call them to some extent endorses earlier findings in this study that the respondents are not exposed to electronic supervision. The need for flexibility in this regard affirms the views of the participants in the study by Scott (2009:49) who had also conceded that as supervisors they needed to be flexible in their approach to supervision; that they needed to “do with” and “not for” supervisees; and that they needed to be accountable in both their practice and administrative roles. The need for upholding confidentiality and a non-judgmental attitude, caring for the well-being of subordinates, counselling and being sensitive affirms the views of Carifio and Hess (2987:244-245) that supervisors should be like therapists in that they should exhibit high levels of empathy, understanding, and unconditional positive regard, while demonstrating congruence and genuineness to supervisees.

Following the identification of strategies, the respondents were also expected to rate the frequency they required each strategy to be implemented. The respondents used the rating scales “1/daily”, “2/weekly” and “3/monthly” to rate the frequency they required each strategy. The rating scale of “1/daily” overall has been rated the highest in this regard by 36 (62%) of the 58 respondents; the rating scale of “2/weekly” was cited by 8 (15%) respondents whilst 9 (16%) respondents cited the “3/monthly” rating leaving 5 (9%) respondents who did not rate their suggested strategies. The respondents’ views are captured succinctly as follows:

Figure 5.26: Frequency for need for strategies for supervisor conduct



Some of the behaviours the respondents reported required to be undertaken daily by their supervisors are rated (1) and include upholding confidentiality, being non-judgemental, acknowledging their own mistakes, effective communication, respect, patience and sensitivity. The respondents reported to be requiring the following behaviours from their supervisors at least on a weekly basis: being people centred, attentiveness and proactivity, which are rated (2) on the graph. On a monthly basis, which was rated (3), the respondents reported to be requiring supervisors to carry out the following: proper planning, to take initiatives, to render counselling to them and must be creative. There were also those strategies, which were not rated by the respondents despite clear instructions that they should. The behaviours include being negotiators, understanding and being better time managers.

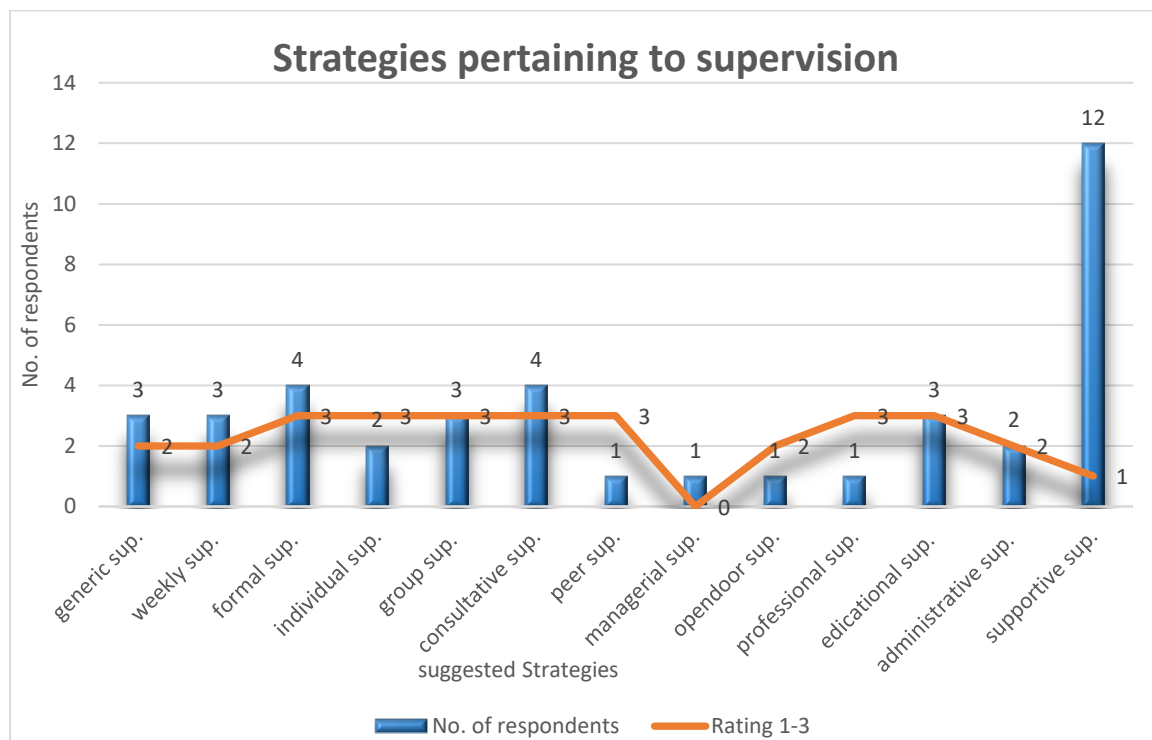
The suggested conduct strategies also relate to the relationship between supervisors and supervisee. For instance, the need for improving communication suggests that the supervisors and supervisees do not communicate well with each other; the need for better understanding suggests that supervisors may be too hard on supervisees; and the need for sensitivity

suggests supervisors are insensitive to supervisees. Consequently, it can thus be deduced that the fact that the majority of respondents want supervisors to improve their conduct also suggests that they are not relating well with each other. This supposition is further supported by the fact that the aforementioned suggested strategies speak to the demeanour of supervisors.

5.5.6.2 Strategies pertaining to supervision

Of the 62 (100%) respondents, 42 (68%) recommended supervision as one of the required strategy that would make them feel supported. Of the (42) respondents, (17) (40%) expressed that the required supervision must be supportive in nature and another (4) (10%) were of the opinion that the supportive supervision should be formal. Another 4 (40%) respondents cited a need for consultative supervision while others, (3) (7%) respondents, expressed a need for group supervision. An additional (3) (7%) respondents wanted supervision to be conducted weekly and these respondents were not specific on the type or function of supervision they required. There was another respondent, (1) (2%), who did not provide a rating for his/her suggestion and this respondent recorded a (0%) mark on the graph. All that which was shared by the respondents with regard to this strategy has been captured as follows:

Figure 5.27: Strategies pertaining to supervision



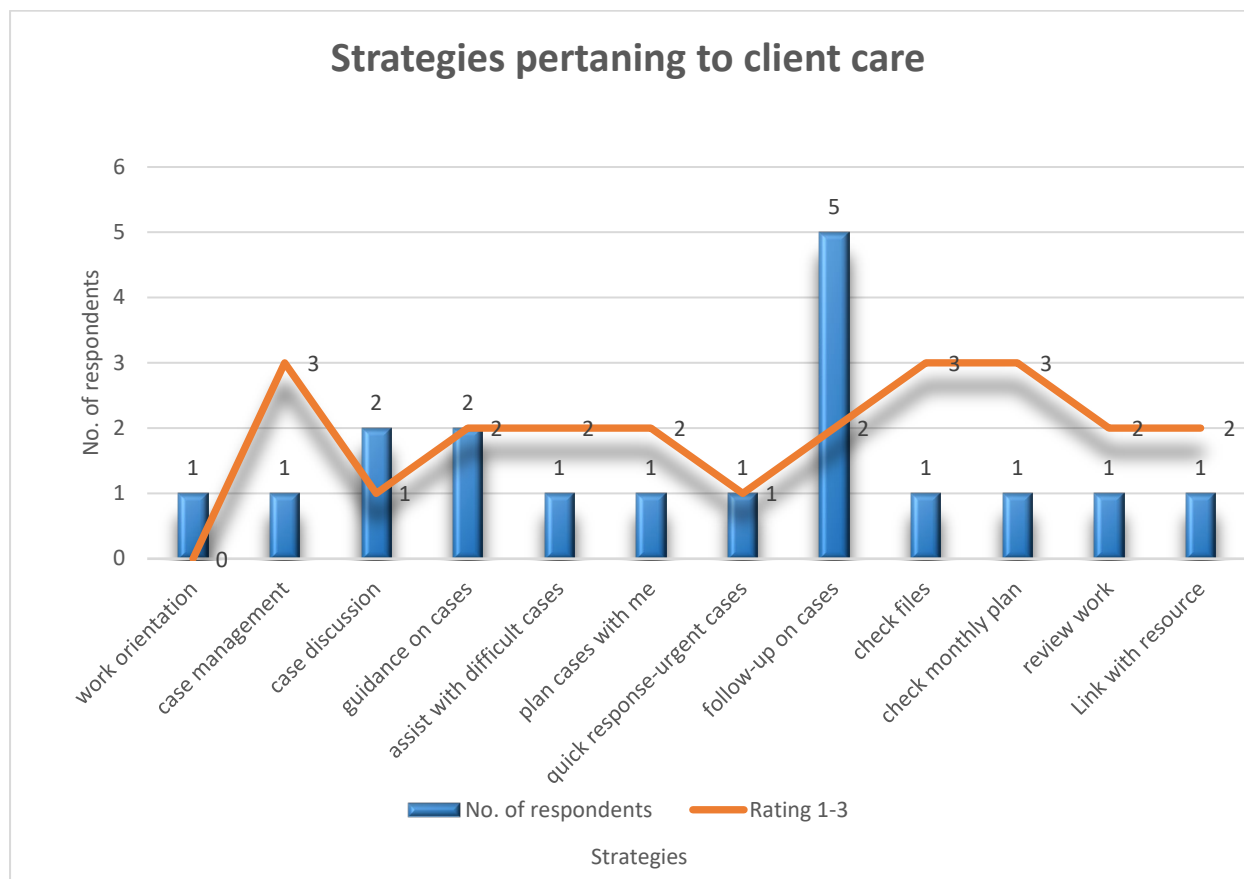
The respondents were also required in this regard to rate the frequency they required the supervision to be conducted using the rating scale “1/daily”; “2/weekly”; and “3/monthly”. Overall, the “monthly/3” rating scale rated the highest by (18) (43%) of the 43 respondents. The “daily/1” rating came second with (14) (33%) responses followed by the “weekly/2” rating, which scored (9) (21%) responses. There was another respondent, (1) (2%) of the (42) respondents who did not rate, his/her suggested strategy.

There was thus a consensus amongst respondents in this regard that supportive supervision should be rendered daily by the supervisors. This sentiment was shared by (12) (29%) of the (42) respondents. The respondents who recommended supervision on a monthly basis reported that their supervisors should carry out the following methods on a monthly basis: formal supervision, individual supervision, group supervision, and professional supervision. Lastly, the respondents are further of the view that if they were provided administrative supervision on a weekly basis they would become better supported by their supervisors. These strategies pertaining to supervision affirm earlier suppositions made by the researcher in this study that while the respondents generally are exposed to social work supervision their exposure to various methods of supervision varies.

5.5.6.3 Strategies pertaining to client care

Eighteen, (29%) of the respondents, from the total of 62 (100%) expressed concern about the support that they get from supervisors on casework and as a result suggested strategies pertaining to client care. The respondents shared the following:

Figure 5.28: Strategies pertaining to client care



Of the (18) (29%) respondents, 4 (22%) shared that they require supervisors to guide them on how to handle difficult cases. According to other 5 (28%) respondents their supervisors do not make follow-ups on the cases that they report to them. These respondents, on average, recorded to be requiring follow-up on cases on a weekly basis. Further, there were 2 other respondents, (11%) of the 18 respondents, who required supervisors to convene case related discussions; these respondents record to be in need of the discussion with the supervisor daily.

Other improvements sought by respondents include, amongst others, quick response for assistance with urgent cases; checking casework files of supervisees, checking monthly plans of supervisees and reviewing supervisee work, and linking supervisees with resources. These strategies were cited by individual respondents respectively. Their ratings were a combination, ranging from daily to weekly and monthly requirements. There was also a respondent who did not rate their suggestion hence a 0% deep in the rating depiction on the graph.

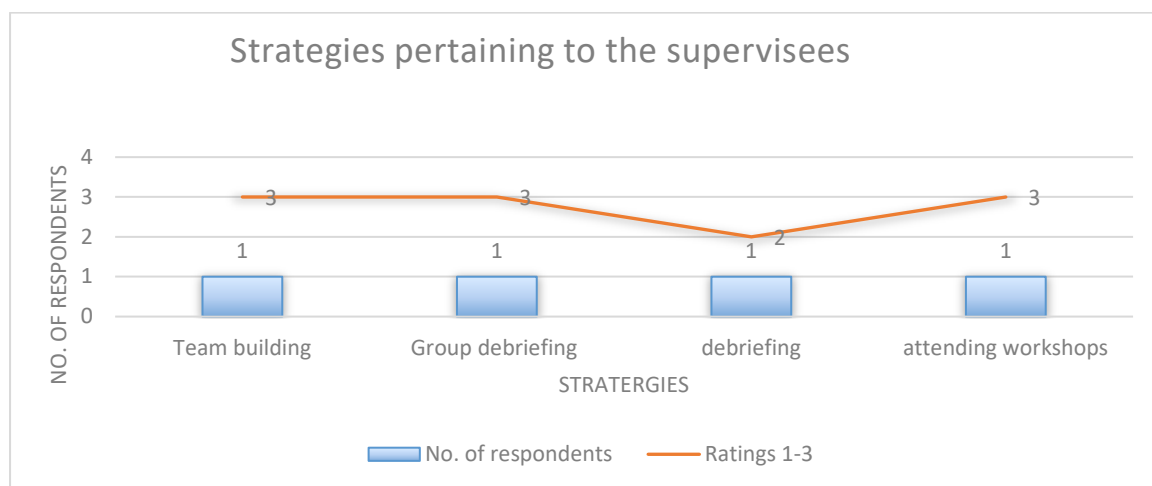
The respondents in this regard made valuable recommendations with regard to how supervisors should support them in dealing with their caseloads. This issue is particularly

critical in South Africa because, as discussed earlier, the current ratio of social worker to population in South Africa is 1:5000 (Department of Social Development, 2015:2). The researcher thus concurs with the respondents in this regard that supervisors should guide them on all difficult cases; that they should respond timeously to urgent cases; that they should convene case discussions with supervisees and to review the monthly work plans of supervisees. To counteract time constraints, the researcher suggests that a supervisor convene case discussions with a group of supervisees where all the social workers' concerns could be raised and attended to and in turn, the social workers would learn from each other's cases. Another method that can assist supervisors in this regard, according to the researcher, is the use of electronic supervision, i.e. telephones and e-mails, because a supervisee can inform the supervisor at any time about their challenges and the supervisor can respond and advise accordingly timeously regardless of where they are.

5.5.6.4 Strategies pertaining to the care of supervisees

This strategy was cited by (4) (6%) of the (62) total respondents of the study. Each respondent reported a need for debriefing to be conducted, and that the debriefing sessions must be conducted in a group format. There was also a need for the attendance of workshops. The latter, however, did not specify how often they needed to attend workshops nor did they specify, which workshops they wanted to attend. The graph hereunder presents these results.

Figure 5.28: Strategies pertaining to supervisees



The respondents were again required herein to rate using the rating scale “1/daily”; “2/weekly”; “3/monthly” the frequency at which they required the care strategies to be implemented. The majority of the respondents, (3) (75%) of the (4) respondents, reported that these suggested care strategies should be undertaken monthly while 1 (25%) respondent said weekly.

The researcher endorses the suggestion by the respondents. She is of the opinion that all three recommended strategies in this regard should be carried out. This is because the goals of almost all team-building efforts are to help group members develop a sense of trust among themselves, open up channels of communication, and to make sure that everyone understands the goals and assignments, and regular review of work assignments (Dyer, 2014:1). Debriefing, on the other hand, is a psychological treatment intended to reduce the psychological morbidity that arises after exposure to trauma (Rose, Bisson, Churchill & Wessely (2010:3). In addition, workshops are mostly geared towards continuous professional development (CPD). CPD workshops are necessary because knowledge base in all fields is growing rapidly, and as the knowledge base expands, new types of expertise are required and workshops can assist practitioners to keep abreast of the development and continually refine conceptual and craft skills (Guskay, 2000:3). These strategies are important to social workers because they will help to promote self-care. Self-care in social work is critical because social work can be highly stressful, as evidenced in the introductory remarks in Chapter 2 of this thesis; social workers need to debrief to keep sane. Team building on the other hand would then improve and strengthen the working relationship amongst social workers and amongst social workers and their supervisors. Lastly, it is critical that practitioners attended workshops to learn new skills or to refresh and harness their existing skills.

Comparing the results from all the suggested strategies, the following can thus be deduced: that the majority of respondents are of the opinion that supervisors can only be truly supportive if they changed their conduct, which in turn would improve their relationships. The respondents also need supervisors to improve the quality of supervision that they provide. The respondents require the support at varying times; some require it daily, others weekly and others monthly. Further, social workers also require monthly group debriefing sessions so as to offload all the stressors they come across daily and team building activities which will strengthen their working relationships with fellow colleagues and supervisors. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that both the supervisors and the supervisees have a critical role in ensuring that social workers are supported. Firstly, supervisors must determine the need for support based on the severity of the presenting problem. Likewise, social workers should also determine and/or influence the frequency of being supported by demanding support from their supervisor as and when they require it.

Following the exploration of supportive supervision, it was also important in this study to capture the respondent's overall perception of supervision and supportive supervision by the respondents hence the next discussion.

5.6 THE RESPONDENTS' OVERALL PERCEPTION OF SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION AND SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

This section is not a stand-alone theme in the questionnaire but its contents were covered in the preceding section, section (05) of the questionnaire titled “questions regarding supportive supervision”. In an endeavour to explicate clearly the analysis, the data warranted a different sub-heading. All the respondents, (62), responded to the questions in this subsection of the questionnaire. The questions consisted of matrix-type questions. In matrix-type questions according to Delport and Roestenburg (2011:201) a variety of interrelated questions are handled in a single question. In this regard, the respondents were required to indicate if supportive supervision was “necessary” or “unnecessary”. Within the same question there was also an open-ended question. With an open-ended question respondents are asked questions and can reply however they wish (Bryman, 2012:246). The reason for making use of open-ended questions was because, as argued by Neuman (2006:286), the researcher wanted to afford the respondents an opportunity to qualify and clarify their responses to the questions posed. In addition, as alluded to by Delport and Roestenburg (2011:198), the researcher also wanted to understand the respondents' logic and frame of reference regarding the phenomenon under study hence the respondents were also required to substantiate as to why they have selected a particular ranking.

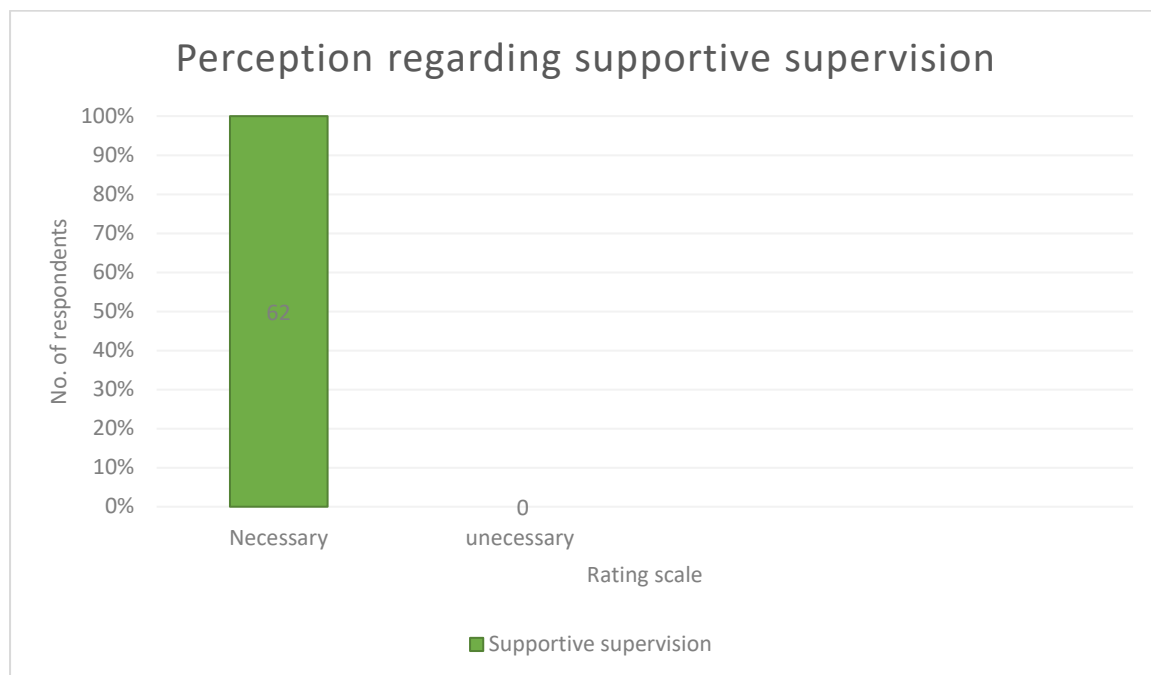
Two questions were subsequently posed to the respondents in this sub-section.

5.6.1 The perception of respondents regarding supportive supervision

The respondents were asked to state their overall perception of supportive supervision. This is because historically, generic social work supervision, which is inclusive of supportive supervision, has always been an important element in social work as indicated by Kadushin (1992:32). The researcher in this regard hoped to verify, validate and/or dispute the views that “social work is built on the foundation of supervision” and “social work has been defined as a supervision profession” (Scott; Harkness & Poertner in Gibleman & Schervish, 1997:3).

In this regard, the respondents needed to indicate if they thought supportive supervision was necessary or unnecessary. All the respondents, 62 (100%), reported that supportive supervision was necessary. Herewith the respondents' views:

Figure 5.30: Perceptions regarding supportive supervision



The fact that all (62) respondents recorded that supportive social work supervision was necessary validated the views by Kadushin (1992:32), Scott et al. (in Gibleman and Schervish, 1997:3); Tsui and Ho (1998:181).

The respondents were further required to provide reasons for their “necessary” option. Of these (62) respondents, 26 (42%) shared that supportive supervision was essential for supervisees to do their work effectively and efficiently; 19 (31%) reported that supportive supervision fosters supervisee care and support. Ten (16%) respondents shared that supportive supervision was critical because it would help them deal with difficult cases and 2 (3%) stated that through supportive supervision practitioners are assisted to stay abreast of continuous professional development issues. Further to the above, there are also 5 (8%) respondents who did not provide a substantiation for the ‘necessary’ option that they selected. Some of the views of the respondents are extrapolated and presented verbatim hereunder.

Table 5.9: The views of respondents regarding supportive supervision

The benefits of supportive supervision	Mitigating factors
Supportive supervision assists with challenging cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A supportive supervisor is necessary because we come across challenges with cases.</i> • <i>It is very necessary because in some cases we don't know how to deal with clients.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>With the intensity of cases that we receive every day, one really needs the help by someone to make sure that services rendered are of required standard and not against the law.</i>
Supportive supervision ensures effective service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supportive supervision will enable us to perform our work better as we would be emotionally stable and alert.</i> • <i>As a new social worker I need as much support as I can get since I need to learn how to deal with clients and new cases.</i> • <i>Social work involves many dynamics that academically one may not be fully prepared for and it differs according to contexts and environments. Support will therefore ensure that intervention is of high quality and responds to the needs of the clients.</i> • <i>It helps professionals to perform their duties with confidence.</i> • <i>It is necessary that we get supportive supervision in order for us to know where to improve and how to improve when rendering services.</i>
Supportive supervision ensures continuous professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is necessary because it creates a platform to learn and promote professionalism.</i> • <i>There are always new developments in our department and to ensure proper and quality services to clients one needs supervision.</i>
Supportive supervision promotes supervisee care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supervisors should provide counselling to supervisees and in turn will relieve social work stress.</i> • <i>Practitioners are human beings and therefore supportive supervision may eliminate overwhelming feelings one goes through.</i> • <i>By being supported, you always feel motivated and empowered in doing your job.</i> • <i>Supportive supervision is very important as our work is very stressful and support is always needed. It also helps us to offload.</i> • <i>Supportive supervision is critical because you are able to open to your supervisor.</i>

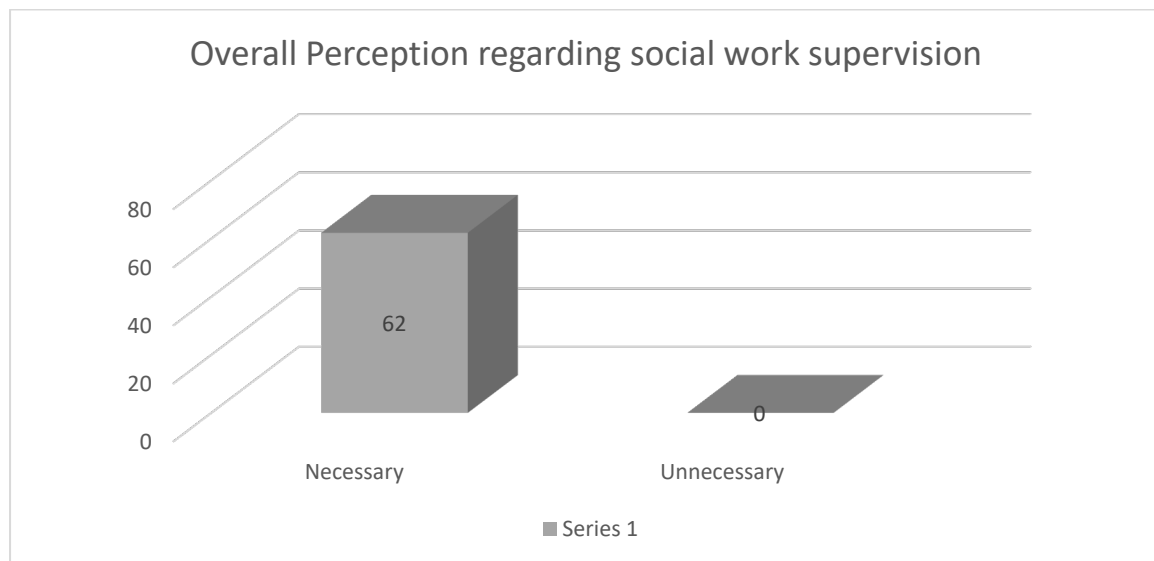
In their reasons as to why supportive supervision is necessary the respondents are reiterating most of the issues that they raised during the discussion of their suggested strategies under subheading 4.5. Consequently, it can be deduced in this regard that the respondents are not supported on handling challenging cases and as a result are concerned about the quality of the service that they are providing. What is encouraging though, is that social workers are aware that they need to be involved in continuing professional development (CPD) and that they should take care of themselves to be able to provide effective services. It is therefore the view of the researcher that social workers can initiate individual and small self-care traditions, which can go a long way in assisting them to distress. The researcher is also of the view that with regard to CPD, the employer, which in this study is the Mpumalanga Provincial

Department of Social Development, should support the respondents with profession specific trainings and workshops. Social workers should also open their ears to learn about the training opportunities that are always advertised, and negotiate with the employer to attend.

5.6.2 The perception of respondents regarding generic social work supervision

There has been consensus amongst social workers, for decades, that supervision is critical to social work practice. During the late 1920's supervision was seen as important because of the lack of good educational programs (Kadushin, 1975:4). Middleman and Rhodes (1985:1) also contended that supervision in social work was special. Tsui (2005:491) and Payne (in Noble & Irwin (2009:375) decades later affirm that supervision is important to social work. This question thus was asked with the hope to uncover if the respondents in this study shared similar sentiments. The respondents were requested to select either "necessary" to support the notion of the importance of supervision to social work or "unnecessary", which disputes the notion. All the respondents, (62) (100%), reported that supervision is necessary in social work. Herewith their views:

Figure 5.32: Overall perception regarding social work supervision



The respondents offered reasons similar to those uttered when they substantiated for the need for supportive supervision. Twenty-three (23) respondents, (37%) of the sample, reported that supervision provides guidance and support to supervisees to perform their work effectively. Sixteen (26%) respondents reported that there are different problems and challenges that social workers are dealing with in terms of the clients that they serve and that they require supervision to be advised and guided to ensure that they render appropriate intervention.

These respondents also shared that supervision strengthens the quality of work provided to the communities.

Twelve (19%) respondents cited case related advantages of supervision. Four (6%) of these respondents reported that supervision gives supervisees a platform to discuss challenging and sensitive cases and untangles stumbling blocks. Four (6%) other respondents cited emotional care of supervisees as another reason why supervision is important in social work practice. The 4 (6%) respondents were of the opinion that supervision is necessary because it gives supervisees the opportunity to discuss everything with supervisors, good or bad, and it also gives social workers an opportunity for debriefing. Further, there were also other respondents, 3 (5%) of the sample, who recorded that social workers enjoy development advantages in supervision. According to these respondents, all forms of supervision are critical to ensure professional development of social workers, which in turn will ensure that social work services are rendered effectively. Finally, 4 (6%) other respondents recorded a necessary response but did not provide a substantiation for their response. Some of the respondents' responses have been extracted and are presented verbatim below:

Table 5.10: The views of respondents regarding generic social work supervision

The benefits of Generic supervision	The mitigating factors
For guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supervision is important for guidance and to be able to do work as expected.</i> • <i>It provides guidance and support to supervisees to perform their work effectively.</i> • <i>It is really necessary as social workers require guidance and support to deal with the diverse cases they encounter on a daily basis.</i> • <i>Social work will not survive without supervision.</i> • <i>Supervision is necessary in social work as social workers work with people and their emotions. And also because social work is constantly evolving.</i>
For effective service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supervision is needed in order for you as a professional to be able to provide services in an effective and efficient manner.</i> • <i>Supervision is needed to assist one to overcome challenges.</i> • <i>It is necessary because social workers deal with sensitive issues.</i> • <i>It is critical because it assists supervisees to gain more information on the scope of their work.</i> • <i>Because social workers' responsibilities are daunting, there is a need for someone like a supervisor to assist.</i> • <i>It provides pure knowledge and skills to the supervisee. It also strengthens the quality of work provided to our communities.</i>
Case related advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cases and the workload are often unbearable, it is therefore important to have support.</i> • <i>Supervision is necessary in order to handle cases in a good manner and to prioritise urgent cases.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is necessary because sometimes you are uncertain about how to handle a case and supervision would be a platform for one to get assistance and guidance which is in line with the governmental regulations, which regulates our practice.</i> • <i>It is necessary in assisting social workers to deal with cases, and the workload in general.</i>
For emotional care of supervisees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supervision is necessary because this is where you get the opportunity to discuss everything with your supervisor good or bad and you also get an opportunity for debriefing.</i> • <i>It is necessary because social workers have high workloads, which may lead to stress and for one to survive in social work they have to be stress free.</i> • <i>Supervision in social work is very vital as it also serves as a debriefing session with regard to the cases we manage and also there are benefits to sharing of ideas with other colleagues during group supervision.</i>
Development advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supervision helps supervisor and the supervisee to identify areas of development.</i> • <i>All forms of supervision are critical to ensure professional development of social workers, which in turn ensures that social work services are rendered effectively.</i> • <i>There are always new developments in our department and supervision becomes a platform to discuss those developments to ensure proper and quality services to clients.</i>

These results are validated by the sentiments of Tsui (2005:491) who also indicates that supervision is important because its mandate is to ensure the professional development and job satisfaction of frontline social workers. Payne (in Noble & Irwin, 2009:375) concurred, stating that supervision is firstly undertaken to ensure that clients are protected; secondly, it provides support for practitioners; thirdly, it ensures that practitioners maintain professional standards and good principles of professional practice; and lastly, that work expected from the organization is interpreted through a professional lens and delivered by professionally competent workers. In agreement, Kadushin and Harkness (2014:20-26) also advocate for the provision of supervision. They are of the opinion that supervision is one avenue that can be used to counteract personal problems from clouding client situations.

Comparing the views of the respondents regarding the necessity of supportive social work supervision and generic social work supervision it can therefore be deduced in this regard that the respondents equated the importance of supportive social work supervision to the overall social work supervision. This is because similar to generic social work supervision, the respondents reported that when adequately supported they are aided to provide effective service delivery; they are assisted with case related challenges; their CPD needs are addressed and they are aided to engage in self-care.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the statistical analysis of data collected from social workers employed by DSD Mpumalanga. The respondents were described by means of the biographical information and their work history. To contextualise the discussion, the social workers also needed to articulate who their supervisors were. Thereafter they shared their knowledge, understandings, perceptions and experiences with regard to generic social work supervision followed by a comprehensive reference to supportive social work supervision. The subsequent chapter focuses on the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the qualitative data garnered in this study.

CHAPTER 6

QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the qualitative data collected from the social work supervisors employed by the Department of Social Development (DSD) in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa is presented, analysed and interpreted. According to Creswell (2013:43) qualitative enquiries study phenomena in their natural settings; it is more interested in how others experience life, and in interpreting meaning and social phenomena. Qualitative researchers utilise field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to make sense of the meanings people attach to the phenomena under study (Denzin & Lincoln in Creswell 2007:36; Creswell, 2013:43; Alston & Bowles, 2003:10).

In this study, data was collected from twelve participants. As already indicated, the data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. Similar to any typical semi-structured interview as alluded to by Edwards and Hollard (2013:29), the researcher had a list of questions to guide the interview. The questions for the interview were divided into biographical questions and open-ended questions. Consequently, the biographical questions and the open-ended questions constitute the main headings of data presentations and analysis. Because of the qualitative nature of this component of the study, the analysis that is presented herein is non-numerical as advised by Babbie (2007:378). This discussion thus commences with the presentation of the participants' profile.

6.2 THE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Because of the dense number of items sought from the participants, the profile information is divided into the biographical information, the work history and the supervision experience of participants. Consequently, it is clear in the study that the participants were predominantly females. Their age ranged between 39 and 61 years. The most prominent ethnic groupings were the isiNdebele speaking and the sePedi speaking participants. Table 6.1 summarises the findings.

Table 6.1: The biographical information of participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Cultural grouping
A	Female	53	Swati
B	Female	44	Pedi
C	Male	52	Ndebele
D	Female	61	Tswana
E	Female	42	Ndebele
F	Female	46	Pedi
G	Female	45	Zulu
H	Male	46	Ndebele
I	Female	45	Pedi
J	Female	39	Pedi
K	Female	42	Tswana
L	Female	47	Ndebele

From the table, it can be deduced that social work supervisors are in the middle age according to Erik Erikson's stages of development (Corey et al., 2017:60). At this stage, the individual needs to go beyond the self and family, they need to be involved in helping the next generation. It is also the time of adjusting to the discrepancy between one's dream and one's accomplishment and failure to achieve a sense of productivity often leads to psychological stagnation (Corey et al., 2017:60). It is thus deduced that the stage denotes that if supervisors do not achieve a sense of accomplishment with their position then they are likely to encounter difficulties in supporting social workers, while those supervisors who perceive their positions as an achievement then are likely to go the extra mile in their endeavour to support supervisees.

The fact that the majority of participants were females as compared to their male counterpart is consistent with the population distribution of Mpumalanga Province. The South African Census 2011 established that in Mpumalanga the proportion of males in the younger age groups was larger than females, whilst in the older age groups the female proportions were higher than those of the males (Statistics South African, 2012:22-24). However, contrary to the above, the findings of the majority of participants being IsiNdebele and Sepedi speaking differs from the official language distribution of Mpumalanga Province because isiSwati (27,7%) is the most spoken language in Mpumalanga, followed by IsiZulu (24,1%) with IsiNdebele being spoken by 10.1% of the population and Sepedi by 9.3% of the population

(Statistics South African, 2012:26). This contradiction in the language distribution of participants could be attributed to data saturation because the researcher ceased the interviews when she began to hear the same information reported repeatedly and she no longer learnt anything new as advised by Seidman (in Strydom, 2011:350). Also, from the findings regarding the ethnic groups, it can be deduced in this regard that most supervisors in the province are of African descent, which is representative of its population categories because according to Statistics SA (2011:18) Africans make 90,9% of the overall population in the Province; coloured are at 0.9%, Indian make 0.7% and white constitute 7.5%.

To gain sufficient understanding of who the participants were the work history of participants also needed to be explicated.

Table 6.2: The work history of participants

Participant	Work Setting	Years of SW experience overall	Appointment Status	Experience in DSD Mpumalanga	Programs responsible for
A	Urban	25	Permanent	25	All
B	Urban	19	Permanent	14	All
C	Rural	23	Permanent	23	All
D	Urban	35	Permanent	15	Crime Prevention
E	Rural	15	Permanent	15	Victim empowerment
F	Rural	20	Permanent	20	All
G	Rural	19	Permanent	19	All
H	Rural	20	Permanent	20	All
I	Urban	14	Permanent	14	All
J	Rural	11	Permanent	11	Social Security Transfer and Administration
K	Rural	18	Acting	13	All
L	Rural	16	Permanent	25	All

Table 6.2 reveals that almost all the participants were legally appointed in their posts, which means that they were appointed in permanent positions as social work supervisors and that most participants were placed in rural settings. It can also be deduced from the table that the supervisors had a minimum social work experience of 11 years within DSD Mpumalanga, suggesting that most participants started their social work careers within DSD Mpumalanga. These findings therefore prove that the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social

Development is compliant to two legal supervision requirements outlined in the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa. It is stipulated in the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa that the supervisor of a social worker should have a minimum of five years' experience as a social worker and that only social workers may act as supervisors for those employed as social workers (Department of Social Development, 2012:31-32). The latter finding is also compliant to the legal requirement stipulated in the Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers in South Africa, which reiterates that a social worker should be supervised in social work matters by a social work supervisor (SACSSP, [Sa]:38). The findings further validate those of Engelbrecht (2015:326), which recommended that supervision of social workers by non-social workers should not be permitted in South Africa. It is also worth noting herein that some of the participants began their careers as social workers within DSD Mpumalanga may point to a decrease in the exodus of social workers from the profession in South Africa which was reported in the mid 2000 by Department of Social Development (2007), and Kasiram (2009).

Due to the fact that the study is on supportive supervision, it was also important to establish the supervision experience of the participants hence the following table.

Table 6.3: The supervision experience of participants

Participant	Supervision experience in Mpumalanga	Programmes responsible for	Number of Social work supervisees	Other personnel supervisees
A	10yrs	All	7	7 SAW
B	4yrs	All	8	7 SAW, 3 Support staff
C	11yrs	All	4	2 SAW
D	11yrs	Crime prevention	1	None
E	10yrs	Victim Empowerment	1	1 CYCW, 1 admin
F	10yrs	All	11	1 GA, 1 receptionist, 2 admin clerks
G	9yrs	All	6	2 support staff
H	9yrs	All	4	2 SAW, 4 GAs
I	10yrs	Social Security Transfer and Administration	0	1 SAW
J	3yrs	All	3	4 SAW, 1 admin, 4 GAs
K	3yrs	All	8	2 admin, 2 GWs, 7 SAW

L	2yrs	Social crime prevention	2	1 APO
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It can be deduced from the table that the supervision experience of participants within DSD Mpumalanga ranges from three (3) years to eleven (11) years. These findings further confirm the earlier findings that the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development complies with the legal requirements that social workers must be supervised by other social workers on social work matters.

In the study most participants reported that they were responsible for all the programmes offered within DSD Mpumalanga with only a small margin specialising in social crime prevention and victim empowerment. As alluded to in Chapter 4, Mpumalanga DSD offers an array of social work services including HIV/AIDS, ECD, children and family services, foster care services, services to older persons, services to people with disabilities, community work, substance use and abuse, prevention and treatment of substance abuse, child justice services and social crime prevention services (Department of Social Development, 2005:21-28; Department of Social Development, 2013:23-40). This finding therefore implies that within DSD Mpumalanga most social work offices offer generic social work services. Generalist social work practice refers to the application of eclectic social work knowledge, professional values, and a wide range of skills to target individuals, families, groups, organisational and community systems (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:107).

Table 6.3 also clarifies a variation amongst the participants in terms of the number of social work supervisees that they are supervising and also the disparity amongst the participants on the number of other personnel that they were supervising. In this regard there were seven (7) participants who had between 0-4 social work supervisees, five (5) had between 6-11 social work supervisees under their belt. The Department of Social Development (2013:25) purports the use of a variety of supervisor-supervisee workload scenarios according to context. According to the Department of Social Development (2013:25) the following workload scenarios are suggested for social work supervisors: 1:13 supervisees for a supervisor whose key responsibility is supervision and located in the same office; 1:10 supervisees for a supervisor whose key responsibility is supervision and supervisees located in a different service office/organisation, and 1:3 supervisees for a supervisor who has added responsibility of casework or management of social welfare services. Similarly, the Generic Norms and Standards for Development of Social Welfare Services the supervision ratio for probation worker to assistant probation officer (APO) is set at 1:2 and in this study, looking at participant (L), the ratio of probation worker to (APO) as set has been adhered to.

In this study, over and above supervising social workers, the participants also supervised the following support staff: social auxiliary workers (SAWs), administrative staff (admin.), general assistants (GAs) also referred to as general workers (GWs), and receptionists. The ratio between social worker to SAW is (1: 2) and for social worker to administrative support staff is (1: 4) (Department of Social Development, 2013:41). It can therefore be deduced in this regard that there is evident variation amongst participants in terms of the types of support staff and the number of support staff supervised. From the table, inclusive of SAWs, it is evident that all the participants were supervising more than five support staff, which is more than the prescribed norm. This finding thus demonstrates that the ratio of supervisor to support staff is not adhered to within DSD Mpumalanga.

On uncovering that there were participants that were supervising SAWs while others were not, the researcher probed the participants further to establish the reasons thereof. The participants supervising SAWs gave a similar response for the deviation from policy, that their social work subordinates were newly appointed with less than 3 years of social work practice, which is why they had to take over the role of supervising SAW also. The finding provides evidence that participants are compliant to the supervision practice norms and standards that in South Africa social workers with three years' experience or less may not supervise SAWs (Department of Social Development, 2013:34) implying that any social worker with 3 years of social work experience and more should be introduced to supervision by supervising a SAW. In the same token the findings demonstrate that social work supervisors are overworked because they supervise social workers, SAWs, GAs, and administrative staff.

6.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting the significant from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework of communicating the essence of what the data reveals (Schurink et al., 2011:397). Data interpretation involves making sense of that data and revealing lessons learnt (Schurink et al. 2011:416). In this study, as comprehensively discussed in Chapter 4, the qualitative data analysis was conducted by means of integrating Creswell's analytic spiral data analysis process and the process described by Marshall and Rossman, with additional comments by Gibbs as discussed in Schurink et al. (2011:403). Before analysing the data, the researcher planned for recording of data, she then collected the data and produced a preliminary analysis. Following data gathering she managed the data further by reading and writing memos, by generating categories, themes, and patterns, by coding the data and testing emergent understandings and searched for alternative explanations.

Through these processes the researcher compartmentalised the findings thematically. The themes were also lined with the nine broad open-ended questions, which the participants responded to. Because of the contrasting responses of the participants in their deliberation of issues in some of the themes, sub-themes also emerged. The themes and subsequent sub-themes include the following:

Table 6.4 Themes and subthemes of the study

Theme	Subtheme
1. The supervisors' perception of social work supervision	
2. The transitional stages of supervisors	
3. Supervisor's understanding of the functions of supervision	3.1 The administrative function 3.2 The educational function 3.3 The supportive function
4. Participants' account on how they apply the functions of supervision	
5. Participants' account on how they provide supportive supervision	
6. The benefits of providing supportive supervision to social work practitioners.	
7. Challenges faced by supervisors in providing supportive social work supervision.	
8. Cultural principles employed in supervising social workers	
9. Support needed by social work supervisors in their endeavour to provide supportive supervision.	9.1 Involvement in formal supervision sessions 9.2 Coping strategies for dealing with inadequate supervision

The aforementioned themes and sub-themes are expounded comprehensively below.

6.3.1 Discussion of the themes and sub-themes

The themes and subthemes are discussed below, chronologically as contained in Table 6.3. Verbatim statements extracted from the views of the participants are inserted to corroborate their discussion as advised by Schurink et al. (2011:402). The verbatim statements are also

set against literature to establish degrees of conformity or deviation from similar and related studies.

6.3.1.1 Theme 1: The supervisor's perception of social work supervision

Supervision is a means of transmitting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a particular profession to the next generation in that profession (Dunbar-Krieg & Fritz, 2006: xvi). In social work historically supervision has always been regarded as an important element in social work (Kadushin, 1992:32). Lamming (in Carpenter, Webb, Bostock & Coomber, 2015:2) is also of the view that supervision is the 'cornerstone' of good social work practice. It was therefore critical in this study to get the perceptions of participants regarding social work supervision that they are appointed to carry out and to establish if they held similar or contrasting views to those of other researchers. The question was also important because the participants' perceptions have a major implication on the way they carry out their supervision duties and how they execute their supportive supervision function. The responses of the participants were thus threefold. While there were participants who held the view that social work supervision is critical to social work practice, some were of the opinion that it occurs minimally and there were also those who said supervision was plagued by challenges making it difficult to execute.

The participants who regarded social work supervision as important had this to say:

"You know I think social work supervision should be mandatory because it promotes the good relationship amongst a supervisor and supervisee and it also promotes overall development in the profession."

"I think it is necessary especially because now and then we get social workers that are coming from school that were never exposed to adequate supervision. They will tell you when they come here that I was placed maybe to do my practical in a school where there was no social worker, I was placed in a hospital where there was no social work supervision so I think it's really helping them. As a new social worker sometimes you need someone to say what you are doing is correct."

"I think supervision is an important thing that has to be rendered to the social worker in order for the supervisor to give guidance, to be there and lead and ensure that work is performed as expected."

“Through social work supervision that’s where we provide support, guidance and advises [sic] to supervisees to strengthen the good working relationship with the communities, families and children within the communities.”

“Social work supervision to me is the key in the profession in the sense that there is absolutely no way that a social worker can perform his or her professional duties in a professional manner without supervision. And I think the other thing is that as a supervisor you are the pillar of the profession because it is our responsibility to build the young social workers so I think it is very important to have supervision in our profession as social workers.”

“I can say that social work supervision is a very important element or part of service delivery because without supervision social workers won’t be able to render quality service because they need somebody to empower them, to support them, and to give them guidance.”

The participants were of the view that supervision was particularly critical for newly qualified social workers entering the field. They reasoned that supervision is important because it affords them a platform to lead, guide and empower social workers thus contributing towards the development of not only the individual supervisee but the profession as a whole. Through supervision supervisors assist supervisees to develop, maintain and strengthen good working relationships with stakeholders, which in turn enhances the quality of service delivered to clients. The participants in the study by Silence (2017:127) also indicated that social work supervision was significant to their profession and service within health care. The findings validate the view by Engelbrecht (2014:124) that supervision in social service organisations enables social workers to flourish. These findings also confirm those of the participants in the study by Carpenter et al. (2015:1) who correlated good supervision with perceived worker effectiveness.

The researcher concurs that social work supervision is critical to social work practice because over and above it contributing to effective service delivery, as argued by Kadushin and Harkness (2014:210), supervision also serves as one of the regulatory tools that professional boards of social workers use to protect the public. The endorsement of social work supervision as a critical component of social work practice means that no social worker should go unsupervised.

In addition to the preceding finding, it has also been found in the study that there were participants who were of the view that social work supervision is plagued by challenges. Those participants had this to say:

“I would say social work supervision is developmental although you are also faced with challenges. If you’re doing generic social work it’s not easy to supervise because we wrote to request that we are given Fridays specifically for supervision but then it seems as if it’s not working because the other one will call a meeting on Friday and the other one has a workshop on Friday and you need to attend those things. You also find that if I’m available at the office the official is not available at the office either attending a workshop, meetings or is supposed to go to court so really we’ve got challenges.”

“The overall perception is that it does exist to a minimal level because you are expected to, as per minimum standard, have 3 social work supervisees, but in our situation it doesn’t happen because you’re supposed to check everything. You are supposed to be an administrator of the office; you are supposed to manage the office and check if the toilets are working, you are supposed to be a jack of all trades but of which you cannot master anything because if you do everything it doesn’t work. Supervision therefore exists to a minimal level because you only see social workers when they have some challenges, you don’t do it the way it is supposed to be done because of the way things are. I don’t know whether it is in Mpumalanga only or the whole country but the way things are in Mpumalanga supervision is not done accordingly.”

“On paper its’ just too complicated, very complicated and it’s got a lot of aspects under it in that sometimes you know it becomes too difficult to cover all the aspects as entailed in the social work supervision framework; it’s very much difficult to actually do as social work supervision frame work states.”

“When most social workers started to work they were not clearly oriented or introduced to the whole process of supervision. I think it was after they had been practicing for two years or three years, whereby we started to introduce them, so for many of them it is a new experience and they find it very...very difficult to adjust to supervision.”

The participants shared the following challenges with regard to rendering supervision: *firstly*, that the Supervision Framework for Social Work Profession in South Africa is complex, thus making it difficult for the supervisors to execute duties as articulated in the framework. It also appears that social work practitioners (i.e. supervisees) were not adequately oriented about the policy, making it difficult for them to understand what is expected from them. *Secondly*, the participants shared that the generalist practice that they are rendering is problematic because it demands a lot and as a result they end up sacrificing formal supervision sessions to attend to cases. According to the participants, the situation is exacerbated by the inability on the part of DSD Mpumalanga to set a structure that promotes formal supervision. Dlamini

(2017) adds other challenges to the mix: that social workers are subjected to depression and anxiety due to financial stress brought forth by their inability to afford basic day to day living. Noble and Irwin (2009:345) also add that as the social work landscape has to contend with a more conservative and fiscally constrained environment, so too has supervision because it is more focused on efficiency, accountability and worker performance, at the expense of professional and practice developments. According to Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015:477) in South Africa an increasing shift towards neoliberalism and new managerialism further impacts negatively on the functioning of social work practitioners and those of social work supervisors.

Because the generalist approach emphasizes five components - client empowerment, working effectively within an organisational structure and under supervision, it requires an assumption of a wide variety of professional roles, it is concerned with evidence-based practice, and involves the application of critical thinking skills to the planned change process (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:107-108), the researcher concurs that generalist practice is taxing. This is because practically it calls for practitioners to be involved in casework, group work and community work concurrently while also ensuring their own professional development. This inadvertently calls for supervisors to manage these aspects of supervisees' professional life, including their own duties and own professional development. This is also compounded by the fact that the supervisor has the responsibility of assisting the supervisees with their personal challenges, in an effort to ensure effective service delivery.

To help ease the pressures experienced by social work supervisors and supervisees, the profession has recommended the provision of supervision services essentially because "supervision is seen as a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systematic context" (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:5). It is worth noting that the challenges faced by supervisors as discussed above point to the fact that supervisors are overworked. The findings also point to a deeper problem, that supervisors may be stressed, which may lead to burnout. According to Brandbury-Jones (2013:254) practitioner stress and burnout are endemic to social work as a practice. Consequently, if supervisors are stressed then the role of supervision in supporting practitioners may be threatened because the undertaking will not be as effective as expected.

It is worth noting again herein that although there may be challenges in providing supervision to social workers, because in South Africa supervision is mandatory, supervision continues to be carried out. The researcher is thus of the view that supervision can only survive if supervisors learn to prioritise and be assertive in how and when they engage in the different

facets of their work, failing which, they will never engage supervisees in formal, meaningful and developmental supervision.

6.3.1.2 Theme 2: The transitional stages of supervisors

Transitions are a recursive part of life and occur throughout individual, group and organizational histories (Drake, Meckler & Stephens, 2002:141). In social work, a supervisor grows from performing clinical social work roles to assuming the supervision role. In South Africa, as established earlier on, a social worker is promoted into a supervision role after years of experience in practice. According to Stoltenberg and Delworth (in Tsui, 2005:108-111); Wonnacott (2012:14); Engelbrecht (2014:131), when they assume supervisory roles as demonstrated in Chapter 2 supervisors have a range of stages which they go through. The transitional stages of supervisors have been clarified in Chapter 2 of this thesis as the novice stage, the exploratory stage, the consolidation stage and the master stage.

The participants in this regard were required to locate themselves in one of the four stages and to give reasons for their response. Five participants out of the twelve located themselves at the consolidation stage, with two who asserted that they were at the master stage of supervision, two straddled two stages and one located herself at the novice stage of supervision. The participants who located themselves at the consolidation stage shared the following:

“I think I’m at the consolidation stage. As I said to you I’ve been now in this position for over 10 years you know, so I’m able to do almost all the programmes and I have supervised many people within different programmes, with different personalities, and so I think I’m at the consolidation stage.”

“Consolidation stage. I think I am on the stage because I will not say I have mastered supervision. I am still learning but I have adjusted. Yes I can work independently, I’m using the framework as expected, I’m conducting supervision without any problems, so I think that is why I said I’m at this stage because I won’t say there is no room for improvement which is why I’m not choosing the last stage... there is still improvement that I need.”

“For now I may consider myself at consolidation because of the reasons that I’ve already said because there is no time of doing all these things so you cannot be a master...you do everything. There is the saying that says ‘jack of all trades but master of none’, as the saying goes it’s like that because you do a lot of things but you cannot master them because you do

not have time to focus on each aspect. You have to do all of them and then sometimes you do a bit, while you are busy with that one the other one crops up and you have to leave that one, concentrate on this one, so you cannot master them all. So in no way can I be the master of supervision as long as the situation keeps on like this.”

According to Stoltenberg and Delworth (in Tsui, 2005:109), at the consolidation stage of supervision the supervisor defines oneself in the role; he/she is adjusting and has gained some level of confidence and independence. Ironically, in this study the participants who located themselves at the consolidation stage regarded themselves as being well experienced in supervision. It sounded as if they have confidence and reported to be independent as well as being able to work independently with the exception of one who complained of being overworked, validating earlier findings in this chapter that social work supervisors are overworked.

The reasons provided by the participants who located themselves at the consolidation stage, i.e. being well experienced in supervision and being independent, are closely associated with the master stage of supervision. The researcher probed the participants further to establish the reasons why they could not locate themselves at the master stage. As conveyed in their responses above, one participant reported that because of being overworked he is unable to master any of his duties. This particular participant used the analogy of ‘a jack of all trades but a master of none’ to express his view. Another participant felt that she still had a lot to learn about supervision as if at the master stage supervisors can no longer learn anything new. This is not true as illustrated by the participant who located herself at the master stage:

“I am at a master stage. I can say that because if you are a social worker from especially that way back, you received supervision and that’s how you learned to perform your duties effectively. I did not start working at the Department of Social Development. I started with the NGOs and so there were supervision sessions, regular supervision sessions, checking, supervising the reports, giving support, educative and administrative supervision. So with that kind of experience that you have, even when you read literature again, you can make sense of social work in practice and supervision. One is able to comprehend and say this is how it should be done. Previous experience also counts because you apply it and if there are differences, improve where you can improve. There is always room for improvement. Like recently, the department introduced this supervision framework to try enhance the provision of supervision by supervisors because it gives you direction on exactly how to do this and then, confirming the types of supervision, also improving yourself as a supervisor with the knowledge.”

By locating herself at the master stage, this participant regards herself as having clear role awareness and of being cemented in the role and that she was able to maintain a healthy balance between own work and the supervision relationship as stated by Stoltenberg and Delworth (in Tsui, 2005:109). In contrast to this expert, at the novice stage a supervisor has recently assumed supervision duties; she is highly motivated but lacks experience (Watkins in Tsui, 2005:110). The participant who located herself at the novice stage in this study placed herself at that stage solely because of the number of years she had been appointed as a supervisor. Other than that the participant regarded herself as fairly experienced in providing supervision contrary to some of the characteristics of the stage. The participant shared the following:

“Honestly I would locate myself on the first one. This is because I am only three years old in this post. Being three years in the post however does not mean I undermine my expertise because I’m a highly motivated person and because I have acted for about two years as a social work supervisor before I got into this position. So, I consider myself to be one of the youngest social work supervisors in the province who are really knowledgeable about the supervision framework and keen on implementing it.”

Two other participants could not locate themselves in one stage but straddled two stages. Of these participants, one located herself at the novice and exploratory stage and the other at the exploratory and consolidation stage. The implication of being on these borderlines suggests the participants have a little bit of the characteristics immanent in both stages. The participant on the novice and exploratory stage has recently assumed supervision duties, she is inexperienced. She is highly motivated but still depends on superiors and peers for guidance. The one on the borderline between exploratory and consolidation recognises that she is still uncertain about her role; she depends on superiors and peers for guidance and that she is also defining herself in the role and is gaining some level of confidence and independence. Herewith the responses of the participants:

“You know I see myself in one or two that you have mentioned. I consider myself as a novice supervisor but at the same time also exploring my skills and what I’m doing in supervision. In terms of the years of experience I am a novice because I am one of the two people who were just newly appointed in this position. I could say this year I would be four years in the supervision post. In terms of exploratory you know I’m still trying out other things. I’m still trying to check other ways of supervising. I am still exploring my methods whether how best will it be for me to supervise this social worker or the auxiliary social workers using this [sic] methods.”

“Of the four I can locate myself in the third and also a little bit of the second one because we also rely on one another. Whenever maybe I need assistance I call other supervisors for assistance so I cannot really say I’m independent.”

These borderline participants validate the views of the researcher aired in Chapter two of this thesis that transitioning from one stage to the next is not a linear process but that a supervisor may master one aspect of the work whilst simultaneously struggling with another. Largely, it can also be deduced from these findings that having prior social work experience does not, ipso facto, prepare one for managerial roles. The study by Moss (2001:57) also suggested that having social work experience does not prepare one for the supervision role. Therefore, the researcher is convinced that the supervisors need to be supported by their managers so as to transition successfully. In fact, the researcher supports the notion of coordinated transition advocated by Savage (2005:50) who calls for coordinated transition of students with traumatic brain injury (TBI) into the adult world of employment. Shields and LaRue (2010:27), in their study on transitioning of nurses from clinician to clinical research coordinator (CRC), also advocate for coordinated transition from one role to the next. Likewise, the researcher contends that there should be some sort of coordination of the transitional roles of supervisors by social work managers to assist supervisors to morph successfully from direct clients care to supervision. The researcher contends that through adequate support from their managers, supervisors may also be assisted in their transition from one stage of supervision to the next.

6.3.1.3 Theme 3: Supervisors’ understanding of the functions of supervision

As discussed previously, the traditional functions of social work supervision, according to Kadushin and Harkness (2014:8) and Tsui (2005:485-486) include administrative, educative and supportive supervision. The participants in this regard were required to share their understanding of each function and because of the voluminous data received, each function is discussed separately as a sub-theme.

6.3.1.3a Sub-theme 3.1: The administrative function

The participants in this study indicated that administrative supervision involves ensuring that supervisees adhere to legislation, organisational policies and processes. Other activities cited by the participants include engaging supervisees in a performance review system; monitoring the records kept by social workers to ensure that correct forms are used to record interventions with clients; ensuring that the tools of trade are available; and making sure that in their office

they facilitate the implementation of the organisation's operational plan. Here are some of their views:

"You know in administration it's all about the procedures, the policies, and the processes of the department."

"Administratively I would think when you're doing supervision you...you don't only talk to the person you also check their files. Eee....here in the office I'm not only responsible for professional staff; I'm also responsible for admin staff, I'm responsible for general assistants so other than looking at their work I must make sure that if they want to go out for field work there's a car available. When a new social worker is employed I must make sure that there is an office and that there are tools of trade so that's what I think administrative function is all about."

"In administrative supervision you do the PMDS (performance management and development system). You have to ensure that each and every person that you supervise you check their PMDS packages one by one and you have to comment. You must then go back to the supervisee tell him or her where to correct then after that the supervisee scores herself or himself then from there you also need to score them based on the performance as you see it. When you score you must be in the know as to what duties that particular person has done; is it correct and in the performance of her duties or his duties; did she or he under-perform."

"You know when I think about the administrative function, I think that is the most important form of supervision because now you start concentrating on the administrative tasks performed by the social worker and then for example we have what we call social work processes. These are all the forms used by the social worker when dealing with the clients from screening, intake, the process notes and the planning forms. The planning forms are new; like we have to plan everything that you do and you have to evaluate. In administrative duties you also have to check the files, checking that all those forms are there. It is not only about checking the forms but also about the information, because as a social worker the most important thing is that you must have administrative records. When you are doing administrative supervision you check if all those processes are there if they are recorded according to the way DSD wants them to be like."

"Okay the administrative part it's where you as a supervisor, you know that there are operational plans that you have to achieve as an office. You have to allocate work to the officials accordingly in order for them to perform that work and you have to ensure that they

are performing that work. You have to make sure that reports are written and the acts that are...are applied in the reports are relevant in order for you to rate them at the end of the year and if they score good it means you've done your work properly."

From the findings, it can be concluded that supervisors have an understanding of the administrative function of supervision. This is because the findings tally with what the literature states about the administrative function of social work supervision, that it entails the supervisor-practitioner accountability to policies, protocols, ethics and standards, which are prescribed by legislation, regulatory bodies and organisational policies as stated by Davys and Beddoe (2010:25). The findings also validate what is said by Reid and Westegard (2006:36) who hold the view that administrative supervision involves ensuring that ethical behaviour and procedures are upheld including accountability and quality assurance dimensions on the part of the supervisor. The findings further confirm those reached by Hung, Ng and Fung (2010:373) who reported that in Shenzhen, Hong Kong, the main administrative activities of supervisors involved monitoring of the fulfilment of service agreements, which were written mainly for a number of cases and/or groups.

6.3.1.3b Sub-theme 3.2: The educational function

The participants indicated that when conducting educational supervision, they usually educate supervisees about the policies of the department and about legislation which has a bearing on social work service delivery. They also indicated that they also educate newly appointed supervisees on how to carry themselves as they interact with clients and other stakeholders. With regard to casework, they identify supervisees' gaps from their reports and then teach them how to handle challenging cases. They also teach supervisees how to compile professional social work reports. The responses further confirm that while there were participants who preferred to conduct educational supervision individually, some preferred a group context. Confirmation of the above summary can be seen in the following responses shared by the participants.

"Educational supervision is eee...as I said to you earlier on, we are given new social workers now and then. My responsibility firstly when this social worker comes to the office is to make her aware of the policies of the department. It is also to make her aware of the legislations relevant to the profession, it is just to be there to educate the social worker on how to present herself in front of the clients, at court and in stakeholders' meetings."

“Educational function includes when there are new social workers, to educate them about our policies, stakeholders and the communities. And then when maybe there is a new case the social worker is not certain about, you have to educate them on how to handle it and how to interpret the acts.”

“With regard to the educational function most of the time I apply it with my supervisees in group supervision whereby maybe we decide to say today let’s discuss the policies of the department or the acts. Maybe today let’s discuss the HR policies then we share our understanding about the policy or the Children’s Act. For us we’ve got this new act, The Prevention and Combating of the 2013 Traffic in Persons Act, then you just share with them what the act is about.”

“To me educational function of supervision is actually when you give feedback to a supervisee. When a supervisee has performed a certain duty, you have to get into the content of that particular task and see where that particular person lacked some guidance. You also have to check what is it she was unable to apply in dealing with task and then automatically you have to decide as to what else you can assist the social worker to get more knowledge regarding that particular aspect.”

“And then on the educational function that is where we sit down and check if maybe there is a gap in the report writing, you then assist and give her guidance on addressing the identified gap and on how to write the report in future. I think it also involves seeing where are the problems with professionalism and to assist the social workers overcome gaps in order to be effective when rendering the service and applying the acts, the processes, the procedures and the prescripts.”

From the findings, it can be understood that the participants knew what educational supervision should entail. This is because the findings are confirmed by the views of Potter and Brittain (2009:25) that the primary goal of educational supervision is to teach workers knowledge and skills, and attitudes necessary to perform their job and to help them integrate these factors into daily practice. The findings are further validated by the 62% respondents in the study conducted by Mbau (2005:64) who felt very strongly about the fact that educational supervision must enhance their skills, knowledge, understanding and abilities to deliver effective social work services for the benefits of the clients. Furthermore, the researcher agrees with the notion of providing educational supportive supervision in a group context as practiced by some of the participants in this study because group supervision is timeous and cost effective. According to Zeiria and Schiff (2010:428) group supervision enhances learning

by sharing peer knowledge and experience and exposes supervisees to a larger number of cases and styles of work.

6.3.1.3c Sub-theme 3.3: The supportive function

According to the participants, supportive supervision entails attending to both personal and work related problems, specifically case work related problems of supervisees. It also involves reinvigorating staff moral and ensuring the job satisfaction of supervisees. The participants also indicated that a supportive supervisor is more than a manager but that at times she must become a mother, a sister and a friend to the subordinate. The views of the participants on supportive supervision are illustrated below:

“The supportive function is where eee...you know you increase the moral of the staff, job satisfaction ensuring that your team members are happy and they are able to render services effectively.”

“In supportive supervision you the supervisor are also a sister, you’re a mother, you are everything to your subordinates. You must know all of them and understand if a person comes to work today...you must be able to see that today maybe something is wrong with the person and provide a supportive role, you know, a shoulder to cry on, a listening ear.”

“When the social worker is having some problems ... maybe sometimes they can confide in you and already they don’t come to work regularly and you know their cases, you have to support them, guide them in whatever situation they are facing. When the person is bereaved or something like that you have to give counselling and support. When they show signs of burnout or being stressed out you have to identify their stressors and check how best you can assist them so that they can be to their full potential at the work place, I think.”

“The supportive part can be personal, it can be work related, where you support the official for her or him to perform the work properly. An official needs to be physically fit, psychologically fit, and emotionally fit so I have to support her. If I see that he or she is not well I have to take care of that thing. I also have to support while doing his or her work to ensure that she is coping with her work and if she’s not coping I need to know the reason.”

“Supportive supervision is to give the social worker support either physically or emotionally. Like for example this month I was writing a report for the other office which does not have a probation officer. I don’t know for whatever reason but I felt that...that the case was traumatic

for me and I felt emotionally drained but I did not consult with my supervisor but I shared with another supervisor. But this means that as social workers, they also need that kind of support because they are dealing with different issues, different cases, which emotionally affect them somehow”

“My understanding of supportive supervision is that you provide it focusing on the emotional aspect because it is my responsibility as a supervisor to make sure that my supervisees are emotionally strong, they are emotionally okay to perform their duties. So if somebody has a problem...I’m their therapist because if a social worker has a problem at home or in the relationship that person definitely might not be in a position to render effective and efficient service to the client. Therefore, I must try to assist this person to deal with his or her own personal issues so he or she can be stable and perform accordingly.”

In this regard, one participant did not know what supportive supervision entailed. This was interesting because this particular participant, like all others, has at her disposal the 2012 Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa, wherein the functions of supervision are outlined. This particular participant shared the following:

“Eh...I think supportive supervision is actually for supervisees who are at a stage where they are able to understand most of the work that is supposed to be done, yours is just to give them support to ensure... to encourage them that they keep on doing what is correct all the time.”

From the responses, it can be deduced that the participants understand what supportive supervision entails, except for only one participant. Their responses are validated by the views of Gibleman and Schervish (1997:3) who submit that supportive supervision is intended to enhance staff morale. The findings are also supported by the views of Newsome and Pillari; Rauktis and Koekse (in Bruce & Austin, 2000:86) that supportive supervision has direct and positive association with high level worker job satisfaction. The findings are further in line with the views of Engelbrecht (2014:129) and Coulshed et al. (2006:164), who state that supportive supervision also involves the promotion of emotional and psychological wellbeing of participants.

Furthermore, comparing the outcomes of sub-theme 3.1, 3.2 and 3.2 the findings evidence that the administrative, educational and supportive functions of social work supervision continue to be critical to social work practice. Mbau (2005:62), established that the majority of the respondents (81%) also pointed out that the administrative, educational and supportive

functions of supervision were the most important functions of social work supervision, also corroborates these finding.

6.3.1.4 Theme 4: Participants' account on how they apply the functions of supervision

After establishing if the participants understood the functions of supervision it was then important to establish if they actually applied the said functions in their everyday tasks, hence the next theme. The participants were asked to indicate how often in a space of a month they offered administrative, educational and supportive supervision to their subordinates. This was because according to Munson (2002:12) for supervision to be effective it must be structured, regular, consistent, case oriented and evaluated constantly. The participants shared the following:

“To social workers specifically, the administrative function is almost every week. That is, I think that is the core, yes... almost every week. And then the educational one, that is where if maybe I feel that there are gaps during individual supervision where for that month I conduct group supervision. I’m able to provide the supportive function almost every day because sometimes even if I am busy with my administration, you know, maybe a social worker or social auxiliary worker will come and say please assist me to do this and that I assist them.”

“Administrative supervision is the one that consume a lot of our time because there are a lot of developments, so almost once in a week we engage in administrative supervision so that social workers can understand what is expected from them, all those kind of things, and for the educational function I’ll say it is once a month as well. Supportive I cannot say its once a month its twice a month its only when a need arises because you cannot predict when will your supervisee have a problem and mention it, continuously you’re doing that so I cannot be specific.”

“Administrative I think I can say weekly. Weekly we do give support to our officials, it happens every day when they are doing intake. There are also times whereby they are faced with a case whereby they will need the input of the supervisor so educational I can also put it in the same bracket and say weekly. Supportive supervision we do that every day.”

The participants reported providing administrative supervision on a weekly basis, educational supervision is conducted periodically and supportive supervision is rendered as and when a need arises. It can also be deduced from the responses that administrative supervision consumes most of the supervisors' time because it is rendered weekly. It should also be noted

in this regard that by assisting social workers with cases, supervisors inadvertently are also supporting subordinates. Educational supervision, on the other hand, was said to be undertaken intermittently by the participants because they looked at the gaps in the subordinates' work and then instituted educational supervision to address those shortcomings. Similar to this study, in the study by Turner (2000:234) every interviewee described supervisory activities that were educative in nature. It is also worth noting here that this finding is also validated by what was stated by the supervisor participants in the study by Kadushin (1974:293) who regarded teaching casework aspects of the job as the most important function of social work supervision.

Contrary to the above findings, another participant reported that she only renders supportive supervision to social workers who have been in the field for long, who are independent. Herewith her view:

“And supportive supervision is more like educational but is more rare than educational supervision because when you provide supportive I mean supportive is provided to...to...to independent social workers who are able to do things for themselves so in most instances it's rendered sometimes...it can be once.”

It appears this participant confuses supportive supervision with consultative supervision, because consultative supervision involves holding sporadic sessions with a seasoned social worker upon the supervisor's or the social worker's request. In consultation, the supervisee can work independently and autonomously regarding the total scope of her work (Department of Social Development, 2012:19). This discovery, although a lone one, calls for concern because all social work supervisors in the employment of DSD Mpumalanga have at their disposal the Supervision Framework for Social Work Supervision in South Africa and in the policy the functions are articulated. The researcher thus wonders as to how many other social work supervisors do not understand the functions and if they do not understand any of the functions how then are they supervising? This one case is also critical because it conspicuously also means that some social work supervisees maybe shorthanded, they are not supervised accordingly.

Overall, with the exception of the one participant, it can however be deduced in this regard that the participants in this study are aware of supportive supervision and that despite their heavy workload as alluded to earlier, they strive to provide administrative, educational and supportive supervision to the social work subordinates.

6.3.1.5 Theme 5: Participants' account on how they provide supportive supervision

In an effort to further disentangle the extent to which participants understand and implement supportive supervision, the participants were required to give an account of one incident wherein they provided supportive supervision to a social work subordinate. The participants shared that they supported social work subordinates by assisting them with their casework while in addition to attending to case challenges, there were other participants who alluded to helping supervisees' resolve personal problems that affected their service delivery negatively. The participants shared the following:

"I can think of many. There is one supervisee who would always come to the office with blue eyes. I could see that something is wrong but at the same time, you know, the situation was difficult to just say to that person what's wrong... did somebody hit you. You need to be tactful, you know. On that day, she was so down that you could detect that if you don't intervene something bad was going to happen. So I called her into the office and we sat down. Then I said to her, I can see that today you are not well, eee...I am here for you if you need me and I think may be the best way for you is either to open up because if you open up you may find that you are not alone in this situation, maybe you can get help. I said maybe it might be difficult for you to open up to me, but find someone that you can trust either here in the office or outside because if you leave things inside you, it could be dangerous for your health, it could kill you. I said to her when I say kill you I don't mean kill you physically but emotionally. I then reiterated that today I'm going to give you a chance if you feel comfortable to talk to me. If you can't I'll also give you a chance to get someone that you are comfortable with to talk to and then she started crying and after that she told me a traumatic experience about personal challenges she was experiencing at home. I then suggested that she consult further regarding the problem with the EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) services here at the department. Understanding that sometimes people are scared to, you know, to approach people within the department because they think their issues may be spread, I also suggested a psychologist I know who assisted me when I had problems in 2013. So after that she went to see the psychologist, she had sessions with him and she ended up convincing her husband to also go to the psychologist so I think that was the supportive role that I played with this person."

"Just yesterday, a social worker had difficulty conversing with a client. I think it was due to language barrier, so I had to join the social worker to conduct that interview together with her but then with the consent of the client and so we conducted the session together. Another instance I also remembered when a probation officer goes to high court for the first time. I am

always there with the official for their first high court case for support and you know this makes them feel uneasy about presenting the case”.

“You know I don’t know if it is support but according to me it is support because, you know, I did receive a lot of new probation officers who were actually generic social workers and it was difficult for them to adjust to being probation officers. For them this field was a little too much to cope with, and for some of them it was difficult to comprehend their roles. I remember a case where a probation officer had to write a competency report, which on its own is traumatising. I had to accompany her to the clients though she was the one who interviewed them. I was there to support her and assist her because the report somehow is emotionally draining because you find that the victims are children who have to go to testify in court and it tends to be too emotionally draining for you as a social worker and you need support.”

“The social worker was new and she handled a domestic violence case, which she did what she was supposed to do for the case. The case was about a woman who experienced domestic violence and continued to stay in the relationship for a long period and when she came to the social worker she wanted the social worker to do whatever she instructed her to do. The social worker could not do as instructed but explained all the processes and the policies that are used when dealing with such matters. According to the social worker when the session ended the client was happy about the direction the case was going to take. The social worker was then shocked when she received a call from the client’s mother. The client’s mother was apparently very angry, she insulted the social worker and the social worker because she was still new she became frustrated and agitated because she did not know why she was being scolded. She didn’t know what to do because I was not there that day and the following day she came to me and she said she couldn’t sleep and demanded we talk because she was very...very frustrated. After our talk, I then called the client and the client said she was sorry. The client explained that she spoke to her mother about what had happened during the session, that she wanted her husband to be removed from their home and that the social worker explained that that was not their core services. The client said that she was happy about the service that she received and that her mother wanted things to go her way that is why she called the social worker and insulted her. The client said she was sorry.”

“Okay...eee...the social worker came to the office and I observed when I greeted her that she was not herself and then I went to her office and I asked if she was alright? And she said my child was admitted in hospital so I hadn’t slept. The child was not well and they had to rush to hospital during the night. I then asked her why she came in and then she said because she had an appointment that day. I then said okay let me check your diary to see who is supposed

to come because I do not think you will be able to provide an effective service, you are here physically but you are not yourself. I said brief me and give me your files of clients with whom you have appointments today so that I could see what we could do. The social worker gave me the files and then I checked on what they were supposed to do on that day so that I could check if I could allocate that work to another social worker, depending on the clients if they would agree. She was able to give me the files and then I let her go to attend to her personal things. I knew it was not going to be difficult for the social workers to continue with the cases, the only problem would be if the client is not fine with the arrangement, then we would be forced to reschedule another appointment. I gave the social worker that support because she made an effort to come to work, it showed that she respected her work.”

The participant who did not have any social work supervisees during the time of data collection responded to the question by giving two responses, the one wherein she previously offered supportive supervision to a social worker and an account on how she has supported her current supervisee, who is a SAW. With regard to a previous social work supervisee she narrated having provided support in dealing with a challenging case, which was similar to some of the responses presented above. With regard to supporting her current SAW supervisee she reported the following:

“On my first year as a supervisor I was on leave and this other SAW was involved in a car accident and she was not authorised to drive. She was practising to drive using the state owned vehicle. She was traumatised to such an extent that she was on an extended sick leave for more than 3 months. So, as part of supportive supervision I had to drive all the way from the office to her home, which is about 250 km away in order to provide her with the necessary support and to make her to feel better. I did this because I realised that should I not do that we would lose this person because she will not feel confident or comfortable to come back to work. I was also worried at the very same time that she will not recover from the injuries she had because she also suffered from depression. I visited her at her home and I told her that you know what, yes, what you did was wrong to practice driving using a state owned vehicle but that this...this did not mean that it's the end of your career; there are still many ways that you can survive this. I said we are going to charge you to pay for the vehicle but that you must know that we still need you, you're still important. I said I know that the reason you drove the car was that you wanted to be perfect in driving so that you can push or fast track service delivery because the fact that we do not have authorised drivers is a...is a limitation. I made her to understand that I understood and what made her to use the vehicle unauthorised. I think after I spoke to her and even contacting her telephonically several times thereafter to check on her facilitated her recovery.”

From the narratives, it is evident that in most cases the participants provide supportive supervision to social work supervisees by assisting them to address case related challenges. Also evident in the narratives is that, in their endeavour to support subordinates with challenging cases, the participants attend to the administrative shortfalls of the supervisees while simultaneously also carrying educational supervision. The participants' administrative support of supervisees involves to a large extent reviewing supervisees' reports intended for external stakeholders to sitting with subordinates as they conduct interviews with challenging clients. In some instances, the administrative support stretches over to also conducting joint client interviews and when push comes to shove social work supervisors also take over the caseloads of supervisees for however necessary in the event that the supervisee has other pressing matters to attend to and is unable to come to work. The fact that sometimes supervisors take on the workloads of supervisees further amplifies the extent to which supervisors are overworked.

These findings are corroborated by a study by Scott (2009:50) wherein the participants reported supporting and guiding supervisees in their work with families. Caras and Sandu (2014:75) carried out a study on the role of supervision in professional development of social work specialists and found that professionals use social services supervision as an educational and administrative process meant to support. These findings are also validated by Kadushin and Harkness (2002: 2014) who reported that through supportive supervision, supervisees are aided to deal with administrative supervision as a source of tension, educational supervision as a source of tension, the clients as a source of tension; and the nature and context of tasks as a source for stress. Secondly, the findings are also validated by Pecora et al. (2010:18) who reported that the practical implementation of supportive supervision includes ensuring that direct line staff receive necessary resources to do their jobs, providing regular feedback about performance through coaching and setting clear expectations regarding the job. Thirdly, these findings corroborate what was stated by Young (in Hoffmann, 1990:218-219) that supportive supervision undergirds the process of the other two principal functions of administration and education because it builds differential relationships which allow each individual worker or student to function well with the supervisor in both the administrative and learning aspects of their shared tasks.

It can also be deduced from the narratives that for a supervisor to be supportive to his/her subordinates encountering personal problems or difficulties he/she needs to be tactful in her approach. The supervisor must be respectful to the supervisee. The supervisor should afford supervisees an option to divulge their problems in a respectful way; he or she should never coerce supervisees to share their personal problems. In this regard, the responses also imply

that a supportive supervisor should know supervisees so well that he/she can read their body language and should be able to pick up when something is troubling them. The responses further suggest that a supervisor should not wait for supervisee to come to them with problems but that when they see that a supervisee is troubled they should take the initiative to call the supervisee privately to their office and offer to assist them with their personal challenges.

From the participants it is also evident that a supportive supervisor should be frank with supervisees; must correct the supervisee when they are wrong and appraise them when they have done well. The responses also highlight that a supportive supervisor must know and apply departmental policies and guidelines. Lastly, the responses highlight that a supportive supervisor is aware of their own limitations in that wherein as a supervisor you cannot assist a supervisee with their problems, there is value in referring supervisees to other professionals of their choice for assistance. Echoing Coulshed et al. (2006:164), it has also been established that supportive supervision may be accomplished by providing emotional support to supervisees, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job.

The researcher in this regard echoes own views expressed in Chapter 1 that supportive supervision is highly characterised by therapeutic support. This supposition therefore affords supervisors an opportunity to utilise professional values when they hold formal supportive supervision sessions with supervisees. The supervisors should thus borrow professional social work values in supervising social workers. As alluded to by Pecora et al. (2010:18) supervisors should respect the personal information that supervisees share. They should respect supervisees by conveying unconditional positive regard. Unconditional positive regard refers to accepting an individual as he or she is, irrespective of their values or behaviours and of whether you approve of those values and behaviours (Van Dyk, 2005:182). The supervisor should also refrain from judgment. The supervisor should not judge the supervisee in the way that the supervisee is choosing to resolve their difficulty. This is because, as alluded to by Van Dyke (2005:183), you are there to help not to judge.

Thirdly, it is important that a supervisor keeps the personal information shared by each supervisee confidential. Confidentiality is the ethical principle that workers should not share information provided by a client or shared about the client unless they have the client's explicit permission to do so (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:39). Confidentiality in any counselling context is non-negotiable. Consequently, supervisors have an obligation to protect and keep the supervisory process confidential and only to release information as required by regulatory boards to obtain licensure or if necessary for disciplinary purposes (NASW, 2013:13). To further illustrate the

significance of confidentiality Grobler et al. (2013:44) have asked: would you share your deepest experiences with someone if you were not certain that these experiences would not be repeated to others? The likely answer to the question for most people would be “no”. This is because no one would want to share their most intimate and private information with anyone they did not trust would respect their information. Therefore, it is critical that a supervisor maintains confidentiality. Likewise, no supervisee would share their most intimate problems with a supervisor without the guarantee that this particular supervisor would keep the information confidential. Confidentiality is so vital that failure to uphold it results in the collapse of any supervisor’s effort to provide supportive supervision.

Lastly, supervisors should also keep records of interventions made with supervisees. It is essential that in any counselling contexts that detailed case notes for every case are kept (van Zyl-Edeling, 2006:111). In social work supervision the records will also serve as the evidence of work done with the supervisee. These records must be kept safely where no other colleague can view them. This issue is particularly important because sometimes supervisors are away and then some other social worker acts in the supervision post. The supervisor must make sure that the records of counselling with supervisees are held in a lockable cabinet and electronic files should be encrypted with a password. The issue of confidentiality should also be discussed with officials that often stand in as acting supervisors. In fact, they should be made to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

6.3.1.6 Theme 6: The benefits of providing supportive supervision.

According to Coulshed et al. (2006:161) organisations offer supervision services to employees or staff because an organisation’s staff is its major asset. This is because the organisation’s whole reputation and future success depends on them. The question posed herein was aimed at uncovering if there were any benefits to providing supportive social work supervision. The researcher hoped that the participants would report and express benefits encountered by supervisees and those which they have encountered themselves directly or indirectly as a result of providing supportive supervision. In responding to the question, a large category of participants reported the benefits as experienced by the supervisees. Only two participants referred to own benefits, which they experienced themselves by providing supportive supervision to subordinates. The former articulated the following:

“The benefits are that these people are motivated number 1, number 2 they are psychologically equipped and strong to render effective and efficient services to our clients. That is the most important benefit of the supportive supervision. And I think the other thing is

that when you render supportive supervision because your social worker will be psychologically strong or emotionally strong, this person cannot do what we call counter-transference. If she meets clients in the same situation that she used to be, this person will still be able to empathise and not sympathise and try not to be biased when she is assisting clients. This is because sometimes if I have a problem as a social worker and I haven't dealt with my problem and here comes a client with a similar problem I might end up misleading the client because I will take my emotions and put them in front instead of my professional opinion. I think supportive supervision prevents such kind of incidents."

"I think it empowers them and it makes them feel and know that they are not alone in whatever they are doing. It makes them know that if they experience a problem or they need their supervisor he or she is going to be there even if they take their reports to court they will know that these reports are up to standard because there is someone who is always there to make sure that the work is up to standard."

"It is developmental. You can see that there is growth because you see when the person is still at point A and then you go to her you can see that now this person is starting to be independent. You see when they are still new, especially the ones that are coming from university, they will come to you for everything and you need to remind them to please complete the referral form, the intake form, writing this SWS 05 especially the SWS11. But once you take them through the process of supportive supervision after six months to seven months you can see that this person starts to function independently and some of the things you don't keep on reminding her; she starts to be assertive and do things on her own so you see now that already there's growth."

"You know as I already said, supportive supervision mostly is applied to social workers who are becoming independent, it encourages them, they become encouraged, and they grow. They have that confidence that I started this case from stage 1 up to stage... for instance stage 7 and all along I was not assisted by any person even my supervisor didn't assist me or advise me and at this stage I'm about to finalise the case. This does not mean they never need help, it happens that they still ask for little advice but it is not that person becomes encouraged and confident."

From the responses, it has been established that (1) supporting supervisees enhances the emotional and psychological wellbeing of social work supervisees; (2) through supportive supervision supervisees know and understand that they do not carry the burdens that come with social work service alone. The third point is that in attending to the emotional and

psychological wellbeing of supervisees the participants use supportive supervision to minimise countertransference on the part of their supervisees. Countertransference, broadly defined, includes projections that influence the way we perceive and react to client (Corey et al., 2017:25). The fourth point is that when supported, supervisees also become motivated to give their best and they are encouraged to remain steadfast, that is, displaying two characteristics, which according to the researcher are important to becoming an effective and efficient service provider.

One of the participants who shared own benefits reported that providing supportive supervision contributes to the development of confidence in the supervisors in their ability to supervise. According to the participant, providing support challenges her because she is able to identify own gaps with regard to supervision and is thus aided to learn more about how to supervise. The other participant reported that knowing that she has helped someone makes her feel good. These findings correlate with the findings in the study by Scott (2009:54-59) wherein empowerment and encouragement were among some of the factors identified by participants as essential in supervision. The participants shared the following:

“I think the first thing is that supportive supervision strongly builds my confidence and secondly it challenges me that I have to read further because there are also aspects whereby I am also not sure. Then I have to go back to the literature and check or even the Acts to refresh my mind.”

“Aaa... the benefit is just that I feel good about myself when I’ve done that ...I feel like...wow...I feel good when my supervisees feel good.”

From the preceding discussion, it is evidenced that supportive supervision is beneficial to the supervisors, the supervisees including the organisations as well as to the service users. This is because if a practitioner is psychologically and emotionally well she or he is more likely to be effective in rendering services to client. In turn, organisations are able to deliver on their mandate. In the same token, it is also critical to acknowledge the fact that supervisors also experience challenges with providing supportive supervision hence the upcoming discussion.

6.3.1.7 Theme 7: Challenges faced by supervisors in providing supportive supervision

Hawkins and Shohet (2006:5) warn that “lack of supervision can contribute to feelings of staleness, rigidity and defensiveness” and that in extremes, the rigidity and staleness contribute to the syndrome that many scholars have termed “burn-out”. Therefore, it was

important to determine in this study if participants experienced any challenges with regard to providing supportive supervision to their subordinates. In this study the majority of participants, ten participants, reported to experiencing challenges, with two reporting not having any challenges with providing supportive supervision. The following responses represent the views shared by the participants who experienced challenges:

“The challenges that we have, challenge number one is that...we schedule an appointment with the supervisee but because of unplanned activities in our sector you end up postponing and to me that is like secondary trauma to the supervisee because this person emotionally is ready for the support but you keep postponing because of other commitments. Challenge number two, some other social workers are not receptive to the support that we offer them as supervisors, they think maybe you are meddling, you know, you are interfering with their personal lives.”

“If you do not have a good working relationship with the social workers it might be very difficult for the social worker to disclose what is wrong so it’s very important to have the good working relationship with the social workers because they can be able to tell you. They need to know that their conversation is confidential and you can prove that by not gossiping with others so they can trust you that my supervisor is not gossiping about my personal issues. It is very much important if you are a supervisor, to conduct yourself as an adult and a professional, somebody who knows when to stop; you can talk with your officials, you can laugh but you...you have to draw a line on where to stop because you may end up gossiping.”

“The challenge is sometimes resistance. When you guide the social workers, you tell them that when you deal with the cases you do 1-2-3 and sometimes some are just ignorant, they don’t want to take your advises as a supervisor.”

“We have people with different personalities so it is not always easy to always provide supportive supervision. Some people might think maybe you are too curious. Some people may not do their work; you will find that maybe a social worker will just write a clumsy report thinking my supervisor is there to fill up the gaps. So, some people may misuse your supportive role.”

“No, I am not always available to provide support. Like I said I think administration takes a lot of time and because sometimes I am expected to attend urgent meetings so sometimes I’m not there, I’m away for three days, I’m away for four days from the office.”

According to the participants in this study, providing supportive supervision to social workers is not always smooth sailing but sometimes they encounter challenges. Similar to the participants in the study by Moss (2001:55), who also reported return dates, having to correct reports and having to deal with difficult supervisees as major stressors in their role as supervisors, the most eminent challenge for supervisors in this study is that they struggle to keep to scheduled supervision sessions with their supervisees because they are overcommitted. The participants attribute being committed to the fact that, over and above their office work, they are also required to attend meetings on various platforms and that most often those meetings are never pre-planned well in advance for them to filter them into their schedules, instead they are always called haphazardly. According to the participants, this situation recurs and it tampers with their supervision schedules. One participant correctly pointed out that rescheduling supervision sessions may manifest itself as secondary trauma to supervisees.

The researcher also acknowledges that such a situation may indeed lead to secondary trauma and adds that secondary trauma is likely to occur because pushing planned supervision sessions to the back banner will make supervisees feel less important, devalued and unappreciated. These findings are confirmed by the views of participants in the study by Mokoka (2016:107) who indicated that at the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg they were not supervised because their supervisors did not have time for supervision. Engelbrecht (2013:463), amongst other issues, also found that supervision sessions were sometimes cancelled or delayed because supervisors are too busy.

From the responses, another participant made a significant contribution to the discussion. She alluded to the fact that a poor supervisor-supervisee relationship also has a negative connotation on the supervisors' ability to provide supportive supervision. The participants shared that if a supervisor does not have a good relationship with a supervisee then that particular supervisee finds it difficult to virtually impossible to disclose any personal problems they may be coming across. This particular participant recommended that supervisors should always handle the personal information of supervisees with the utmost confidentiality as this goes a long way in aiding and abetting a good relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee. This particular participant was also of the view that supervisors in their chit chats with staff should also draw a line to just "chit chatting" and that they should never divulge intimate personal problems of their supervisees. These finding is critical because it validates the notion that "the supervisory relationship is fundamental to the delivery of effective social work services and that there is a direct link between the quality of supervision and outcomes of services" (Wonnacott, 2012:13-14). This finding also backs the researchers' earlier

suggestion that supportive supervision can only be possible if supervisors respect and hold with confidentiality the personal information shared by supervisees.

In addition to the findings by Nkomaza et al. (2016:5) who cited inadequate supervisory skills, lack of support from the Ministry of Health and ill-preparedness to deal with difficult and uncooperative subordinates as some of the hindrances to supportive supervision another challenge expressed by participants in this study is resistance. As captured by the responses, according to the participants, sometimes some social workers resist the support because they view the supervisors as being too curious when they inquire about their private lives. When asked how they (the supervisors) counteract the resistance, one participant reported that for her what worked is that she demonstrated for the resisting supervisee during staff meeting how others are benefitting from the support and by so doing the resistance was eliminated. The participant shared the following:

“Previously when I was supervising social workers, during our staff meeting, we would report on cases. We discussed challenging cases and how they were handled and when we share the information those resistant supervisees could see that the guidance made social workers to be motivated and equipped, that’s how we deal with the resistance”

Dissimilar to the preceding view wherein supervisees viewed supervisors as being noisy, of the participants who had no challenges one is employed in probation services. According to the participant probation officers need and demand supportive supervision. The participant further stated that, as a supervisor she is inundated and overwhelmed by the demands for supportive supervision and the expectations of supervisees who always need her to be readily available for them as they compile criminal case reports and sometimes also needing her to be present when they deliver their testimonies during trials. The views of the participants who had experienced no challenges are thus depicted hereunder:

“I don’t recall any challenge.”

“Really, there is no challenge. Probation officers need, they want that service. For instance, the beginning of this month I was assisting an official to compile an impact report of a person alleged to have raped about 7 victims. The report was for the high court. I had to assist the official, she needed me to assist. They always need me to intervene to assist them to give them the support so that they are confident about the reports that they have written.”

It can therefore be deduced from the responses of the participants that even though supervisors are encountering numerous challenges with providing supportive supervision, they develop ways to counteract the challenges and by striving they avert a condition which Hawkins and Shohet (2006:5) have termed “staleness” in practitioners. It is also encouraging to know that there are social work supervisors who do not experience challenges in their efforts to provide supportive supervision to their supervisees.

6.3.1.8 Theme 8: Cultural principles employed by supervisors when providing support

As an enabling social work process, social work supervision involves considerable interaction and exchange among the agency, the supervisor, the supervisee, and the client, and each of these parties have objectives that are embedded in a specific cultural context (Tsui, 2001:69). The notion that social work supervision is an enabling process in this context denotes that a social work supervisor must be culturally competent. Cultural competence refers to the process wherein individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each (Fong et al. in NASW, 2013:13). The benefit of cultural competence in social work supervision, according to Munro (in Brandbury-Jones, 2013:262), is that it helps social workers introspectively identify their biases and examine them. The mission of social work supervisor must then be to cultivate effective relationships with culturally diverse individuals (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009:75).

Culturally competent social work supervision is especially important in South Africa because of South Africa's apartheid history, which was characterised by racial and ethnic discrimination, and because in South Africa cultural differences are primarily equated with differences in race (Engelbrecht (2013:256). Against this backdrop it was important in this study to uncover any culturally rooted practices, beliefs and principles that influenced, positively or negatively, the supportive supervision rendered by the supervisors. The responses of the participants thus generated two categories of responses: participants who could mention culturally rooted principles and those participants who said they did not employ any cultural principles when supporting supervisees. The following responses are extrapolated from those participants that reported to employing cultural principles in supporting supervisees:

“No....I don't think I've got anything cultural because fortunately maybe because mostly I supervise younger people but I respect them that's the first thing. I know that I have to respect them. I have to give them a chance to say what they want to say not to say everything that I feel is correct so I have to respect them. Sometimes I equate our relationship with my home circumstance; at home I'm the first born and I've got 3 siblings and I think I'm the one who has to respect them more and as a result I think they do respect me because I respect them. So, even with the officials that is what I also do, they are all young...younger than myself so because I respect them they also respect me, I work well I don't have a problem.”

“Cultural supervision involves that during supervision you have to acknowledge and take into cognisance that you are different and that you are from different cultures also recognising the principles of social work.”

“I would say yes I use respect. Respect covers the cultural aspect, it is part of the cultural system and it is part of professionalism. It also binds and touches on Ubuntu and Batho Pele (people first) principles, so I usually tell my social workers that the respect is about yourself, it is something that comes from you and that they should practice what they have learnt at home.”

“I think I was taught not to be rude to people. I was, I don't know if its cultural or if it was what I learned from my studies that I have to accept people the way they are not to judge... both professional and cultural.”

“I think that maybe I do use cultural principles. For instance, most of the social workers that I am supervising are very young so one will come to the office, you know, dressed inappropriately and then eee...maybe I will tap into my culture to say if you're going to go into this meeting you will need to dress like this. If you are talking to a person who is older than you, you need to...I remember we attended an awareness campaign on elderly abuse and so, there were many older persons in attendance of that campaign. When I arrived...I arrived a bit later after it had started. I have a passion for the programme of older persons and I was requested to do a presentation but when I got to the function it had already started by thirty minutes or so. When I arrived I found that the older persons were many and some of them were standing. I also found that my officials were seated in front, I think not...not because they were cocky that they wanted to sit in front but the older persons felt that these are officials let us give them chairs to sit. When I got there I spoke to them and said but our culture doesn't allow old people to stand while younger people are sitting down. I explained that they are old and that their knees could not carry them anymore. You know since then this has become a

joke. Now if we are having a meeting here at the office and I come in late they always give me a chair because they say my knees cannot carry me anymore (laughs)."

The participants highlighted respect as one of the most critical cultural principle, which they employ in their endeavour to render supportive supervision to social work supervisees. Some of the participants also closely linked the respect to the generic principle of respect as encompassed in generic social work practice. Of the participants that cited respect, there was one who distinctly noted that the respect should be directed towards older people, meaning young people should respect their elders while another held a different view but emphasised that the respect must be both ways instead, that the older persons should respect the young colleagues and vice versa. The participant meant that respect should move from supervisor-to-supervisee and from supervisee-to-supervisor. In addition, another participant cited *Ubuntu* as the principle that informs her supportive supervision practice.

In social work, social workers accord appropriate respect to the fundamental human rights, dignity and worth of all human beings (SACSSP, [Sa]:6). Respect in social work also denotes that social workers should respect and work cooperatively with colleagues (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:43). According to Battle (in Mabovula, 2011:40) *Ubuntu* means that each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship to others. The tenets of *Ubuntu* also mean that a person has a duty to give the same respect, dignity, value and acceptance to each member of the community (Letseka in Mabovula, 2011:41-43). From the descriptions, it is therefore not surprising that the participants associated respect in a social work context and respect and *Ubuntu* in an African context. This is because these principles are intertwined. In both contexts the emphasis is on according all human beings respect and is on accepting people irrespective of their race, culture, religious affiliation, language, class, ethnic backgrounds, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors.

The responses of the participants who reported not employing any cultural principles when supporting supervisees ironically also captured the importance of treating supervisees with respect and treating supervisees equally irrespective of their gender both of which are principles governing social work practice. The participants shared the following:

"Not, not as such. I always treat them as human beings, not like you are a woman or you're a man, I treat them equally so there is no cultural practice that I actually employ in my supervision process."

“Most of the time I don’t have especially in terms of the cultural issues, I don’t have the principles. We just consider much of the code of ethics as a profession that is how to render services in terms of the code of ethics.”

Over and above what has been unravelled thus far, the responses to the question posed herein also confirm that supervisors do not reflect on how their own cultural practices, beliefs and principles influence their provision of supportive supervision. This is shown by the fact that supervisors could only cite two principles, i.e. respect and *Ubuntu*. In addition, it is also clear that supervisors are not fully aware of culturally competent social work supervision. The lack of awareness of culturally competent supervision is amplified by the fact that only one participant made reference to the importance of acknowledging cultural differences in supervision as advised by NASW (2013:12). The lack of awareness according to the researcher can also be attributed to the fact that the 2012 Supervision Framework for the Social Work Practice in South Africa, which is supposed to be a “bible” for supervisors as they supervise is silent when it comes to culturally competent social work supervision.

The researcher holds the view that it is important that supervisors reflect on how their cultural beliefs and principles affect their offering of supportive supervision. This is because, as argued by Cook (1994:139), the unspoken assumptions regarding race, and the cultural influences of the individual involved in supervision may affect every aspect of supervision including the establishment of the relationship, expectations for supervision and evaluation of supervisees. The researcher further believes the reflection to be critical based on what Engelbrecht (2013:261) states that, support in social work cannot be successfully provided in South Africa if the support is not culturally friendly. Furthermore, the researcher also holds that a supportive supervisor should, after reflecting, discuss with supervisees about cultural issues, their own and those of the supervisees, which have an impact directly or indirectly on their supervisory relationship and on service delivery. Moreover, the researcher is convinced that in order to offer successful support through supervision a supervisor must relate to supervisees from their cultural contexts.

It was thus hoped that by interviewing participants on the influence of their culture on supportive supervision the participants would have begun to introspect a bit more about the issue and that they would be inquisitive enough so as to want to find out a bit more about the phenomenon. It is also hoped that the evidenced gap on the Supervision Framework for Social Work Professionals in South Africa would be addressed by policy.

6.3.1.9 Theme 9: Support needed by social work supervisors

Although they occupy the middle management positions, it is critical to note that social work supervisors are also employees. As social work practice is undulated by rapidly changing social, economic and political environments (Noble & Irwin, 2009:345; Lekalakala 1999:55), globalization as proclaimed by as Dominelli (2010); Ingersoll and Jayarante (1996) and Garret (2012), and increased demands made on them often with shrinking resources (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006:ix-x) social work supervisors are not spared. If anything, the researcher believes that supervisors bear the most brunt because they should ensure that clients receive the best service despite the challenges. It is thus a no brainer to realise that such working condition poses a lot of strain on social work supervisors. Also, if supportive supervision is a way of fostering performance, productivity, motivation, and the retention of workers as stated by Nkomaza et al. (2016:1), then one cannot help but wonder if social work supervisors are supported. It was therefore from these premise that the participants in this study were asked if they were supported in their endeavour to support social workers. The majority of participants reported that they were not supported by their managers, while a handful reported to be supported. The participants who felt unsupported had this to say:

"I don't think I am supported. It is because I think there...there is a gap between our superiors (managers) and the supervisors. There is no connection. I am...I am not getting supervision anywhere. If I'm stuck unless I call my colleague because I also get stuck it is difficult to call my superior because I think they are not on this level, they are too operational. They don't know what is happening on the ground or they forgot what is happening. It seems they don't care, you have to see to finish on how to deal with your problems. I don't get the support that I need."

"I don't know whether I am supported, sometimes I feel that I'm not. Why am I saying that? It is because sometimes I feel that the work is too much and my manager or the management does not see it and they don't give the necessary support that I'm expecting from them. You know if you're a supervisor you're not going to satisfy everyone. For instance, if my subordinates complain about me they will go to my superior and complain about me and I expect them to listen to both sides but at the same time to understand where I'm coming from because I have got a lot of people that I'm supervising. I am also managing an office but they take the sides of the supervisees. Also, I am looking at the other sub-districts, if you are a supervisor you only supervise social workers and then the auxiliary social workers are being supervised by the social workers but here everything is done by the supervisor. You're supervising the social workers, social auxiliary workers and the support staff and sometimes you don't meet the deadlines and instead of them understanding where you are coming from,

you know, sometimes they will shout, sometimes they will moan and say things that the standard is dropping”

“I don’t think so. I’m not supported. The only time truly speaking I get a call from a supervisor is when one of my subordinates didn’t do something right or when they say you are under performing. They also call if there is something from the province or when it comes to PMDS and during PMDS they will just say because you didn’t do this you’re not going to get the performance bonus instead of saying let’s sit and check the challenges they come down on you harshly. So when your boss calls you know that you didn’t do something correct, they harass you that you didn’t achieve the targets but to support you, no”

The participants who did not feel supported reported a gap between them and their managers because when supervisors have problems they are unable to report challenges to their managers. The participants also revealed uneven work distribution that in one district a supervisor would have four supervisees while another eight and that despite the inconsistencies managers have equal expectations from all supervisors. Participants also reported that managers only make contact with them if either they (supervisors) or their subordinates have underperformed or if supervisees complain about the supervisor and also during performance review.

On the other hand, with the exception of one participant who reported being supervised, the participants who reported to be supported also evidenced that the support they were receiving was inadequate. One participant reported that for her to see her manager she must initiate the contact and that she should insist on having the meeting. Another reported that maybe the reason she is not supported was due to the fact that she never asks for support. There was another participant who attributed the lack of support to the fact she was never adequately oriented on the post to begin with. Herewith the views of the participants:

“I think my manager, the sub-district manager, is the one who gives me support. If I am actually stuck or even the programme coordinators that are located at the district office they provide a lot of support when I’m stuck, I simply call them and they’ll give me information about the way forward.”

“The support that I get I’m not sure about it. The support that I get is not the same as the support that I give to my supervisees. I get delegation to say do this and that, but maybe it is because I’ve never went there and say I needed support.”

“Minimally so. I’m saying minimally so because with me as a social work supervisor I do not have a mentor and I hardly have a session with my manager to provide support and guidance and I am always the one who initiates the sessions to say I need you, I need you let us meet I am stuck, you know. Honestly, I think this is a loophole that is there within the department. But I think they have realised that as supervisors we also need to be supported hence they have introduced the mentorship programme so I think from this financial year going forward we will be supported.”

“To a certain extent yes. For example, as a supervisor I also have a supervisor, my manager, but most of the time I’m expected to perform my work without getting proper support from the manager. I have never sat down and will never sit together with my manager for her to check how far you are with what and where can I assist, things like that. I feel to a certain extent this situation was due to the fact that when I started here I did not get any in-depth orientation. Most of the time when we discuss it is all about the work that is supposed to be done hence I say to a certain extent I feel the support is not there; it is not enough.”

From the responses, one participant makes reference to the fact that Mpumalanga Province rolled out a mentorship programme for supervisors, wherein supervisors are allocated a mentor to help attend to the challenges they experience with regard to supervising. According to Tsui (2005:28) mentoring is an interpersonal relationship between two individuals (the mentor and the protégé/mentee) at different stages of professional development and is undertaken on a voluntary and self-determination basis of both parties. It also comes out clearly from the participant that not all supervisors have been allocated a mentor. It is however surprising that none of the other participants in the study mentioned this mentoring programme. Could it be that most of the participants were amongst those that were not allocated mentors or is it that the supervisors do not benefit from the programme, or even worse, could it be that they are not aware of the existence of this programme?

In an effort to comprehensively understand the extent to which participants were supported or were not supported by their managers, the participants were also asked if they had ever had any formal supervision sessions with their managers.

6.3.1.9a Sub-theme 9.1 Involvement in formal supervision sessions

As articulated in chapter 2, formal supervision is planned and agreed upon by the supervisor and supervisee. These included participants who reported to being supported and those who

were not supported. Most participants, with an exception of the participant who had reported to being adequately supervised, uniformly responded as follows:

“I’ve never. You sit down with your manager when they are reprimanding you for not having reached your deadlines or when somebody has complained about you or if he or she needs work.”

“No... never since I was appointed in this department... it is more telephonically.”

The researcher believes that the fact that supervisors are not engaged in any form of formal supportive supervision is a misfortune because, echoing Harlow and Shardlow (in Branbury-Jones, 2013:264), it is important that someone cares for the carers. Consequently, the researcher advocates for the supportive supervision of supervisors by managers and that the support should be formally construed. This is because, as argued by Wonnacott (2012:64-65), formal supervision provides consistency, predictability and regularities; it facilitates the development of positive relationships; it allows on-going reviews on practice issues and maintains a focus on developmental needs. In addition, the researcher also advocates for contracted formal supportive supervision of supervisors by managers. In social work, a supervision contract is negotiated between the supervisor and the supervisee with the express intention to identify the terms of the supervision relationship (Department of Social Development, 2012:26). According to Engelbrecht (2014:148), contracts should also promote ownership of the supervision process. A contract would also be important in the proposed formalised supportive supervision because, according to Sokhela (2007:95), there is no way that supervision can be carried out without contracting.

The researcher supports formal and contracted supportive supervision for supervisors because there would be innate value in supporting supervisors. The researcher is convinced that when supported supervisors would feel valued and appreciated. Tham (2007:1239) also records that it was not necessarily aspects of work tasks that were a push factor for social workers wanting to leave the profession but rather a perceived lack of human resource orientation, where people did not feel sufficiently rewarded, valued and taken care of that were driving social workers away from their jobs. Further, supporting supervisors formally and contractually would also go a long way in contributing towards staff retention. Ellet et al. (2007:274) also revealed that supportive, quality supervision, consultation, mentoring, and leadership that value employees were some of the organisational factors contributing to employee retention.

Following the determination that participants were never involved in formal supportive session, it was vital to also establish their coping strategies owing to the lack of support from their managers.

6.3.1.9b Sub-theme 9.2 Coping strategies for dealing with inadequate supervision

If according to Figley (in Anderson, 2000:840) all child protection service workers are at risk of compassion fatigue, then why wouldn't the supervisor participants in this study? Also, if, as argued by Gibleman and Schervish (1997:10), the practice of supervision is significantly affected by the agency auspices, it was important to establish in this study how participants coped without being supervised and/or with the minimal support from their managers. The participant thus said:

"You know by talking with other supervisors. Isn't that we've got this supervision forum, that is where we ventilate and share the burden."

"Sometimes I feel overwhelmed to be honest, I...sometimes feel so overwhelmed that I'm thinking I'm doing so much but you know with this little support it overwhelms me. I survive because of my peers, you know, the other colleague supervisors. We share our experiences, we learn from one another because some of the things, you know, I'll just pick-up the phone and ask how it is done so it helps. It also really helps because we can vent about our frustrations and challenges to each other."

"We have a forum where we talk to other social work supervisors and if you can be in that forum you'll think that these social work supervisors are complaining but we are not, it is because we don't have a platform to talk these things to our supervisors. It...it seems as if there is a gap between the offices because as a supervisor you're there with your officials and there is nobody that you can talk to hence I say there is a gap somewhere somehow between managers and offices."

"I cope because I do consultation with my peer from the other office. If I'm stuck I even contact the other social work supervisors from other sub-districts. The other thing that has helped me to grow and be confident as a social work supervisor is the fact that we have the district social work supervisors' forum. That forum is where we share best practice models, we share problems, experiences, you know, it is a support group for us as social work supervisors so that is how I've been surviving so far."

“It is very much difficult to get support although we are having supervision meetings wherein we share all kind of things but it is very much rare that when we are in the supervision meetings that we share the difficult cases that we experience from offices. So there is no support actually and I don’t even consult although we are two here. However, once or twice sometimes I do consult her to check if these things are like this or what can I do. I sometimes also discuss even if the case has been finalised, just to check as to whether I did things as she would do, that is it.”

From the responses it is clear that not being supported made the participants in this study feel overwhelmed. In dealing with the emotions, they unanimously reported that they have a supervisors’ forum and that during the forum meetings they get an opportunity to share their frustrations, their experiences and their challenges. During forum meetings, they also share burdens and get an opportunity to ventilate and offload. It thus seems that the supervisors’ forum has come to the participants’ aid because there was a participant that likened the forum to a support group. From the responses, the second coping mechanism is that they consult with each other, a phenomenon referred to as peer supervision. Peer supervision entails the coming together of social workers occupying the same level of employment to supervise each other and it does not rely on a designated supervisor, all members participate equally (Department of Social Development, 2012:28). Peer supervision can take many forms. It can be either individually reciprocal or in a group of workers with similar needs, approach and/or level of expertise (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012:192). Peer supervision can be sought in one’s immediate workplace or in similar workplaces (different units) within an organisation or externally with workers from different organisations (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012:192). These findings are validated by the study conducted by Hamama (2012:1348) which concluded that workers who perceived stronger support from their colleagues and from the agency experienced less burnout.

These findings reiterate that supervisors within DSD Mpumalanga are overworked and overburdened and it is the opinion of the researcher that things cannot continue as they are instead they denote change. These findings thus call for managers to change their management styles. Nkomaza et al. (2016:5) state that managers (i.e. social work managers in this regard) should change their management styles to include ‘human’ elements of supervision, which are teamwork, information sharing, transparency, affirmation caring, staff health and collaboration. Middleman and Rhodes (in Bruce & Austin, 2000:92) were also in favour of humanising the workplace and described humanizing as the recognition of human dignity in the workplace. The humanisation of the workplace thus denotes that managers should be open to the personal and interpersonal aspects of relationships with staff. In this

regard it entails that managers should have personal and interpersonal relationships with social work supervisors so as to aid them in their supervision endeavour.

6.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the qualitative data collected from social work supervisors was presented and analysed. To contextualise the discussion, the dialogue commenced by profiling the participants and specifying their work history and supervision experiences. Nine (9) themes emerged from the data and the analysis is construed along the themes. The participants articulated their knowledge, understanding, perceptions and experiences of social work supervision with special reference to supportive social work supervision. At this juncture, following the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the knowledge obtained was used to construct the envisaged model for supportive supervision, which is discussed in the penultimate chapter.

CHAPTER 7

THE MODEL FOR SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and operationalises a model for use by social work supervisors as they endeavour to provide supportive supervision to social work practitioners. This emanates from the need for supportive social work supervision that stimulated this study, specifically the recognition that there was no social work model found through literature search that fills this gap. According to the social workers in the quantitative component of the study, amongst other reasons, supportive supervision is important because it assists with challenging cases; it contributes towards effective service delivery; it ensures continuous professional development and it promotes supervisee care. The supervisors in the qualitative component of the study concurred and reported that supporting supervisees enhances the emotional and psychological wellbeing of social workers and that through supportive supervision, supervisees also get to understand that they do not carry the burdens that come with social work service delivery alone.

Social workers require supportive supervision because they are faced with turbulent working conditions daily, which are sometimes compounded by familial and personal problems. Social workers are further exasperated by the administrative demands associated with every aspect of their duties, including dwindling resources for their use as they endeavour to render a meaningful service to their clients. Supervisors in South Africa occupy a middle management position, and although they are willing to support their supervisees, often they find themselves sandwiched between top management and practitioners. Consequently, supervisors are expected to juggle their roles such that they can simultaneously supervise social workers and undertake their managerial roles to fulfil their managerial responsibilities. Sometimes they fail hence it has been shown in this study that whilst the majority of social work respondents were supported, there are pockets of social workers who were not supported. It was also demonstrated in the study that of those social workers who were supported, some were not adequately supported. The supervisors in Chapter 6 also confirmed experiencing challenges in their endeavour to provide supportive supervision to social workers. The main threat to supportive supervision according to the supervisors was their failure and struggle to keep to scheduled supervision sessions. The supervisors also attributed their struggle to being overcommitted. The social workers in the quantitative phase of the study also attested to the fact that their supervisors could not support them because they were overworked. A poor

supervisor-supervisee relationship was also said to have a negative impact on the supervisor's ability to provide supportive supervision.

Furthermore, one of the goal of supportive supervision is to make sure that supervisors keep oversight of supervisees to ensure that their personal and professional challenges do not get in the way of doing a good job. However, in this study, it has been evidenced that supervisors seldom assist social workers with personal and familial problems. This is because it has been evidenced in the quantitative results that supervisees rarely discussed their personal problems and challenges with supervisors instead support was mostly focused on assisting them to deal with case related issues and fulfilling the educational function of supervision. The supervisors themselves also unanimously shared that they mostly supported social work subordinates by assisting them with their case related issues.

Therefore, if supervisors were challenged in their endeavour to support social workers and social workers require supervisors to support them it was thus clear in this regard that supervisors need to be aided in their endeavour hence this model. Through literature review, it was established that there is no model in South Africa that has been developed for use by social work supervisors to provide supportive supervision to their supervisees, as has been indicated earlier. As indicated in Chapter 4, the development of the model is underpinned by the D&D methodology.

7.2 THE METHODOLOGY UNDERPINNING THE MODEL

The D&D research methodology involves the development and testing of practice models, description of change processes, and the application of models of practice to new populations and contexts (Gilgun & Sands, 2012:349). The D&D methodology comprises six (6) phases each with various steps that need to be accomplished. In this study, because of the nature of the study compounded by time and resource constraints, it was not possible for the researcher to undertake all the identified phases. Consequently, as articulated in Chapter 4, neither all the phases nor all the steps in some of the phases of the D&D methodology were undertaken. The model was developed from the first four phases, i.e. project analysis and project planning, information gathering and synthesis, design and early development. Some of the steps in the phases were also excluded from the study, as seen later in the chapter. The first stage, entitled "designing an observational system," and the last stage of early development, "applying design criteria to the intervention concept," depicted in Table 4.2 were not undertaken. The phases and the steps that are not included in this study are beyond the scope of the study and will be pursued at the post-doctoral level.

Herein the first four stages of the first phase “project analysis and project planning” of the D&D methodology are discussed briefly because they are comprehensively articulated in Chapter 4. The brief discussion presented herein is intended to facilitate the contextualisation of the process followed in constructing the model.

7.2.1 Phase 1: Problem analysis and project planning

This phase involved establishing that a problem exists. In this study, the critical aspects of this phase were unpacked through the following steps: identifying and involving clients, gaining entry and cooperation from settings, identifying concerns of the population, analysing identified problems and setting goals and objectives of the study as advised by Fawcett et al. (1994:27).

Phase1-step 1 “Identifying and involving clients” entailed the selection of a population whose issues and problems are of current or emerging interest to the study, clients themselves, researchers, and the society as a whole (Fawcett et al., 1994:27). Because the study was conducted within the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa and because it was conducted within the social work realm and the envisaged model was developed for use by social work practitioners, the population of the study was by default identified as all the social workers practising in DSD Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Due to the mixed method nature of the study, cluster sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed and their outcomes conceded that two categories of practitioners be involved in each approach. As a result social workers were involved in the quantitative leg of the study while the supervisors participated in the qualitative one.

Phase1-step 2 entailed gaining entry and cooperation from settings. In preparing for data collection, as discussed in Chapter 4, the researcher completed the research proposal wherein the research methodology underpinning the study was presented and defended. After obtaining ethical clearance from the university and from DSD Mpumalanga, the researcher oriented the Mpumalanga DSD sub-district managers and the supervisors about the study through an information session. While the supervisors were recruited for inclusion in the qualitative leg of the study during the orientation, they were instrumental in the recruitment of social workers for the quantitative study. The supervisors were requested to inform social workers in their respective offices regarding the study. They were furnished with a request letter and the ethical clearance letter as evidence of the legitimacy of the study, and the informed consent forms for engagements with social workers regarding the study.

Phase1-step 3 involved identifying concerns of the population. In this study, the concerns of the populations were identified through quantitative and qualitative data collection processes. The quantitative data was collected by means of a self-developed group-administered questionnaire while in the qualitative leg of the study semi-structured interviews were used.

Phase1-step 4 entailed analysing the identified problems. The quantitative data was analysed by means of univariate analysis and the qualitative data by means of integrating Creswell's analytic spiral data analysis process with the process described by Marshall and Rossman and comments by Gibbs as cited by Schurink et al. (2011:403). The last stage in this phase is phase1-step5, which entailed setting of goals and objectives of the envisaged intervention hence the upcoming discussion.

7.2.1.1 The aim and objectives of the model

According to Fawcett et al. (1994:31) goals refer to the broad outcomes that are desired by the community that is the focus of a study and specifying the outcomes that are envisaged at the end of the intervention effort. In this study the model was constructed in the hope that it would assist the social work field of practice in addressing challenges with regard to the provision of supportive supervision as expressed by social workers in Chapter 5, the supervisors in Chapter 6 and uncovered in Chapter 8 of this thesis. Consequently, the goals of the supportive social work supervision model developed here are the following:

- To aid supervisors and supervisees in the comprehension of what supportive social work supervision entails;
- To guide supervisors on how to conduct formal supportive supervision;
- To encourage supervisors to tackle the personal challenges of supervisees in their endeavour to support them;
- To give supervisors and managers direction with regard to counteracting their strenuous and overbearing work demands; and
- To combat the adverse effects which may result from failure to support social workers by supervisors.

According to Fawcett et al. (1994:31) objectives refer to those more specific changes in programmes, policies or practices that contribute to the broader goal. In this study the objectives, as advised by Fawcett et al. (1994:31), are also directly linked to the development of a model. Prinsloo (in De Vos & Strydom, 2011:480) and Mathekga (2017:220-221) also

approached the objectives in the development of their interventions in a similar way. Consequently, the objectives of the supportive social work supervision model are the following:

- To conduct a literature review on existing social work supervision models with specific reference to supportive social work supervision models so as to identify replicable procedural elements for use in the construction of the model;
- To present the philosophical underpinning of the model and guidance on its usage;
- To develop the supportive social work supervision model.

Following the determination of the goals and objectives for the model, the researcher synthesised all the information that she had gathered.

7.2.1.2 Phase 2: Information gathering and synthesis

According to Bailey-Dempsey and Reid (1996:213) during this phase the researcher begins a daunting task of retrieving, organizing, and analysing information that must be instructive during the design phase. The key steps of this phase, as conveyed in Table 7.1 below, include using existing information sources, studying natural examples and identifying functional elements of successful models.

Phase2–step1 involved using existing information sources. This step calls for researchers to examine selected empirical research, reported practice, and identified innovations relevant to the social and health concern under study (Fawcett et al., 1994:32). Boyer (in Fawcett et al., 1994:32) encourages researchers to establish new linkages between concepts and methods extrapolated from various disciplines. In this study, the researcher undertook a comprehensive literature review as depicted by Chapters 2 and 3 to examine what other researchers have covered on the subject “social work supervision” in general and what has been covered regarding “supportive social work supervision”. These searches were conducted comprehensively within the field of social work and as advised by Fawcett et al. (1994:32). The researcher also extended the discussion by infusing literature publications from disciplines such as psychology, sociology and health studies. To aid in the development of the model, the researcher also conducted a comprehensive review of South African literature to identify and evaluate any existing social work supportive supervision models. It was critical to conduct the said review because the researcher did not want to reinvent the wheel but needed to make sure that the envisioned model would make a valuable contribution to social work literature and practice.

7.2.2.1 Existing supportive social work supervision models and programmes

The tendency in social work is that supervisors make use of therapeutic models, perspectives and theories intended for interventions with clients to facilitate supervision (Tsui, 2001:27). Further, clinical supervisors adopt therapy theories as models for supervision because there is a dearth of information regarding formal social work supervision and because the therapy theories are already well developed. Supervisors also adopt therapy theories because these theories offer guidance on skills; the use of therapy as a model also allows supervisors to build on what they already know; and lastly, because the formats of therapy and supervision are related. Kadushin, Berger, Gilbert and DE ST Aubin (2009:180) in their review of models and methods in hospital social work supervision perpetuates this notion because they discuss casework model, individual supervision model, group supervision model, peer supervision model and team supervision model.

The researcher is convinced that the practice of using therapeutic models in supervision is not entirely incorrect nor appropriate because in a supervision context, a supervisee is a client of a supervisor. The researcher is also convinced that there are features so unique to a social work supervisor-supervisee relationship that warrants a specific and unique supervision model. The differences include the fact that social work supervisors and the supervisees are colleagues and secondly, the collegial relationship between the two has the potential of turning itself inside out or upside down wherein a supervisee may be promoted to a senior post, thereby making the supervisee get to supervise or manage one who was previously their supervisor. Thirdly, the supervision relationship is mandatory, which compels the two to interact and engage with each other and lastly, their interaction has consequences for service delivery.

Models of social work supervision are also critical because “without a model, the supervisor may not conceptualize and understand the process of supervision in a holistic manner” (Tsui, 2001:25). During the literature review on social work models, the researcher strove to uncover South Africa’s stance on the matter but instead found more of international models, which pushed for the development of a contextually-bound and culturally sensitive supportive supervision agenda.

In this regard, over and above reviewing the models of social work supervision by Kadushin et al. (2009:180) discussed above, the Johari window model, the transactional analysis model and the Karpman drama triangle model discussed briefly by Engelbrecht (2014:148-150) were also reviewed. Practice theory as a model, structural-functional models, agency models,

interactional process models and the feminist partnership model as discussed by Tsui and Ho (1997:186-193) were also reviewed. This review was extended to examine the developmental models of supervision, i.e. Stoltenberg's model, Loganbill, Hardy and Delowrth's model and Blocher's cognitive developmental approach discussed by Holloway (1987:210-212). Other models reviewed in this regard are the following:

Table 7.1: Existing social work supervision models/programmes

Social work supervision models	Source(s)	The premise of the model(s)
Operationalising a competence model of supervision to empower social workers and students in South Africa	Engelbrecht (2004)	In this article the value of the competence model for the supervision of social workers/students in South Africa is demonstrated by showing that it is situation-relevant in the local environment.
A community-based model of supervision for child and youth care workers employed in the Isibindi model of care in South Africa	Scott (2009)	The Isibindi model is an innovative, effective, and locally directed child and youth care intervention that trains indigenous adults to work with child-headed households and families affected by the AIDS pandemic.
A life coaching programme for the support of social work students within an open and distance learning context	Botha (2014)	The support programme is based on life coaching principles and techniques as well as the socio-critical model for improving student success in open and distance learning at UNISA.
Person-centred mentoring model (PMM)	Wong, Wong and Ishiyama (2013)	The model is said to have the following benefits: empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence; the conditions give supervisees a voice with regard to their cultures and beliefs; a non-directive approach which facilitates self-actualisation and self-evaluation and mentoring which facilitates personal and professional development.
The reflective learning model: Supervision of social work students	Davys and Beddoe (2009).	The model identifies the importance of both facilitative and didactic interventions within effective supervision.
The job strain (job demands-control) model	Taylor (2008)	The job strain model examines the demands made on workers and the degree to which they perceive control over the tasks that they needed to perform
The Integrative Supervision Model (ISM)	Smith, Russell and Giddings (2007)	The ISM is designed to provide supervisees with a comprehensive review of the social work knowledge base and to facilitate their integration and application of the knowledge base, values, and skills into professional clinical practice.

Peer collaboration: A model for field instructor development and support	Barlow, Rogers and Coleman (2003).	The peer collaboration model aims to improve instructional competency through the development of critically reflective teaching practices
Web of voices involved in social supervision story	O'Donoghue (2002)	The model highlights the need for social workers and their supervisors to develop a kaleidoscope of lenses, which captures the global, local and personal pictures.
Field work supervision model	Davys and Beddoe (2000).	The model is located within a 'map' of the placement process and within a broader understanding of learning milieu of fieldwork placement. The authors have also included an integration of adult learning theory within the supervisory process in the development of the model
The supportive model of organisational behaviour	Likert in Hopkins (1997)	It espoused supportive leadership and relationships which enhance personal worth and ultimately, organisational effectiveness
A comprehensive model of social work supervision	Tsui and Ho (1997)	With the model, the supervisory relationship and supervisory process were reconceptualised. The influence of culture was emphasised.

As enunciated earlier, none of the models reviewed were designed to aid social work supervisors in their bid to provide supportive social work supervision. Apparently then, supervisors currently cherry-pick traits for own use as they strive to support social workers. For instance, social work supervisors in their endeavour to support social workers could learn from the reflective learning model the components of facilitative and didactic intervention techniques; supervisors through the ISM could learn techniques on how to assist supervisees to integrate and apply their knowledge base, values, and skills into professional clinical practice. The supportive model of organisational behaviour, on the other hand, emphasises that the manager should lead their employees by setting a good example, being available and by being involved in the various work tasks and as such supervisors could learn to become better involved with the work of their supervisees, which would enhance their supportive role. Reviewing these interventions was beneficial because they served as a source of reference on how the researcher could also approach the construction of the proposed model.

After using existing sources, the researcher embarked on phase2–step2, which entailed studying natural examples. Studying natural examples in the context of developing a model entailed observing how community members faced with the problem have attempted to address it (Wolf & Ramp in Fawcett et al., 1994:32). Fawcett et al. (1994:32-33) advise that natural examples may be studied by conducting interviews with people who have actually experienced the problem or those with knowledge about it because they provide insight into which interventions might or might not succeed and the variables that may affect such success.

The ‘natural examples’ in this study refer to those individuals for whom the proposed supportive supervision model is intended and those individuals to whom the model is applied. As discussed earlier, the DSD social work supervisors tasked with providing supportive supervision and the social work supervisees who are targeted for support using the model served as the natural examples in this study. The quantitative data was collected by means of a self-developed and self-administered questionnaire from supervisees, while interviews were conducted with the supervisors for the qualitative part of the study. The comprehensive process undertaken in this regard is described under the heading “data collection methods” in phase 1-step1 contained in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Furthermore, the researcher identified functional elements of successful models, which is phase2-step3 of the D&D methodology. This step called for the researcher to analyse the critical features of successful and unsuccessful programmes and practices that have previously addressed the problem of interest (Fawcett et al., 1994:33). Owing to the prescripts

of this step, the researcher immersed herself in reading different policies, programmes, and practice guidelines adopted by the National Department of Social Development, which guide social workers employed by DSD Mpumalanga in offering supportive supervision. As evidenced in Chapter 3, amongst others, the researcher reviewed the ISDM, the Policy for Social Service Practitioners, and the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa and the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers, the Generic Norms and Standards for Social Welfare Service, and the Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Work.

From the policies, what was critical to note was the legal requirements for the provision of supportive supervision, that supportive supervision should be provided ethically and within social work values and principles and that the support should be rendered within the prescribed norms and standards for social work supervision. After all the investigation and synthesis of knowledge regarding supportive supervision, the model was designed.

7.2.3 Phase 3: Design

As illustrated in Table 4.2, two tasks are associated with this phase, viz. designing an observational system and specifying procedural elements of the intervention. However, as indicated earlier, only phase3-step2 “specifying procedural elements of the intervention” was carried out. Also, as articulated earlier, the excluded step is beyond the scope of this study and shall be pursued at the post-doctoral level.

Specifying procedural elements of the intervention refers to studying naturally occurring innovations and other prototypes for the identification of procedural elements for use in the intervention (Fawcett et al., 1994:35). The procedural elements included the use of information, skills and training for their acquisition, environmental change strategies, policy change, enforcement strategies and reinforcement, or punishment procedures that should be specified in enough detail so that, where necessary, they are replicated (Fawcett et al., 1994:35). According to Bailey-Dempsey and Reid (1996:213), the researcher relied on knowledge gained during the information retrieval and synthesis phase and also her own practice and wisdom to design social work intervention models.

Likewise, the researcher relied on the information and knowledge acquired from the literature review chapters, Chapter 2 and 3. The researcher also documented possible procedural elements from the models and programmes depicted in Table 7.1 and the policies consulted. Most importantly, the procedural elements are also derived from the results and the findings

of the quantitative and the qualitative data collection and analysis processes. The latter processes were the most critical in this regard because, echoing Morelli (2007:5), a real understanding of a situation is only possible when focus is directed at local instances. Again, the latter processes were the most critical in the development of the model because “the most effective methods of cultivating social innovation start from the presumption that people are competent interpreters of their own lives and competent solvers of their own problems” (Mulgan, 2006:150). Further, because the theoretical foundation of the study is the ecosystems approach, the researcher was influenced by the PIE construct in developing the model.

Therefore, without a set scientifically proven process on how to design a D&D methodology in this study, aspects of the process for programme formulation followed by Kettner and Daley (1988:99-110) and parts of the model development processes followed by Rothman (1991:520-527), Tsui and Ho (1997:181-201) and Mathekga (2017:214-240) are assimilated and interwoven to articulate the procedural elements of the model. The procedural elements entail outlining the philosophy of the model, the model throughputs, the tasks associated with rendering supportive supervision and explicating how the model should be interpreted. But before the procedural elements are articulated, the proposed model needed to be schematically presented.

7.2.4 Phase 4: Early development and pilot testing

The phase of early development and pilot testing is the fourth phase in D&D methodology. This phase consists of two stages, phase4-step1: Developing a prototype or preliminary Intervention and phase 4-step2: Conducting a pilot test of the prototype. According to Fawcett et al. (1994:36) during phase4-step1 “Developing a prototype or preliminary intervention”, the preliminary procedures of the envisaged intervention are selected and specified and the mode of delivery is also selected and established. Following this sage advice, the model is illustrated herein.

7.2.4.1 The Schematic representation of the model

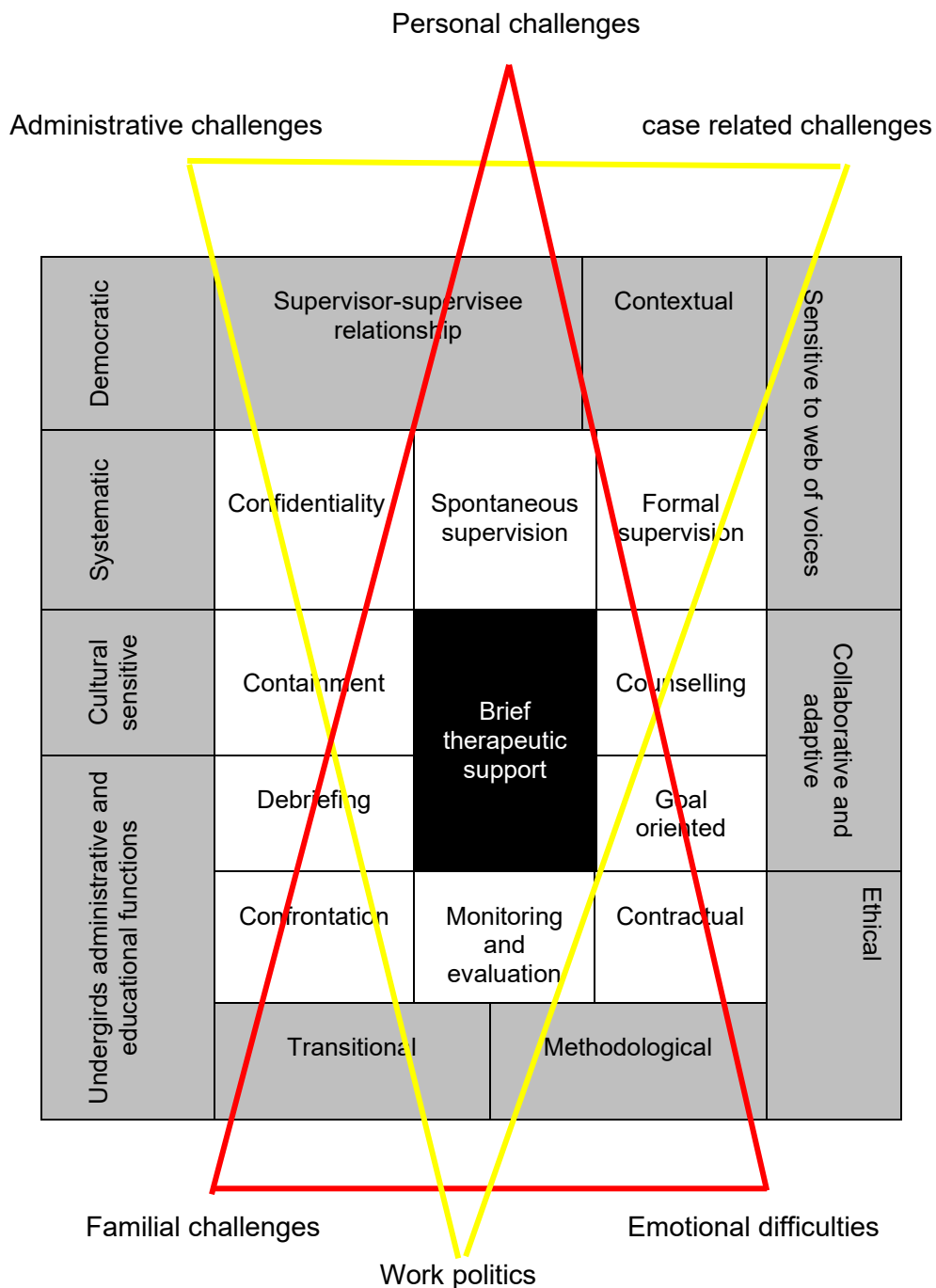
In this regard, the supportive social work supervision model is illustrated. According to Wallace (1994:13), a model is any system of relations used to present another system of relations. Gomm (2009:206) defines it as a simplified representation of some phenomenon. The term ‘model’ in this study is described as a simplified schematic representation of a phenomenon and the explanation of the processes to be followed when utilising the schema. Consequently,

the supportive social work supervision model is an abstraction of the supportive social work supervision reality. It is the opinion of the researcher that a social sciences model, as is the case with the supportive model for social work supervisors, should be characterised by the following principles: synthesis, representation, simulation and applicability. Synthesis entails the combination of components to form a connected whole, representation refers to the portrayal of something in a particular way, simulation refers to the imitation of a process, and applicability refers to the quality of being relevant and appropriate (Oxford Living Dictionaries Online, 2018, sv “synthesis” “representation” “simulation” “applicability”). Dawson (1962:1-15) and Greenblatt (1988:41-46; 52-66) attest to the use of simulation and representation when developing models and Delorme (2010:365-429) corroborates the use of synthesis and applicability principles.

In the development of the supportive social work supervision model, as alluded to earlier, the researcher synthesised the information which she obtained from the literature review and the empirical findings of the quantitative and qualitative data, which she used to construct the model. The model is illustrated in Figure 7.1 hereunder. Providing an illustration of the supportive supervision model is considered critical in this study for the following reasons: firstly, a model aids visibility (Raser in Greenblatt 1988:41). Through the model, supportive supervision is visible and thus comprehensible. Secondly, a model enhances communicability of a phenomenon. Through the model, supportive social work supervision is interpretable. Thirdly, a model promotes simplicity of a phenomenon. A model simplifies the supportive supervision phenomenon by specifying its critical elements. Lastly, a model also promotes reproducibility (Raser in Stein Greenblatt 1988:42). Through the use of the model, it is hoped that supervisors can fully comprehend how to render supportive supervision.

Further, the thick illustration on how the tasks associated with providing supportive supervision maybe carried out serves to simulate the model. By simulating the model, the applicability of the model was also illustrated. Establishing applicability entailed determining if the technique would adequately solve the problems for which it is intended (Dawson, 1962:12). The schematic representation of the model thus follows:

Figure: 7.1: The supportive social work supervision model



7.2.4.2 The philosophy underpinning the model

It is critical to proclaim the philosophy and principles of the supportive social work supervision model here because according to Tsui and Ho (1997:193), models are based on assumptions and principles which reflect their underlying philosophy and the model of social work supervision is no exception. According to Tsui and Ho (1997:193) the philosophical base of a

social work supervision model should be the “ideals and beliefs of supervisors” but in this study the ideals and beliefs of social work supervisees are also considered critical and are incorporated in the discussion because without supervisees there would not be any supervision.

After the quantitative data analysis of questionnaires completed by social work supervisees, the analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with social work supervisors and after the collation, interrogation, correlation, contrasting and comparing the results and the findings into conclusions, the following were found to be the main philosophical principles which underpin the model of supportive social work supervision developed in this study.

- **The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is the cornerstone of supportive social work supervision.** This is because a supervisor is assigned or designated by an organisation or statutes to supervise a supervisee’s practice and the supervisee is expected to be accountable to the supervisor (Munson, 2002:10). In this study, it emerged that supervisors and supervisees display a mixed bag of relationships because it was found that while some supervisor-supervisee relationships were good, some were poor. However, if the supervisory relationship, as stated by Wonnacott (2012:13-14), is fundamental to the delivery of effective social work services and if there is a direct link between the quality of supervision and outcomes of services then it means in their supportive endeavour social workers should strive for good supervisor-supervisee relationships.
- **Supportive social work supervision can be carried by means of various methods.** In this study, of the 42 respondents who reported having been supported two months prior to data collection, 29 (69%) recorded individual supervision as having been the most commonly used method for supporting them. The other methods cited were clinical supervision and open door supervision both cited by 26 (62%) respondents with formal supervision trailing slightly behind with 22 (52%) responses. In another dimension, in the study the 20 (32%) respondents who reported not having been supported two months prior to data collection indicated that they would have appreciated being supported individually, that the support they sought be carried out internally by their immediate supervisors; that the support be clinical in nature and that there be an open-door policy allowing them to walk into a supervisors’ office whenever they required assistance.

- **Supportive social work supervision is sensitive to the web of voices in supervision**
 There are many perspectives or 'stories' immanent in the supervisory process, whether acknowledged or not (Noble & Irwin, 2009:354). The many stories include the social story, the supervision story, the supervisor's story, the supervisee's story as well as the stories of various other players such as the clients, other workers, the many and varied situations in society and the ever changing socio-political, cultural context of human service work. Each of these stories contains 'the values, ideologies, and discourses present in society's cultures, politics, social policies, laws, governing bodies, agencies, professions, and pressure and service user groups' (O'Donoghue, 2003:39). The degree of influence each story has is dependent on its positioning and the power of its voice (O'Donoghue, 2003:39). Developing a critical focus, then requires supervisors and supervisees to focus on the interactive aspects of these many perspectives (Noble & Irwin, 2009:355). And one way of ensuring that each story is heard adequately in supportive supervision is that social workers need to be culturally competent.
- **Supportive supervision requires culturally sensitive supervisors.** As an enabling social work process, social work supervision involves considerable interaction and exchange among the agency, the supervisor, the supervisee, and the client, and each of these parties has objectives that are embedded in a specific cultural context (Tsui, 2001:69) hence the significance of culture in social work supervision. Culturally sensitive supervision thus refers to the values, beliefs, assumptions, and shared behavioural norms (Cherin & Chenot 2010:26) that influence the interpretation and execution of supervision processes and procedures by supervisors. Culturally sensitive supervision practice thus signifies the importance of organisational culture, the heritage of supervisors, supervisees and service users in the supervision process and in the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. Social work supervisors who are culturally sensitive become culturally competent. The benefit of cultural competence in social work supervision, according to Munro (in Brandbury-Jones, 2013:262), is that it helps social workers catch their biases and examine them. In a supportive supervision context, echoing Hair and O'Donoghue (2009:75), the mission of the social work supervisor must be to cultivate effective relationships with culturally diverse individuals.
- **Supportive social work supervision is democratic.** It has been revealed in the literature review that the supportive component of supervision may be closely linked to democratic leadership style because a supportive supervisor involves a supervisee in every aspect of the supervisory relationship. One way of attaining democratization is involving a

supervisee in all decision-making pertaining to the supervisory process and relationship. According to Noble and Irwin (2009:255) democratizing the supervision process also enables social work supervisors and supervisees to move towards a more equal and socially aware experience.

- **Supportive social work supervision is ethically bound; it is conducted in compliance with the code of ethics for social work.** As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, in their supportive endeavour social work supervisors should ensure that supervisees adhere to their ethical responsibilities towards practice settings, ethical responsibilities towards colleagues and other social workers, ethical responsibility towards client systems and ethical responsibilities towards the profession. A supportive supervisor will also be ethical if he or she exhibits loyalty, fairness and honesty.
- **Supportive social work supervision undergirds administrative and educational functions of social work supervision.** It has been indicated in this study that supportive social work supervision is largely discussed alongside the other two functions of social work supervision, i.e. administrative supervision and educational supervision. All the social work respondents in the study reported that they require supportive supervision from their supervisors. The majority of social work respondents, 47 (76%), reported that they mostly required support for attending to workload issues, 33 (53%) required it for assistance with client queries; 12 (19%) to work through work politics and 11 (18%) to work through family problems. The supervisor participants in this study also attested to this. In their endeavour to support subordinates with challenging cases, the participants attend to the administrative shortfalls of the supervisees while simultaneously also carrying out educational supervision. The position of supportive supervision in relation to its administrative and educational components further suggest that supervisors should make supportive supervision an integral and on-going part of their professional practice.
- **Because social work services are largely carried out in organisational contexts, the organisational nature of social work implies that supportive supervision should be mindful of contexts.** Supervisors should always take note of the effects that the welfare contexts have on the organisation because it directly affects their ability to provide support or not. In this study, of the 62 social work respondents the majority, 61 (98%) of the sample scored interpersonal context with supervisors as the most critical to social work supervision. The psychological context followed second with 60 (96%) responses, which was followed by the physical context with 55 responses and cited last was the cultural

context at 48 responses, which constituted 88% and 77% of the sample respectively. The interpersonal context proved more prominent in the study because the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is the nucleus of supportive social work supervision. Contexts also matter to social work supervision because they condition the manner in which a professional project is constituted and enacted (McDonald, Harris & Wintersteen, 2003:204-205) and because supervisors should strive to alleviate contextual issues which exert pressures on the practitioners (supervisees). In the words of Eisikovitz (in Bruce & Austin, 2000:86), the contexts of supervisory practice should be managed and enhanced by ensuring that supervisors create a work environment that fosters task orientation, staff involvement, staff autonomy, and clarity of rules including the articulation of high levels of expectations on the part of the supervisor and supervisee.

- **In supportive supervision, supervisors and supervisees go through transitional stages.** Practitioners do not wake up one morning to find themselves as expert supervisors. They go through a series of developmental stages. In this study, supervisors located themselves in the novice, exploratory, consolidation and master stages while social workers located themselves in the beginning, intermediate, advance and final stages of supervision. Supervisors should thus be mindful of the fact that, especially in new supervision relationships, supervisees go through an adjustment process (i.e. transition) to adapt to the supervisor and the supervision process. In this regard supportive supervisors should make sure that supervisees experience a positive transition process for the supervision process to be successful. One way of ensuring a seamless transition is by involving supervisees throughout the supervision process (i.e. collaboration). The supervisor should not make decisions for the supervisees but involve them in decision making. Another way supervisors can foster successful transition can be through democratizing, humanising the supervision process including the adoption and application of the systems approach in the supervision context.
- **Supportive social work supervision is systematically inclined.** The ecosystems approach emphasises “the relationship and reciprocal and adaptive transactions amongst ‘organisms’ (i.e. individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations) and between these organisms and their bio-psycho-socio-cultural-economic-political-physical environment” termed the person-in-environment construct, PIE (Weyers, 2011:20). The resultant PIE construct is thus especially important because of its focus on individuals, their environments, and the transactions or relationships between the two (Weyers, 2011:20). The supervisor in a supportive endeavour should assist supervisees deal with their “bio-psycho-socio-cultural-economic-political-physical environments” either on a personal level

and/or at work. As advised by DuBois and Miley (2010:64), the supervisor can achieve this by systematically considering and engaging in actions that will create favourable changes in the supervisee's social and physical environment in order to enhance their ability to function more effectively".

- **Supportive supervision requires collaboration and adaptation.** The transitional stages of supervisors and supervisees, the contextual nature of social work supervision, the fact that social work supervision is carried out through various methods and the fact that social work supervision undergirds administrative and educational functions including the inextricable supervisor-supervisee relationship all which are embedded in a systematic context, implies that social work supervisors should collaborate with supervisees and that they should be adaptive to the needs of supervisees as they endeavour to support them. This premise also conveys the logic that supportive social work supervision must be sensitive and responsive to organisational changes and changes in the welfare sector, which means that it cannot be static.

Through the aforementioned philosophies of supportive social work supervision, the following throughputs were established.

7.2.4.3 Throughputs

Throughputs encompass all those elements connected to the actual provision of a service. According to Kettner and Daley (1988:104), social work throughputs encompass all aspects of the helping process and can be reduced to three elements: service definition, service task and methods of interventions. Service definition typically consists of one or two sentence statements which describe the service to be provided; service tasks are the activities performed by the provider while methods of intervention refer to the technologies employed to offer the service (Kettner & Daley, 1988:104). Because the service definition has been addressed by the description of the goal of the model as articulated earlier, only the service tasks and methods of interventions are addressed in the following segment.

- **Methods for rendering supportive social work supervision**

Based on the literature review undertaken and the empirical findings in this study, it has been deduced that at the core of supportive social work supervision is brief therapeutic support.

There has been a discourse in literature time immemorial of the relationship between supervision and therapy. Authors such as Wise, Lowery and Silverglade cited in Corey and Corey (1993:48) have asserted that the main purpose of supervision is to protect the well-being of clients and this precludes making the supervisee's personal growth a primary focus. According to Syme (in Wheeler 2007:246-247) the dual relationship of supervisor and therapist is now considered to be ethically unacceptable. Corey and Corey (1993:48) were also of the view that supervision and therapy should not be combined. Itzhaky and Itzhaky (1996:77) however holds a different view which supports the notion because they contend that supervision has an emotional load which should be dealt with in the supervisory relationship as a means of increasing effectiveness in the learning process. St. Arnoud (2017:141) agrees with Syme that supervisors cannot function in dual roles, but also shares Itzhaky and Itzhaky's views that the personal difficulties of trainees may impact their clinical practice and should not be ignored in supervision. Cassoni (2004:130) adds to the argument that the complex function of supervision that takes place between the therapist and the supervisor while they are talking about an interaction between the therapist and his or her client suggests that these two relational fields influence each other.

The notion of brief therapeutic support is thus adopted in this study because, echoing Itzhaky and Itzhaky (1996:77), the emotional load immanent in supervision makes it difficult for the supervisor to keep adequate distance between supervision and therapy. Carifio and Hess (1987:244-245) are also of the view that supervisors should be like therapists. If anything, the emotions compel that a supervisor engages in therapy with the supervisee hence the therapeutic support. In generic terms therapy refers to treatment intended to relieve or heal a disorder while support refers to a source of comfort or encouragement (Oxford Living Dictionaries Online, 2018, sv "therapy") and as such in a supervisory context therapeutic support entails providing an intervention to a supervisee to relieve them of stressful encounters. According to Bruce and Austin (2008:88) the concept of therapeutic support represents a parallel process whereby a worker's ability to understand and support the client is similar to the supervisor's ability to understand and support the supervisee. There are also themes related to therapeutic support which include (1) the confidentiality of the content of the supervisory session, (2) the importance of self-awareness and self-understanding as a precondition for understanding and helping others, and (3) the supervisor's role in facilitating a worker's ability to handle stressful work situations (Bruce & Austin, 2008:88). The therapeutic support inferred here should be brief, it should only be offered when a supervisee exhibits intense emotional reaction regarding a problem and thereafter the supervisor should refer the supervisee to another therapist for further assistance. Consequently, therapeutic support is characterised by containment, counselling and confidentiality, which are discussed in detail

as part of the tasks associated with providing supportive supervision. The said therapeutic support should be brief because supervisors, as clarified in this study, should not engage in prolonged therapy with supervisees because firstly, they are overworked and secondly, because if supervisors become therapists of supervisees then the supervisor-supervisee relationship gets blurred and confused with the worker-therapist relationship. This convinces the researcher that the supervisors' role here lies in identifying the issues that need therapy in their supervisees and then linking them with appropriate services, not to serve as therapists.

When asked about their preferred methods of being supported, the supervisees in this study reported that the most preferred methods for supporting them should include individual supervision, clinical supervision, open door supervision and formal supervision. Against this backdrop, it has also been deduced in this regard that supportive social work supervision should be carried out in two ways, spontaneously and formally. Formal supervision is planned, scheduled and agreed upon between the supervisor and supervisee. According to Wonnacott (2012:64-65) formal supervision provides consistency, predictability and regularities; it facilitates the development of positive relationships, allows on-going reviews on practice issues; maintains a focus on developmental needs. The formalisation of supervision is critical because staff interaction and collaboration are essential in any agency (Klein, 2015:1). The researcher is swayed that formal supportive supervision will afford supervisors an opportunity to enquire about the work challenges of supervisees; they will aid supervisors to identify and build on the challenges of supervisees; and they will help supervisors celebrate the successes attained by supervisees. The researcher also believes that all those activities undertaken in formal supportive supervision session will culminate in creating an environment that encourages supervisees to be open about their work and personal stressors. Like Munson (2002:2), Scott (2009:35) is also of the view that the elements of support should be planned, flexible, hold supervisors accountable, and it should be empowering.

Supportive supervision cannot be rendered by formal supportive supervision alone because the disadvantage of engaging solely in formal supervision is that supervisees would not get assistance in case of emergency situations hence the need for informal supervision and as such the informal support sought by supervisees is referred to as 'spontaneous support' in this study. Spontaneous supportive supervision on the other hand denotes that the supervisor attends to the needs of a supervisee instantaneously or promptly.

The needs of the social work respondents as articulated above are thus addressed by the two suggested methods for offering supportive supervision. Firstly, attending to supervisees spontaneously is tantamount to the open-door supervision sought by supervisees. This is

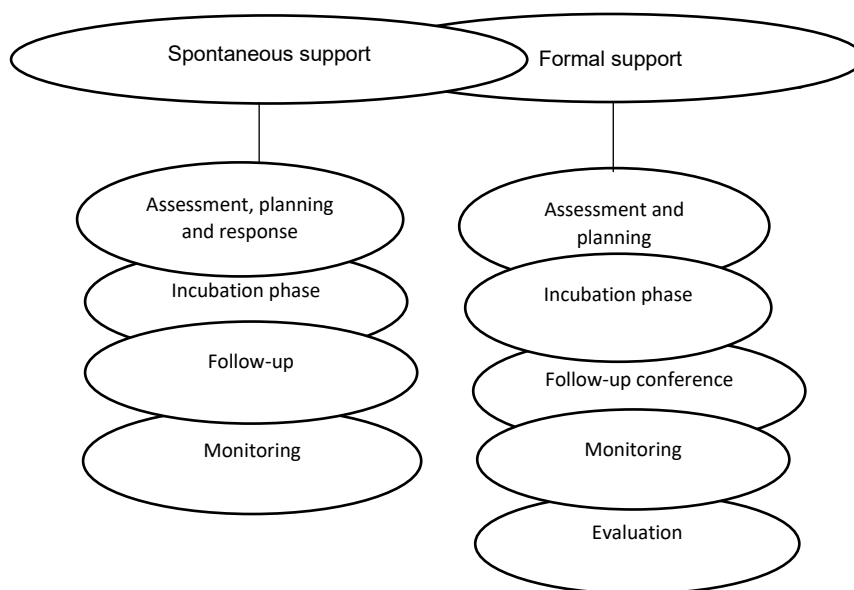
because open door supervision is an informal ad hoc type of supervision that occurs as and when required (O'Donoghue, 2002:6). By implication, open door supervision has connotations that the supervisee should be able to contact the supervisor anytime according to need. On the other hand, individual supervision involves a private meeting between a supervisor and a supervisee while clinical supervision is "the professional application of social work theory and methods to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunctions, disability or impairments, including emotional and mental disorders (Barker in Brittain, 2009:297) and the two could be carried out formally.

The supervisor thus has a professional discretion to use either one method solely to support a supervisee; i.e. spontaneous supervision, or may use a combination of the two identified methods, i.e. spontaneity and formal supervision, simultaneously, concurrently or one after the other in providing support. Furthermore, supervisors engage in a variety of tasks in supporting supervisees.

- **Tasks for providing supportive social work supervision**

Based on the literature review undertaken and the empirical findings in this study the tasks associated with providing supportive social work supervision are construed to involve immediate response, assessment, incubation, planning, follow-up, and monitoring and outcome evaluation. Containment and confrontation are also critical in the provision of both methods. It is also concluded that supportive supervision should always be goal oriented, that it must be contracted between the supervisor and the supervisee and that the supervisor should also be resourceful to refer a supervisee according to need. As echoed by Bruce and Austin (2008:88), the principle of confidentiality is the most critical in the provision of supportive supervision. The tasks associated with providing spontaneous and formal support are explicated schematically underneath.

Figure 7.2 Tasks for providing supportive social work supervision



Of all the above, the researcher recognises that the tasks associated with providing spontaneous supportive supervision are assessment, planning and response; incubation phase, a follow-up and monitoring whilst those associated with providing formal support are assessment and planning, incubation, follow-up conference, monitoring and evaluation.

Assessment involves an attempt to understand the nature of a problem, its cause and what needs to be done to resolve or minimise it (Trevithick, 2012:174). This is confirmed in Kirst-Ashman (2013:121) who perceives assessment as the investigation and determination of variables affecting an identified problem viewed from a micro, mezzo and macro perspective. For the purpose of supportive social work supervision, assessment thus refers to a process that a supervisor engages in with the supervisee to determine the nature of a problem and its cause from a micro, mezzo and macro context and thereafter establishing what needs to be done to resolve or minimise it. In a supportive supervision context, sometimes supervisors conduct hasty assessment because situations may require urgent responses while in other times supervisors can embark on assessment over a period of time. In each assessment, echoing Kirst-Ashman (2013:121), supervisors should take aspects of the diversity of each supervisee into consideration. Taking into cognisance the diversity of supervisees also promotes cultural competency of supervisors.

Unlike a client-social worker relationship wherein social workers work with clients over time, social work supervision demands that supervisors be proactive in their supportive endeavour because they are usually overworked, as established in this study, and thus do not have a lot of time to spend with a supervisee. It is against this backdrop that it is recommended that immediately after assessment supervisors should engage supervisee in planning. Planning entails determining how to go about resolving or minimising the impact of the presenting problem. Borrowing from Kirst-Ashman (2013:1213), the supervisor should plan with the supervisee by assisting the supervisee to prioritise different aspects of the problem; the supervisor should assist the supervisee identify alternative solutions; the supervisor should help the supervisee evaluate the pros and cons of each course of action so that the supervisee can select the best option for themselves. Finally, the supervisor should also help the supervisee develop goals, which they need to accomplish. In spontaneous support, immediately after planning, the supervisee implements the plans while in a formal support, supervisees can be afforded an opportunity to go and sift through that which has been discussed before making a decision regarding implementation.

In formal supportive supervision context, after planning with the supervisee, the supervisor should reflect on the intervention rendered. In a spontaneous support context following implementation of supervisors and supervisee should also reflect on the impact of the intervention. The process of reflection is thus referred to as the 'incubation phase.' To incubate in biological and medical terms refers to keeping cells, bacteria etc. at a suitable temperature so that they develop (Hornby, 2000:607). According to the Oxford Living Dictionaries Online (2018, sv "incubate"), amongst other meanings, to incubate also refers to giving support and aid to the development of something. Incubation therefore in this context refers to a process of meditating, pondering and reflecting on the advice, suggestions, recommendations and the intervention offered to the supervisee. Incubation allows the support to simmer. This process is critical because by reflecting the supervisor identifies shortcomings of his/her own intervention, which would have to be rectified. The shortcomings identified can thus be addressed in a follow-up session. By engaging in incubation, supervisees will also be able to determine if the option they selected to resolve their dilemma works, worked and didn't work or to ponder on what else could work.

Regardless of the type of support rendered, supervisors should always hold follow-up conferences with supervisees to establish how far the supervisee has implemented the adopted solutions and to discuss hindrances and their resolutions. In a formal supportive supervision context, a supervisor may convene a formal conference while in spontaneous support it may be a bit casual and may be done in the form of a telephone call for instance.

Irrespective of the kind of follow-up, during the follow-up the supervisor can discuss with the supervisee the information, which was erroneously withheld as uncovered during incubation. The supervisee can also report on what worked and what didn't work and can offer suggestion on what else could work. After the follow-up the supervisor should monitor the supervisee.

Monitoring involves a process or activity to check and making sure that something is carried out fairly or correctly. In generic supervision, as advised by Certo (2013:158-162), supervisors can monitor the performance of supervisees by establishing performance standards, monitoring performance against standards and if supervisees are not compliant with standards reinforce success and fix problems with supervisees and not for supervisors. In a supportive supervision context monitoring maybe more specific. It refers to checking on the supervisee and making sure that the supervisee is okay following an intervention rendered. The supervisor should monitor by observing the supervisee's behaviour including their performance. If a supervisee was referred for further therapeutic care, the supervisor should receive periodic feedback from the therapist indicating the supervisees' attendance and progress, excluding the personal details of the process.

Furthermore, supervisors should engage supervisees in the evaluation of their supportive supervision endeavour. Because evaluation entails making judgement about something, in a supportive supervision relationship it is recommended that before supervisors and supervisees embark on this process, they should talk about its pros and cons and they should clearly articulate the purpose of evaluation. It is recommended herein that evaluation in a supportive supervision context be a three pronged approach. Firstly, if for instance the supervisee was referred to a service provider for further therapeutic care, the supervisor should evaluate the service provider by seeking feedback from the supervisee on the benefits and/or disadvantages of the service offered. The information will determine if the service provider could be used in future or not. Secondly, the supervisor should also conduct at least once a year anonymous evaluation from all his or her supervisee where possible so as to review his or her own strategies and to improve on the support offered to subordinates. Lastly, supervisors should also evaluate supervisees about their contribution in the supervisory relationship. For the evaluation to be constructive, before it commences, both should agree to be brutally honest about each other. They should also agree that none should take offense but that the information relayed should be used to harness their working relationship.

As evidenced in the schema of the model and as emphasised earlier, at the core of supportive supervision is brief therapeutic support. The therapeutic support maybe carried out by means of containment and counselling. In an event whereby a supervisee is hysterical, crying and is

presenting with any other severe emotional outburst, the supervisor should contain the situation. Containment has two connotations. In its generic connotation, containment refers to the action of keeping something harmful under control or within limits (Oxford Living Dictionaries Online, 2018, sv “containment”). However, in a supervisor-supervisee relationship according to Dunbar-Krige and Fritz (2006:5) containment involves creating a sense of containment and safety as a basis for meaningful and growth-promoting work. According to the authors this involves predictable mutually acceptable frame which specifies a set time and space for meetings. Both stances can be utilised to render supportive social work supervision. Wherein a supervisee approaches a supervisor with an emotionally charged issues, then the supervisor should contain the situation by finding out the problem and then assisting the supervisee come up with alternatives for solving the issue. In the same token, the supervisor and supervisee should have set dates for when formal supportive supervision would take place. Formalising the support will give supervisees an opportunity to oust all that which is bothering them and in turn might prevent adverse outburst such as those referred to earlier. During follow-up sessions, supervisors should offer short-term counselling to supervisees. Counselling refers to a facilitative process in which the counsellor, working within the framework of a special working relationship, uses skills to assist clients to develop self-knowledge, emotional acceptance, emotional growth and personal resources (Van Dyk, 2005:175). And wherein prolonged therapy is needed, the supervisee should be referred accordingly.

Supervisors may also provide supportive supervision by confronting supervisees. Confrontation in its generic connotation refers to an argumentative situation between two people but in a social worker-client relationship according to Corey and Corey (1993:216) confrontation can also be a skill and as a skill it should be constructive and caring. According to the authors constructive and caring confrontation challenges individuals to look at the discrepancies, distortions, games, excuses, resistances and evasions that affect them psychologically. The skill also entails focusing on client’s awareness of what they are thinking, feeling and doing. Confrontation as a skill can be applied in a supportive supervisor-supervisee context in that the supervisor must approach and challenge a supervisee if they see that they have a personal problem, which affects negatively their performance. The supervisor should point out to supervisees their behaviours which prompted them to be inquisitive. They should challenge supervisees to look at the discrepancies, distortions, games, excuses, resistances and evasions and how those attributes negatively affect service delivery. This skill will require supervisors to be respectful to supervisees, to give them an opportunity to air their problems and if supervisees cannot divulge their challenge to the supervisor then the supervisor should refer them to alternative resources for assistance. And for a supervisor to be able to refer

supervisees accordingly, she or he will need to be resourceful. According to the Oxford Living Dictionaries Online (2018, sv “resourcefull”) being resourceful entails having the ability to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties. Resourceful in this context may also mean being knowledgeable of different service providers within your geographical area wherein you can refer supervisees for assistance.

The provision of supportive supervision as discussed thus far demands that supervisors adhere to the confidentiality principle of social work. Confidentiality in generic social work practice refers to the ethical principle that workers should not share the information provided by a client unless they have a client’s explicit permission to do so (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:39). Confidentiality also involves not asking for more information than necessary, as well as informing clients about the limitations of confidentiality within the agency setting (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:39). Corey, Nicholas and Bawa (2017:38) also contend that there is a legal requirement to break confidentiality and a duty to report cases involving child abuse, abuse of the elderly, abuse of dependent adults, and danger to self and others. Consequently, the principle demands that the supervisor holds sacred and confidential all the personal, emotional, familial and work problems and any other information that is shared by their supervisees in a supportive supervision context. A supportive supervisor should also discuss with supervisees the limitations of confidentiality in relation to their relationship. Failure to adhere to this principle will cripple the supportive supervision relationship because supervisees won’t be able to trust supervisors with their most sensitive information. Certo (2000:92) was also of the view that as a leader, a supervisor is expected to be loyal to his/her employer, to his/her manager, and to his/her subordinates.

Supportive social work supervision should always be goal oriented. A goal is something that one aspires to achieve (Hornby, 2000:508). The supervisor must have own goals for involving a supervisee in counselling. This may relate for instance to improved service delivery on the supervisee. The supervisor should also facilitate the discussion with the supervisee, in an event that the supervisee is referred to an alternative resource for further assistance with their challenges, regarding the reasons for the need of additional services and thereafter should assist the supervisee to clearly articulate the goals they want to achieve.

For supportive supervision to be effective and efficient, the notion of contracted supportive social work supervision is also encouraged herein. In the same way that activities pertaining to educational and administrative supervision are explicated in a supervision contract, so should the activities for supportive supervision. Explicating supportive supervision will give the supervisee an opportunity to inform the supervisor of the kind of support he or she needs and

where a supervisor cannot deliver specifically according to the supervisee's needs, a compromise can be reached between the two. It is thus recommended herein that supervisors should contract with supervisees that at various time intervals, for instance once a quarter, they would meet for a supportive supervision session. Holding formal sessions once a quarter is realistic because supervisors are over worked and may not be able to hold these sessions more frequently. Furthermore, it is deemed critical herein that supervisors should maintain records of major supportive supervision rendered to supervisees. This is because any work done by supervisors can only be evidenced through written reports. Having reports will also serve as evidence in cases of disputes between supervisors and supervisees.

It is thus critical to note herein that there is no one activity or a combination of specific activities, which must be followed to provide supportive social work supervision to social worker supervisees. The tasks undertaken to support a supervisee are dependent on the circumstances warranting the support. An illustration to this effect follows next.

- **Illustration on how the tasks may be carried out**

As evidenced in this study and as portrayed in Figure 7.2 above, in social work supervision supervisees usually present with one of the following challenges: personal problems, family related problems, work related challenges, work politics and administrative difficulties and as such require to be supported through supportive supervision. Coulshed et al. (2006:164) also emphasised that supportive supervision may be accomplished by providing emotional support to supervisees, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job. Consequently, whenever the supervisee is faced with a challenge, which warrants support the supervisor should first and foremost assess the severity of the presenting problem and its effects on the ability of the social work supervisee to render service to clients. Through the assessment, the supervisor should determine if the problem can be resolved promptly or if a more intensive and long term approach is needed.

If the supervisor finds that the presenting problem is not emotionally charged and can be tackled right away, it is recommended that the supervisor do so. An example of such a problem maybe an instance where a newly appointed supervisee who is not married is nervous about conducting an interview with an older married couple encountering marital problems for the first time. The spontaneous support can be conducted face to face or electronically through e-mails or telephone calls. In providing the support, the supervisors should commence by containing the nerves of the supervisee by assuring the supervisee of their capabilities.

Thereafter the supervisor should listen to the concerns of the supervisee, should engage a supervisee on a discussion of how they think they can overcome their fear. The supervisor can also offer advice and/or recommendations and can also link or refer a supervisee to a resource such as a reading material, which will assist the practitioner to gain confidence in themselves. Thereafter the supervisor should make a follow-up with a supervisee to establish if the problem still exists or not. Going forward, the supervisor must monitor through observation or casual questioning if the supervisee is coping with providing services to the couple. Ideally, the supervisor should not bank such a problem but should resolve them right away.

However, if in a similar incident another supervisee is hysterical and portrays severe emotional reactions, then such circumstances may warrant extensive support. The supervisor must contain the situation according to need and thereafter should schedule a conference with the supervisee to explore the reasons for the adverse reaction. During the conference the supervisor should also assure them of their capabilities. The supervisor should also offer counselling to the supervisee. The supervisor should monitor the performance of supervisee and in doing so should schedule another follow-up conference with the supervisee to check how they are coping. Say for instance the supervisee has reported that she has rescheduled two follow-up sessions with the couple because she is still anxious about her capabilities then in such a scenario the supervisor should refer a supervisee to an alternate therapist for further counselling. The supervisor must then demand from the 'other therapist' a report on the attendance and progress of therapy by the supervisee. The supervisor should also monitor if the supervisee is able to convene sessions with the couple again following the therapy. The many follow-ups with the supervisee in this context can be in the form of telephonic conversation or e-mail correspondences. It is also critical in this regard that the supervisor keep record of the intervention rendered to the supervisee.

Furthermore, in an event that a supervisor has heard rumours that a supervisee is experiencing domestic violence inflicted by her husband and has observed that the supervisee's performance is negatively affected as a result and a supervisee does not voluntarily request assistance from the supervisor, it is recommended that a supervisor should confront such a supervisee. If a supervisor confronts the supervisee, the supervisor should communicate in a respectful way her/his observation. The supervisor should communicate his/her observation in terms of how the issue has affected negatively the supervisees' performance. Should the supervisee, during the confrontation, begin to cry hysterically, the supervisor should offer counselling to the supervisee with the aim of containing the emotions. The supervisor should explore with the supervisee the extent of the problem. The supervisor

should explore how the issue is affecting the supervisee emotionally, including his or her family. The supervisor should assist the supervisee to explore ways of resolving or minimising the problem. In this instance, supervisors have an option to conduct the follow-up conference casually, maybe by going out for coffee or in an office environment that is deliberately made conducive. It is also recommended in this regard that the supervisee be also referred to an alternate therapist for assistance. The supervisor has to make follow-up with a supervisee if he or she is attending the therapy and should monitor their personal progress and the performance.

From the discussion of the tasks, it is evident that the identified tasks are interrelated and intertwined. They can be rendered individually, simultaneously and sequentially. It can also be deduced from the discussion that their application is dependent on the problem presented by the supervisee and the needs of the supervisee. Also, critical to note herein is the interpretation of the model hence the next discussion.

7.2.4.4 Interpretation of the model

Drawing from some of the dimensions of the models constructed by Rothman (1991:522-526); Fraser and Galinsky (2010:464) and also drawing from the views of Greenblatt (1988:52), the supportive social work supervision model as presented above could be applied as follows:

- The diagram is meant to be flexible rather than rigid. A supervisor should undertake any method and may draw from any dimension and/or combination of tasks to render the support. A supervisor may further support a supervisee with one or a combination of problems simultaneously or coherently.
- Consequently, the model espouses that services should be tailor-made for specific individual circumstances, depending on the needs at hand.
- Supportive social work supervision is not undertaken in a linear process and it is not systematic; instead it is a cyclical process, which is never ending because as the supervisor finishes supporting a supervisee with one aspect of his/her life, a supervisee will require support with another aspect of their work or personal life.
- There is no specified time as to when support should start and end.
- The model is adaptable. Although constructed from the basis of the experiences of social work supervisees and social work supervisors, the model may be adapted and used by supervisors from any other fraternity including the health field, other social sciences, the natural sciences, the economic sciences and others.

7.2.5 The pilot testing of the model

In business, people talk about the “chasm that innovations have to cross as they pass from being promising pilot ideas to becoming mainstream products or services...exactly the same challenge faces social innovations” (Mulgan, 2006:152). The pilot testing step is the last process that was intended to be undertaken in this study. This is because pilot tests within the D&D methodology are designed to determine whether the intervention will work, in other words, “to see if the beast will fly” (De Vos & Strydom, 2011:484). Caspi (2008:579) describes pilot testing within D&D similarly by stating that it involves testing preliminary guidelines to discover which aspects worked and which did not, and to revise and improve the model. In this study, piloting would involve testing the usability and applicability of the prototype supportive supervision model and its procedural elements.

In pilot testing the model, the intention of the researcher was to involve a minimum of two DSD offices, whose social work practitioners and supervisors participated in the study in the pilot testing process. Meticulous care would have once again been taken to ensure that the selected offices covered both rural and urban setups. Subsequently, the researcher wished to involve a minimum of eight supervisors in the pilot test. The researcher planned to workshop the supervisors on how to interpret the model and the supervisors would have been expected to conduct both methods, spontaneous support and formal supportive supervisions. The plan was for that the supervisors should test the model for a month and a joint discussion session would have been held for a joint feedback session. The supervisors needed to report on the following with regard to formal supportive supervision: the date of the session, the presented problem, the purpose of the session, the venue wherein the session took place, and a brief summary of the contents of their intervention. The supervisors also needed to ask and record the perceptions of supervisee regarding the session. With regard to spontaneous supportive supervision, the supervisors would have been requested to document the date of the intervention, the presented problem, the intervention rendered and what monitoring mechanisms were used. After implementation, a joint conference would have been held with the participants to get feedback on the usability and applicability of the model.

In executing the plan, the researcher approached the Nkangala District Social Work Supervision Learning Forum for their inclusion in the piloting of the model. The supervisors were oriented about the pilot test in one of their meeting. In orientating the supervisors, the goal of the pilot test was explicated, including its envisaged modus operandi. The researcher did a brief presentation regarding the model and then requested the participation of the

supervisors in the pilot test. Following the recruitment of prospective participants for the pilot tests, the researcher needed to give feedback to her promoter.

On consultation with the promoter on the planned activities regarding the pilot test the study promoter had an epiphany. She alerted the researcher to the possible danger that circulating the model would compromise the intellectual property right of the researcher on the model because once distributed to the supervisors, although confidentiality and informed consent would have been signed, the researcher would not have control of the distribution of the model to various people, organisations and entities hence the cessation. The envisaged challenge was thus communicated to the Nkangala District Supervisors Learning Forum. The researcher thus plans to pilot test model as part of a post-doctoral study.

7.2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented a model for use by social work supervisors in their endeavour to support social work practitioners. The discussion commenced with a brief account of how the D&D methodology was utilised in the construction of the model. In illuminating the model, the aims and objectives of the model were articulated followed by the presentation of its schema. Thereafter, the philosophy underpinning the model, its throughputs and tasks associated with providing supportive supervision were also interrogated and defended. Amongst other critical issues, the discussion here amplifies the contention that in supporting social workers supervisors should be democratic; they should facilitate the support in an ethical manner; and they should be culturally sensitive while tenaciously upholding the principle of confidentiality. The throughputs and the activities associated with rendering the support articulated in the model are not prescriptive but should be adapted to suit the individual circumstances warranting the support.

The final chapter consolidates the overall conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents the summary of the whole research report, the conclusions drawn from the empirical study and literature review and makes recommendations based on the findings, including empirical and literature review.

It is worth specifying that although the quantitative results were presented separately from the qualitative findings, the researcher is convinced that the mixed method nature of the study implies that the results and the findings provide essential connections. Handling data results and findings this way is also recommended by Ivankova et al. (2006:11); Hanson et al. (2005:232-233) and Bryman (2012:699). Bryman (2012:233) further reasoned that researchers should link the two sets of findings so that they can extract the maximum interpretive meanings from the study. According to Bryman (2012:700) the link is also important because the expectation with a mixed method research is that by the end of the manuscript, conclusions gleaned from the two strands should provide a fuller understanding of the phenomenon under study. Consequently, the researcher drew conclusions from collating, interrogating, correlating, contrasting and comparing the quantitative results with the qualitative findings. The qualitative findings are further used to corroborate the quantitative results, while the strength of the quantitative results makes the outcomes of the study more generalizable.

As discussed in Chapter 4, because in mixed methods studies data analysis and integration may occur at almost any point and because not all the questions set out in the questionnaire were the same during interviews, the corroboration, contrasting and comparison only occurs in the event that the results and the findings correspond and confirm each set. Where there is no correlation between the results and the findings then conclusions are made based solely on the results as derived from each approach.

The discussion thus commences by providing the summary of each chapter, leading on to demonstrate how the goals of the study were achieved and ultimately how research questions were answered.

8.2 SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 provides the general introduction of the study. It commences with a broad overview of social work supervision as a phenomenon in social work practice. Thereafter the problem statement of the study is highlighted, the rationale for the study is discussed, the goals and objectives are presented, ethical issues outlined and the theoretical framework reflected upon. The chapter is concluded by the presentation of the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 explicates the literature review on social work supervision with special reference to supportive social work supervision. In an effort to provide a global and national picture on supportive supervision the discussion commences with the historical developments of social work supervision in general and then zooms in on supportive supervision. The status quo of social work supervision in South Africa is also interrogated in the chapter, including the archaeological makeup of supportive supervision.

Chapter 3 highlights the global and the South African regulatory frameworks governing social work supervision. The international instruments which have an impact on social work supervision globally, i.e. the UN and the AU declarations/conventions/covenants/treaties, are discussed in this chapter. The IFSW and the IASSW promulgations on supervision are also discussed. The chapter ends by examining the legislative frameworks governing social work supervision in South Africa, highlighting in the process the relationship between the international instruments and the South African regulatory frameworks.

Chapter 4 presents and justifies the research methodology underpinning the study. In this chapter, amongst other methodological procedures followed, the research site is described, the research approach explicated; the research design and the population issues are also delineated. The process of selecting respondents and participants is a focal point in the chapter. Data collection, analysis and verification thereof also form part of this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents and analyses the quantitative data collected from the respondents. The researcher also draws and presents own synthesis from the results.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses the qualitative data collected from participants. The findings were further linked to the literature and the researcher also formulated own synthesis.

Chapter 7 provides an overview of existing models, programmes and technologies regarding supportive supervision, globally as well as in South Africa. Thereafter the study develops and

presents a model to assist supervisors in their endeavour to provide supportive supervision to social work supervisees. In presenting the model, the researcher offers a schematic representation of the model; describes the model and offers guidelines on how to interpret and apply the model.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the entire study. It highlights the conclusions reached from both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches and presents recommendations for the improvement of social work practice, improvement of policies and for future research from both approaches.

8.3 THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was set out to achieve the following:

8.3.1 The research goals

The goals of the study were twofold and set to:

- Develop an in-depth understanding of the nature of supportive supervision provided to social workers employed by the Department of Social Development in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa; and
- Develop a model for supportive social work supervision.

The goals of the study were achieved sequentially, beginning with the first aim followed by the second one. In order to establish an in-depth understanding of the nature of supportive supervision provided within Mpumalanga DSD, it was important to include both social work practitioners and social work supervisors in the study. Involving both parties was also important because the nucleus of social work supervision is the relationship between social workers and supervisors; without this relationship the supervision would not be possible. Chapter 5 and chapter 6 clarified the nature of supportive supervision as experienced by the social work supervisees and as rendered by the social work supervisors. The responses sought from the social work supervisees and the submissions of the supervisors were thus correlated, corroborated and contrasted, a process which enabled the researcher to reach conclusions about the nature of supportive supervision in Mpumalanga, DSD. These conclusions are presented later in this chapter. The collated information also contributed significantly to the construction of a model for supportive social work supervision, which is

presented in Chapter 7. Consequently, it could thus be stated that the goals of this study were met.

8.3.2 The research objectives

In order to achieve the goals of the study, the researcher undertook a series of activities consisting of the following:

- To theoretically conceptualize the phenomenon of supportive supervision in social work;
- To explore empirically the nature of supportive supervision provided to social workers within Mpumalanga Province;
- To describe the nature of supportive supervision provided by social work supervisors within the Mpumalanga Province;
- To draw conclusions regarding the nature of supportive supervision and make recommendations to improve practice, policies and for future research; and
- To develop a model for supportive social work supervision based on the findings obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data.

All these objectives were undertaken successfully. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 conceptualized theoretically the phenomenon of supportive supervision in social work. Thereafter the researcher liaised with the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development and determined the sample of the study, a step which was preceded by compiling a questionnaire, which was then administered to social workers as reported in Chapter 5. Thereafter social work supervisors were interviewed to determine the nature of support that they provide to supervisees and this is amply reflected in Chapter 6 of this study. As can be seen in chapter 6 all the findings were linked to the literature. From the results and findings, a supportive social work supervision model was developed. By following the objectives the researcher managed to answer the research question of the study:

8.3.3 The research question

The study endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of supportive supervision provided for social workers in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa?
- What does a supportive supervision model for social work supervisors entail?

These questions were answered because the quantitative and qualitative conclusions highlighted that in South Africa social workers are supervised by other social workers on social work tasks and undertakings. The study, amongst other conclusions, also demonstrates that although supportive supervision was thought to be necessary, social workers are currently not adequately supported. Some of the prominent challenges to supportive supervision link to the fact that social work supervisors are overworked and that some social workers are not keen on being supported.

The second question was answered in Chapter 7 because, amongst others, a supportive model for social work supervisors should be steeped in an epistemological and philosophical framework, specifying explicitly all procedural elements of the intervention necessary for interpreting and implementing it.

8.4 The conclusions

In an endeavour to integrate quantitative results and the qualitative findings in this study, the presentation of the conclusion differs slightly from the norm because it also encapsulates the collation, interrogation, correlation, contrasting, comparison and the corroboration of the quantitative results with the qualitative findings. Because for both data collection instruments, the discussion commenced with obtaining the biographical information of the participants in this study and as such the discussion of the conclusions commences by comparing and corroborating the biographical information of social workers (respondents) and supervisors (participants).

8.4.1 Conclusions based on biographical information of study participants

For both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study, the intention of this section was to gain a generic understanding of who the supervisees and the supervisors within Mpumalanga DSD were. The section was stretched further when in the quantitative study the respondents were required to display if they had an understanding of who their supervisors were. The biographical information was therefore explored in terms of a variety of factors including age, gender, race, ethnic grouping and educational qualifications and yielded the following:

- Collating the total number of respondents (social work supervisees) of the quantitative phase of the study and the participants (social work supervisors) involved in the qualitative the study reveals that the total number of respondents was (74) consisting of 63 (85%)

females and 11 (25%) males. It can therefore be deduced in this regard that the majority of study subjects were females with minimal males. The study thus validates that the majority of social work practitioners in South Africa are females.

- Based on the age of majority of respondents (social workers) and participants (supervisors) it was deduced in this study that social work practitioners in South Africa are young adults and that social work supervisors are in their middle age.
- It was concluded in this study that the majority of social workers in South Africa after obtaining their social work degree do not pursue further postgraduate qualifications in social work. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that only 2% of the respondents and participants possessed an additional postgraduate Master's degree in social work.

8.4.2 Conclusions based on the work histories of study subjects

Knowledge of the work history of both the social workers and the social work supervisors was important in this study because it helped to further understand who the social work supervisees and supervisors were. A number of conclusions are made with regard to the work histories of the participants:

- It is concluded in this study that the majority of social workers in South Africa commence their social work careers within the Department of Social Development. This is because it was established in both accounts that the majority of study participants had commenced their social work careers within the DSD, Mpumalanga. Eighty-four percent of respondents in the quantitative study began their social work careers within DSD, Mpumalanga. Similarly, the supervisor participants had a minimum social work experience of 11 years overall and most of this within DSD, Mpumalanga.
- Secondly, the results validate that in South Africa social work services are rendered generically. This is because in the quantitative study the social workers reported to have been involved in a combination of programmes ranging from children and family services, foster care services, HIV/AIDS services, ECD services, services to older persons and services provided to people with disabilities. The findings obtained from the supervisors also back this conclusion because the majority of social work supervisors reported having been involved in all the programmes. The consistency in the low number of supervisors who work in specialised fields compared with the social workers who had reported

specialising in social crime prevention and child justice respectively also validates the fact that social work practice in South Africa is generic.

- Thirdly, drawing from the deduction that social workers in South Africa offer generic services, it could also be concluded in this study that social work practitioners in South Africa are overworked. It was found in the quantitative study that social workers have high workloads. This conclusion is also backed by the fact that supervisors, over and above supervising social workers, are also responsible for supervising non-social workers and that in some instances they take over the work of subordinates in the event they are unable to fulfil their duties due to personal reasons. The fact that social work supervisors are overworked further explains why when asked to explicate the extent to which supervisors undertook the controlling, leading, staffing, delegation, organising and planning roles in their endeavour to supervise them, respondents reported that their supervisors did not comprehensively undertake any of the identified management roles.
- Lastly, it is concluded in this study that the National Department of Social Development has made notable strides to comply with the policies and legal requirements regarding social work supervision. The fact that most supervisor participants were legally appointed in their posts shows that DSD Mpumalanga is compliant with the legal requirements outlined in the 2012 Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa and in the Code of Conduct for Social Services in South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2012:31-32; SACSSP, [Sa]:36).

8.4.3 Conclusions based on the generic supervision experience of participants

To garner insights into the supervision experience meant that the respondents report on their exposure to supervision and that of their supervisors. The information thereafter needed to be correlated with the experiences shared by the supervisors themselves. The following is thus concluded with regard to the supervision experience of participants:

- Based on the results and findings of this study, it is concluded that social work supervision is critical to social work practice. This is because both the respondents and the participants shared this sentiment. According to the respondents, social work supervision was necessary for guidance, for effective service delivery, for case related challenges, for the emotional care of supervisees and also because it has developmental advantages. Amongst other reasons, the supervisors reasoned that supervision is important because

it affords them a platform to lead, guide and empower social workers thus contributing towards the development of not only the individual supervisee but the profession as a whole.

- From the results, it is also concluded that social work supervision is plagued by a myriad of challenges. This is because in the quantitative phase of the study when the respondents were asked to explicate their exposure to the three functions of social work supervision, the rating scale of “sometime” scored the highest responses overall, followed by “always” with “never” receiving the lowest ratings. The quantitative results also revealed that most respondents were “never” exposed to the majority of supervision methods. In the qualitative study, while the supervisors attested to rendering all three functions of social work supervision, the supervisors reported that they rendered supervision minimally.
- Because in the quantitative study it was found that the majority of respondents 38 (61%) had been under the supervision of their supervisors between (2) and (5) years, it is concluded that social workers in South Africa are supervised by experienced social work supervisors. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that in the qualitative component of this study, while there were new supervisors with less than 4 years supervision experience, most participants involved in the interviews were experienced supervisors with a minimum of 9 years supervision experience within DSD Mpumalanga.
- It is concluded herein that social work supervision is a process. This is because the study revealed that both supervisors and supervisees go through a series of stages to acclimatise to supervision, to the supervision process and to each other.
- Moreover, it is concluded in this study that there are inconsistencies in the number of social work supervisees that social workers in South Africa are supervising. This is because it was established in the study that the social work supervisors were supervising an unequal number of social work supervisees and support staff. In the study while some social work supervisors were supervising as many as eight social work supervisees, others had one. Similarly, while other supervisors had up to ten (10) other support staff that they were supervising, others had none.
- It is also concluded in this study that social work supervisees in South Africa do not clearly comprehend what social work supervision entails. This was evidenced by the fact that the respondents in the quantitative phase of the study could not locate the management

position of the supervisors. In addition, the fact that the respondents did not have an inclination of the relationship between supervision and UN and AU treaties and conventions also supports this conclusion. Furthermore, the view by one of the supervisors that social workers were not adequately trained about the supervision framework for social workers in South Africa further validates this conclusion.

- Lastly, it is concluded in this study that the quality of social work supervision provided to social work supervisees is compromised. This is because in the quantitative study, the respondents reported that they were supervised by an array of social work practitioners including grade 1 social workers, grade 2 social workers, social work managers at grade 1, 2 and 3. This conclusion is also based on the fact that social work supervisors are overworked.

8.4.4 Conclusions regarding supportive social work supervision

- It is concluded in this study that social work service delivery would dwindle without supportive social work supervision. This is because it has been established in this study that supportive social work supervision undergirds the process of the other two principal functions of administration and education because when supervisors are engaging supervisee in administrative and educational supervision they are inadvertently also providing supportive supervision to the supervisee. Also, social work service delivery would dwindle because in the study the social work respondents and the supervisor participants all regarded supportive social work supervision as necessary. In addition, supportive supervision is necessary in social work because, according to the respondents and the participants, there are also benefits to providing it, which include assisting with challenging cases, contributing towards effective service delivery, and promoting supervisee care such as enhancing emotional and psychological wellbeing of social work supervisees.
- Although supportive supervision is regarded as important, this study concludes that social workers are not adequately provided with supportive supervision. The majority of respondents in the quantitative phase reported to have been supported two months prior to data collection, while the minority respondents reported that they did not receive any support.
- It is further concluded that failure to support social workers has adverse effects.

- It can also be concluded that social workers are not exposed to formal supportive supervision. In the qualitative phase, the participants reported providing supportive supervision to social work supervisees by default. The supervisors reported supporting social workers inadvertently when they were assisting them to address case related challenges and when they attended to the administrative shortfalls of the supervisees.
- It is concluded, that supervisors do not unravel the personal territories of supervisees adequately. This was confirmed in the quantitative results that supervisees seldom discussed their personal problems and challenges with supervisors. Instead of focusing on providing emotional support, supervisors mostly focused on assisting them to deal with case-related issues by educating them. This conclusion is also backed by the fact that the supervisors themselves unanimously shared that they mostly supported social work subordinates in their case-related issues. Based on these results, it is logical to conclude that supervisors do not support their subordinates with their personal issues that might affect their performance, and this is a cause for concern as it might lead to poor service delivery on the part of the supervisees. This could also lead to the compromised wellbeing of the supervisees.
- It is also concluded that the reasons why social workers are not adequately supported is that there are challenges to offering supportive supervision. In the qualitative phase, the challenging workloads of supervisors were directly associated with the inability of social work supervisors to provide supportive supervision in this study. According to the supervisors, other threats to supportive supervision include their failure and struggle to keep to scheduled supervision sessions and the fact that sometimes social workers apparently also resist the support because they depict supervisors as being meddlesome. A poor supervisor-supervisee relationship also has negative connotations about the supervisors' ability to provide supportive supervision. The importance of the latter reason was validated by the social workers in the quantitative phase wherein the majority of respondents cited the interpersonal context with supervisors as the most critical context to social work supervision.
- Furthermore, it is concluded in this study that culturally competent social work supervision is not adequately filtered in social work supervision in South Africa. This was established when the supervisors in the qualitative phase cited only two culturally rooted principles i.e. respect and *Ubuntu*, which influenced their supervision practice. This lack of awareness of cultural influence is thus attributed to the fact that the 2012 Supervision Framework for

the Social Work Practice in South Africa, which is supposed to be a “bible” for supervisors as they endeavour to supervise and support social workers, is silent on culturally competent social work supervision. There are also no scholarly articles in South Africa intended for social work practitioners, which address the issue of culturally competent social work supervision.

- Moreover, social work supervisors also require supportive supervision from their managers. It was established in the study that social work supervisors do not get an opportunity to sit down with their managers and discuss their work-related challenges. It has also been revealed in the study that participants are rarely congratulated on a job well-done by their managers. Not being supported thus makes supervisors feel overwhelmed, which in turn also makes it difficult for them to adequately support their subordinates.
- Lastly, peer supervision and peer consultation are extremely useful mechanisms that scaffold supervisors in their supervision endeavours. This is because all the supervisors in the qualitative study who reported never having been supported indicated that they received the said support from their peers.

8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Strydom and Delport (2011:290) recommendations of a scientific enquiry should always be based on the conclusions and should be of a practical nature so that they are utilised maximally in practice. Likewise in this study, recommendations are made for practice, for improving policies and future research on the phenomenon.

8.5.1 Recommendation for practice

- It has been established in the study that there are inconsistencies in the numbers of social work supervisees and the supervision of other personnel who are supervised by social work supervisors. These inconsistencies thus threaten the quality care of supervisees by supervisors, which in turn also threatens the quality of services provided to clients. It is thus recommended that there should be a nationwide overhaul of the system to determine the real workload of supervisors per district and where needed their duties be restructured and staff increased to relieve the supervisors, for them to provide the most needed supervision for their supervisees.

- All social work supervisors, over and above supporting social workers with cases and through teaching them about the different aspects of their jobs, should also schedule formal supportive supervision sessions to check on the well-being of supervisees. The proposed sessions should be contracted. This could only be achieved if the workload of social work supervisors is given attention and reduced to manageable portions.
- Likewise, the researcher also advocates for contracted supportive social work supervision for supervisors as well, because supporting supervisors this way ensures that the recommended formal supportive supervision session actually materialise. To make sure that the suggested session bears fruits, it is again recommended that the said supervision sessions should be one of the key performance areas for office managers.
- Over and above constituting formal supportive supervision sessions for both social workers and supervisors, it is also recommended that social workers and social work supervisors be involved in separate group debriefing sessions. The debriefing sessions should be used to offload, to refuel and to learn from peers how they counteract the pressures that come with social work practice. To ensure that the suggested sessions materialise, these sessions ought to be pre-planned yearly and should be key performance areas for office managers and district social work managers.
- It was clarified in this study that social work supervisees in South Africa do not fully comprehend what social work supervision entails, specifically supportive supervision. It is therefore recommended that a road show be held by the National Department of Social Development to educate social workers about the 2012 Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa.
- The supervisors in the study were strongly convinced that they themselves also required support from their supervisors. The researcher is convinced that in their endeavour to support supervisors, managers should capitalise on the fact that supervisors are involved in peer consultative supervision by formalising the process. Without determining for supervisors who, when and how to consult each other, the researcher believes that managers should encourage supervisors to continue to engage in peer supervision with each other by allocating performance incentives for peer consultation.

- Lastly, it was revealed in the study that, in the absence of supportive supervision by their managers, social work supervisors rely heavily on their interaction with other supervisors during their district and provincial forum meetings for support. Consequently, because supervision forums are the most important support system for social work supervisors, it is recommended herein that the forums be established, maintained and enhanced throughout South Africa.

8.5.2 Recommendations for policies

- This study identified that culturally competent social work supervision is not adequately filtered in social work supervision in South Africa. Consequently, it is recommended that the 2012 Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa be reviewed to address the issue of culturally relevant and culturally sensitive social work supervision. The researcher also recommends that the Department of Social Development should develop the norms and standards pertaining to culturally sensitive supervision practice in South Africa.
- Again this study established that social work supervisors are not involved in any formal supportive supervision sessions and the negative impact thereof has also been unravelled. It is thus recommended that supervisors undergo training on how to render, practically, supportive social work supervision to their social work subordinates.
- Formal training of the social workers before they could assume supervisory positions is recommended to ensure that they are equipped to perform satisfactorily with regard to the basic functions of supervision.

8.5.3 Recommendations for future research

- The study has demonstrated that social work supervisors and social work supervisees go through a series of stages to acclimatise to supervision, to the supervision process and to each other. Therefore, studies could be conducted to investigate how the transitions could be best managed.
- While it has been established that both social work supervisors and social workers were exposed to the functions of social work supervision, i.e. the administrative, educational and supportive functions, literature mostly informs readers on what the functions are

about, it does not delve deeper into delineating “how” exactly should practitioners effectively undertake the functions. Therefore, the researcher recommends that scientific studies be undertaken with social work supervisees and supervisors to establish how supervisors could effectively apply the functions.

- It has been evidenced in the study that culturally competent social work supervision is not adequately filtered in social work supervision in South Africa. Therefore, it is recommended that participatory research studies be undertaken in the different provinces in the country to delineate how social work supervisors could render culturally relevant and culturally sensitive supervision.
- All Provincial Departments of Social Development in South Africa should commission participatory research studies involving social work supervisors, wherein the perennial challenge of work overload is deliberated and context specific solutions established.
- The study also revealed that social work supervisors seldom examine the personal territories of supervisees in their supportive supervision endeavour. For supervisors to comprehensively support supervisors, scientific studies need to be conducted to establish reasons thereof and how to handle these challenges.
- Finally, the study also revealed that after completion of their Bachelor’s degree most social workers do not register for further postgraduate qualifications in social work. Scientific research studies could be commissioned to identify the reasons behind this complacency in undertaking postgraduate studies.

8.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter provided the overall conclusions which are comparatively presented based on the quantitative results and the qualitative findings. Conclusions were drawn from the biographical information of the study subjects, their supervision experiences and their exposure to generic social work supervision and supportive social work supervision. In the chapter, recommendations for the practice of social work supervision, improvement of policy in relation to social work supervision and for further research were also made.

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ADDENDUMS

ADDENDUM A: Ethical Clearance Letter from Unisa



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 4 November 2014

Ref #: DR&EC_2014_009¹
Name of applicant: **NEM Dube**
Student #: **33916861**

Dear Ms Bhuda,

Decision: Ethics Approval

Name: GB BHUDA, PO BOX 164, MADLAYEDWA , 0460, Cell Nr: 079 893 5416. Tel (o): 012 429 4807. E-mail: bhudag@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr J Sekudu

Proposal: SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION: A MODEL FOR SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISORS

Qualification: D Phil in Social Work

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the **Department of Social Work's Research Ethics Review Committee** for the above mentioned research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the Department of Social Work's Research Ethics Review Committee on 23 October 2014.

Final approval is granted for the duration of the project.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Department of Social Work's Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the*

¹ Note:

The reference number (top right corner of this communiqué) should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication (e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters) with the intended research participants, as well as with the Department of Social Work's RERC.



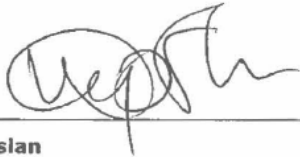
University of South Africa
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study-related risks for the research participants.

- 3) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*
- 4) *[Stipulate any reporting requirements if applicable].*

Kind regards,

Signature: _____



Prof AH Alpaslan

Chair: Department of Social Work Research Ethics Review Committee

alpasah@unisa.ac.za

Signature _____

Prof J Murray

Manager Postgraduate studies - College of Human Sciences

05/11/2014

ADDENDUM B: Approval letter to conduct the study within DSD Mpumalanga



Office of the Head of Department
for Social Development
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Building 3, No. 7 Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mbombela, 1200, Mpumalanga Province, Private Bag X11213, Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 3097, Fax: 013 766 3465

Litiko Letekutfutukisa
Tehlalakahle

UmNyango WezokuThuthukiswa
KwezokuHlalokuhle

Departement van Maatskaplike
Ontwikkeling

Enq : Ms. E. Botha
Tel : 013 766 3053
Ref : DSD/12/5/R

3 March 2015

Ms G.B. Bhuda
PO BOX 164
MADLAYEDWA
0460

E-mail: bhudag@unisa.ac.za

APPROVAL TO COLLECT DATA FROM SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Correspondence pertaining to this matter, received by e-mail on 17 February has reference.

Permission is hereby granted to Ms. G.B. Bhuda to collect data from Social Workers with less than 5 years working experience in the Mpumalanga Department of Social Development as part of his PHD studies – **“Supportive Supervision: A model for social work supervision”**.

In accordance with the principles of ethical research it is presumed that participation will remain confidential and anonymous. Groups should be convened in or as close as possible to the workstations of participants in order to avoid travel cost.

For further logistical support please liaise with Ms. Gabi Godi, tel: 013 766 3155 or Ms. Dionie Greyvenstein, tel: 013 766 3157.

We look forward to feedback on the findings and the value that will be added by the research.

Kind regards,

MS. N.L. MLANGENI
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DATE:



ADDENDUM C: A LETTER REQUESTING THE SOCIAL WORKERS PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEACH PROJECT (QUANTITATIVE STUDY)

Dear Participant

My name is Gladys B Bhuda. I am a PhD student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. As part of my studies I am expected to undertake a research project and is for this reason that I invite you to participate in a research study titled "Supportive supervision: A model for social work supervisors". The purpose of the project is to twofold; to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature and the extent of supportive supervision provided amongst social workers employed in Mpumalanga Province and the findings obtained therein will be used to reach the second goal; to develop a model for supportive supervision.

The first aim of the study is discussed within the mixed method type of research, i.e. it employs the methodological procedures of the quantitative and the qualitative approaches, sequentially and respectively. Consequently, two professional social work categories (i.e. the grass roots level social work practitioners and the social work supervisors/managers) will be included in the study respectively; one after another.

In view that you have personal experiences about this subject, I hereby approach you with the request to participate in the study. You will be involved in the first leg of the first aim of the study wherein the purpose is to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature and the extent of supportive supervision provided amongst social workers.

Should you decide to participate, kindly note that your involvement will entail completing a questionnaire, particularly a group administered questionnaire, which will be issued to you by the researcher amidst your fellow colleagues. You will need approximately an hour to complete the questionnaire.

Further on, kindly note that prior to administering the questionnaire, a briefing session will be held wherein issues such as confidentiality, anonymity and privacy as well as the management of information will be addressed. You will also be afforded an opportunity to seek clarity on unclear issues during the study. A briefing session and debriefing sessions will also be conducted prior and post data collection and where negative emotions and reactions are invoked during the study kindly note that I am required to refer you for further therapeutic support should you agree.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary; you are not forced to take part in the project and can withdraw anytime from it. Wherein you had agreed to take part kindly note that you will still have the right to change your mind and withdraw from it anytime during the processes. Your decision to participate or not to participate will also not affect you in anyway, now or in the future.

Should you decide to participate, further note that you will be required to sign an informed consent form (see attached copy).

Use the following contact details to get hold of me in case of queries: Office (012) 429 4807 or E-mail: bhudag@unisa.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Ms GB Bhuda
Researcher

ADDENDUM D: A LETTER REQUESTING THE SUPERVISORS' PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT (QUALITATIVE STUDY)

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Gladys B Bhuda. I am a PhD student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. As part of my studies I am expected to undertake a research project and is for this reason that I invite you to participate in a research study titled "Supportive supervision: A model for social work supervisors". The purpose of the project is to twofold; to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature and the extent of supportive supervision provided amongst social workers employed in Mpumalanga Province and the findings obtained therein will be used to reach the second goal; to develop a model for supportive supervision.

The first aim of the study is discussed within the mixed method type of research, i.e. it employs the methodological procedures of the quantitative and the qualitative approaches, sequentially and respectively. Consequently, two professional social work categories (i.e. the grass roots level social work practitioners and the social work supervisors/managers) will be included in the study respectively; one after another.

In view that you have personal experiences about this subject, I hereby approach you with the request to participate in the study. You will be involved in the second leg of the first aim of the study wherein the purpose is to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature and the extent of supportive supervision provided amongst social workers. The purpose of this leg it to corroborate findings sought from the quantitative study (i.e. questionnaires administered to social workers).

Should you decide to participate, kindly note that your involvement will entail participating in an interview. Set aside an hour of your time for the interview. A tape recorder will be used to capture all the information that you will share during the interview and the researcher will also take notes. The interview will be conducted by the researcher with you alone (one-on-one interview) and will be conducted at the venue of your choice. You will have to answer, for instance, biographical questions and in-depth open-ended-questions such as this one:

Biographical questions:

- What is your gender?
- What is your age?

- What is your race?
- What is your cultural grouping?
- Are you employed in a rural set-up or in an urban area?
- How many years of experience do you have as a social work supervisor?
- How many social work practitioners are you supervising currently?

The open-ended questions and requests:

- Distinguish between administrative, educational and supportive supervision.
- What is your overall perception of supportive supervision?
- How often, in a space of a month, do you provide administrative, educational and supportive supervisions to your supervisee(s)?
- When do you offer supportive supervision to your subordinates?
- Talk me through an incident where you had offered supportive supervision to a supervisee
- Discuss the benefits of providing supportive supervision to social work practitioners?
- What are the challenges that you often come across in providing supportive supervision to social work practitioners?

Should you decide to participate, also note that you will be required to sign an informed consent form (see attached copy) and that the researcher will uphold the ethical principles of confidentiality/anonymity and privacy in the study. Your details as contained in the informed consent form and the tape recordings will be kept in a safe and lockable place; they only be shared with the researcher's supervisor at the University of south Africa. You are assured that the information you will give will be used for research purposes only and that your identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the researcher; symbols will be used to refer to you instead of your name.

Further to the above, it is pertinent that you note that your involvement in the study may invoke negative emotions in you owing to past or current experiences regarding supervision. A debriefing session will thus be conducted with you by the researcher and where you require further counselling, arrangements have been made for you to attend further therapeutic support.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary; you are not forced to take part in the project and can withdraw anytime from it. Wherein you had agreed to take part kindly note that you will still have the right to change your mind and withdraw from it anytime during the processes.

Your decision to participate or not to participate will also not affect you in anyway, now or in the future.

Use the following contact details to get hold of me in case of queries: Office (012) 429 4807/
Mobile: 0798935416 or E-mail: bhudag@unisa.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Ms GB Bhuda

Researcher

ADDENDUM E: AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

Dear Participant

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Supportive Supervision: A Model for Social Work Supervisors

REFERENCE NUMBER

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Gladys B Bhuda.

ADDRESS

PO B0ox165, Madlayedwa 0460

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

079 893 5416

(012) 429 4807

DECLARATION BY THE PARTICIPANT

<p>I, the undersigned, ID No:....., the participant of..... (Address)</p> <p>A. HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:</p> <p>1. I the participant was invited to participate in the above research project which is being undertaken by Gladys B Bhuda of the Department of Social Work in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2. The following aspects have been explained to me:</p> <p>2.1 Aim: The researcher wants to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of supportive supervision amongst social workers employed in welfare organisations of Mpumalanga and to develop a model for supportive supervision.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>

<p>The information will be used to aid social work supervisors in their quest for providing supportive supervision to supervisees.</p>	
<p>2.2 I understand that the study is a mixed methods research study employing both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. I therefore understand that two data collection methods will be used, the questionnaire and in-depth interviews and that I will be required to participate in one of the two. I have also been made aware that quantitative data gathering will be done in a group and that interviews will be conducted one-on-one and that data will be collected on theday of2017 Between and.....pm and on theday of.....2017 respectively.</p> <p>I further understand that following described data gathering, if my employing organisation/institution is selected to form part of the participants to pilot test and evaluate the proposed supervision model that I may again be required to participate in the study.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2.3 Risks: The risks that are likely to occur by participating in the study include psychological and economic risks. Psychological in a sense that as I share information pertaining to the phenomenon there is likelihood that some responses may be emotionally charged. Therefore to ensure psychological harm does not occur, the researcher will brief me about the study prior to data collection and have also been assured that thereafter I will also be debriefed. Wherein I require further emotional support, arrangements to that effect have been made with an EAP/EHWP practitioner (name of social worker to be included), employed (name of employer to be included) who is a qualified social worker. I have also been informed that I can also consult a practitioner of my choice in this regard.</p> <p>Economic risks may also result whereby my job may be threatened. This may occur prior and after completing the questionnaire because briefing and debriefing about the study will be done in a group context. I am aware that should I share information criticising or may be offensive to my employers and they accidentally heard about it then my job may be threatened. To avert this from happening, I have been assured by the researcher that permission to conduct the study has been obtained from employers and that all management structures, including my immediate supervisor have comprehensive knowledge about the purpose of the study. Further to that I have been informed that all practitioners who will be involved in the session, including myself, will be sworn to confidentiality ensuring that all comments made</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>

will not be shared beyond the setting. The researcher has also assured me that she will also hold all information shared by all the respondents confidentially.	
<p>2.4 Possible benefits:</p> <p>The benefit of participating in this study is that I will be afforded an opportunity to give my own personal account on supportive supervision in a protected environment, where I will not be judged. The findings of the study will contribute to the development of a supervision model and conversely also benefit other social workers as they embark on supervision in their daily professional lives. Further to that, I will also contribute to the generation of indigenous knowledge regarding supervision in social work in South Africa.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>2.5 Confidentiality: I have been assured that as I consent to participate in the study by signing this informed consent form with my details in it that the form will be kept in a safe and lockable cabinet. Furthermore, I have been assured that the information I will give will be used for research purposes only and that my identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the researcher and that to ensure my anonymity symbols will be used to refer to me instead of my name.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>2.6 Access to findings:</p> <p>As a form of gratitude for my participating in the study, I have been informed that a seminar will be held wherein the researcher will share the findings of the study with all participants including the social work community as a whole.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>2.7 Voluntary participation:</p> <p>I am aware that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time should I feel I am unable to endure the emotional discomfort.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>3. The information above was explained to me the participant by Gladys B Bhuda in English and I am in command of this language. I was given an opportunity to ask questions and all my questions were answered satisfactorily.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participate in the study and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage from the study without any penalty.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>5. Participation in the study</p> <p>Because the mode of data collection is a group administered questionnaire, I am aware that a single venue will be arranged for data collection. During an information session with the researcher I have agreed that the researcher conduct the said group atwhich is within my reach.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>B. I HEREBY CONSENT TO VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE PROJECT</p>	<u>Initial</u>

Confirmedon20.....

.....

.....

Signature of Participant

Signature of witness

ADDENDUM F: AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISORS

Dear Participant

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Supportive Supervision: A Model for Social Work Supervisors

REFERENCE NUMBER

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Gladys B Bhuda.

ADDRESS

PO Box165, Madlayedwa 0460

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

079 893 5416

(012) 429 4807

DECLARATION BY THE PARTICIPANT

<p>I, the undersigned, ID No:....., the participant of..... (Address)</p> <p>A. HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:</p> <p>1. I the participant was invited to participate in the above research project which is being undertaken by Gladys B Bhuda of the Department of Social Work in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2. The following aspects have been explained to me:</p> <p>2.1 Aim: The researcher wants to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of supportive supervision amongst social workers employed in welfare organisations of Mpumalanga and to develop a model for supportive supervision. The information will be used to aid social work supervisors in their quest for providing supportive supervision to supervisees.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2.2 I understand that the study is a mixedmethods research study employing both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. I therefore understand that two data</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>

<p>collection methods will be used, the questionnaire and in-depth interviews and that I will be required to participate in one of the two. I have also been made aware that quantitative data gathering will be done in a group and that interviews will be conducted one-on-one and that data will be collected on theday of2018 Between and.....pm and on theday of.....2018 respectively.</p> <p>I further understand that following described data gathering, if my employing organisation/institution is selected to form part of the participants to pilot test and evaluate the proposed supervision model that I may again be required to participate in the study.</p>	
<p>2.3 Risks: The risks that are likely to occur by participating in the study include psychological and economic risks. Psychological in a sense that as I share information pertaining to the phenomenon there is likelihood that some responses may be emotionally charged. Therefore to ensure psychological harm does not occur, the researcher will brief me about the study prior to data collection and have also been assured that thereafter I will also be debriefed. Wherein I require further emotional support, arrangements to that effect have been made with an EAP/EHWP practitioner (name of social worker to be included), employed (name of employer to be included) who is a qualified social worker. I have also been informed that i can also consult a practitioner of my choice in this regard.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>2.4 Possible benefits:</p> <p>The benefit of participating in this study is that I will be afforded an opportunity to give my own personal account on supportive supervision in a protected environment, where I will not be judged. The findings of the study will contribute to the development of a supervision model and conversely also benefit other social workers as they embark on supervision in their daily professional lives. Further to that, I will also contribute to the generation of indigenous knowledge regarding supervision in social work.</p>	<u>Initial</u>
<p>2.5 Confidentiality: I have been assured that as I consent to participate in the study by signing this informed consent form with my details in it that the form will be kept in a safe and lockable cabinet. I have also been informed that a tape recorder will be used as a means to capture all the data I share with the researcher during the in-depth interview and that the recordings will be stored in a safe and lockable place and that they will then be destroyed after a couple of years as prescribed by the teaching University where the researcher is enrolled.</p>	<u>Initial</u>

<p>I am aware that information regarding my details and the tape recordings will only be shared with the researcher's supervisor at the University of south Africa. Furthermore, I have been assured that that the information I will give will be used for research purposes only and that my identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the researcher and that to ensure my anonymity symbols will be used to refer to me instead of my name.</p>	
<p>2.6 Access to findings: As a form of gratitude for my participating in the study, I have been informed that a seminar will be held wherein the researcher will share the findings of the study with all participants including the social work community as a whole. As a form of gratitude for my participating in the study, I have been informed that a workshop will be held wherein the researcher will share the findings of the study and also to train me and other social work supervisors and managers in Province on the application of the model for our use to offer supportive supervision.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2.7 Voluntary participation: I am aware that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time should I feel I am unable to endure the emotional discomfort.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>3. The information above was explained to me the participant by Gladys B Bhuda in English and I am in command of this language. I was given an opportunity to ask questions and all my questions were answered satisfactorily.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participate in the study and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage from the study without any penalty.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>5. Participation in the study will not result in any cost to me. I will be contacted by the researcher at..... which is my place of employment.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>B. I HEREBY CONSENT TO VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE PROJECT Confirmedon20..... Signature of Participant</p>	<p><u>Initial</u> Signature of witness</p>

ADDENDUM G: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introductory Information

The purpose of this study is twofold; firstly is to explore and describe the nature and extent of supportive supervision amongst social worker employed in the Mpumalanga Province of south Africa and secondly, is to develop a model for supportive supervision.

The said study is conducted for PhD purposes by Ms. Gladys B Bhuda.

Instructions

- The questionnaire consists of section A to D.
- Answer all questions.
- Answer those questions that are applicable to you.
- Use the symbol X where appropriate to indicate your selection.

Section A: Biographical Information

1.1	GENDER	
	Male	
	Female	

1.2	AGE	
	20-25	
	26-35	
	36-45	
	46-64	
	65 0r more	

1.3	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
	Diploma	
	Bachelor Degree	
	Master Degree	
	Doctorate	

Section B: Work Information

2.1	RANK			
	Social worker grade I		Social worker grade II	

2.2	How many years overall have you been practicing as a social worker in South Africa?					
	0-3 years		4-6 years		7-9years	Specify other:

2.3	How long have you been practising as a social worker in the Mpumalanga Department of Social Development (DSD)?					
	0-3 years		4-6 years		7-9years	Specify other:

2.4	In which programme/sub-programme are you currently located?					
	HIV/AIDS programme		Early Childhood development		Services to older persons	Children and family services
	Foster care Services		Community Work		Substance use and abuse	Services to people with disabilities s
	Social crime prevention		Prevention and treatment of substance abuse		Victim empowerment programme	Child justice services

Section C: Questions Regarding Supervision

3.1	Indicate your supervisor's rank.			
	Grade ii social worker		Grade iii social worker	
	Social work manager grade i		Social work manager grade ii	

3.2	In a space of three month, how often do you receive formal supervision?		
	Once a week		Once a month
	Once in two months		Irregularly

	Bi-monthly		Never
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3.3	Use the rating scale: <i>1= seldom exposed; 2= sometimes; 3=always</i> to rate the frequency at which you are exposed to each of the following “functions” of supervision.		
	Administrative		
	Supportive		
	Educational		

3.4	Use the rating scale: <i>1= seldom exposed; 2= sometimes; 3=always</i> to rate the frequency at which you are exposed to the following “modes” of supervision.		
	Individual		
	Group		
	Team		
	Tandem		

3.5	Use the rating scale: <i>1= seldom exposed; 2= sometimes; 3=always</i> to rate the frequency at which you are exposed to the following “types” of supervision.		
	Open door		
	Consultative		
	Contracted		
	Observational		
	Review		

3.6	Use the rating scale: <i>1= seldom exposed; 2= sometimes; 3=always</i> to rate the frequency at which you are exposed to the following “kinds” of supervision.		
	Internal		
	External		

3.7	Use the rating scale: <i>1= seldom exposed; 2= sometimes; 3=always</i> to rate the frequency at which you are exposed to the following “forms” of supervision.		
	Managerial supervision		

	Clinical/Professional supervision	
	Peer supervision	
	Cultural supervision	

3.8	Does your supervisor make use of a supervision guideline(s) in supervising you?	YES	NO
If yes, name the guideline(s):			

Section D: questions regarding supportive supervision.

The Definition: Supportive supervision constitutes one of the three components of social work supervision. Supervisors engage supervisees in this type of supervision when they want to promote psychological well-being of supervisees (social workers) (Hoffmann, 1990: 220), to enhance staff morale (Gibleman & Schervish, 1997: 3) by providing emotional support, keeping oversight of personal and professional boundaries, and “talking through what to do if personal needs get in the way of doing a good job” (Coulshed et al., 2006: 164).

Keep in mind the description of supportive supervision when answering the following questions:

4.1	How often have you needed supportive supervision in the past two months				
	Daily		Once a week		Twice a week
	Bi-weekly		Once a month		Specify other:

4.2	Indicate 2 factors that often lead to your need for supportive supervision.				
	To work through family problems		To work through work politics		To attend to client queries/complaints
	To attend workload issues		For emotional support		To work through personal problems
	Specify Other:				

4.3	Did you receive the necessary support for the need indicated at 4.2?	YES	NO
-----	----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

If your answer to question 4.3 is YES, answer questions 4.4 until 4.11 and then proceed to answer question 4.18. And if your answer to question 4.3 is NO Skip questions 4.4 to 4.11 and proceed to answer questions 4.12 until 4.18.

4.4.	Indicate the “mode” utilised by your supervisor in offering support to address the factors identified at no. 4.2.		
	Individual		
	Group		
	Team		
	Tandem		

4.5	Use the scale below to rate the effectiveness of the “mode” used in supporting you.					
	1=Ineffective		2=Slightly effective		3= Highly effective	

4.6	Indicate the “type” of supervision utilised by your supervisor when supporting you with the issue identified at 4.2.		
	Open door supervision		
	Consultative supervision		
	Contracted supervision		
	Observational supervision		
	Review supervision		

4.7	Use the scale below to rate the effectiveness of the “type” of support used in supporting you.					
	1=Ineffective		2=Slightly effective		3= Highly effective	

4.8	Indicate one the “kind” of supervision used by your supervisor to support you with the challenge identified at 4.2.		
	Internal		
	External		

4.9	Use the scale below to rate the effectiveness of the “kind” of support used in supporting you with the challenge identified at 4.2.					
-----	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

	1=Ineffective		2=Slightly effective		3= Highly effective	
--	---------------	--	----------------------	--	---------------------	--

4.10	Indicate the “form” of supervision used by your supervisor to support you with the challenge identified at 4.2.					
	Managerial supervision					
	Clinical/Professional supervision					
	Peer supervision					
	Cultural supervision					

4.11	Use the scale below to rate the effectiveness of the “form” of support used in supporting you with the challenge identified at 4.2.					
	1=Ineffective		2=Slightly effective		3= Highly effective	

If your answer to question 4.3 is NO, answer the questions hereunder:

4.12	Identify the emotion that can best describe how you felt hours after you did not receive the support.					
	Joyful		Worried		Anxious	
	Unappreciated		shocked		Confident	
	Enthusiastic		Baffled		Frustrated	
	Specify other:					

4.13	Ideally, how often would you have liked to be offered support for the challenges indicated at 4.3? Is it not 4.2?					
	Daily		Weekly		monthly	
	Bi-monthly		Never		Specify other:	

4.14	Indicate the “kind” of supervision you would have preferred to be used by your supervisor in addressing the challenge identified at 4.3. Is it not 4.2?					
	Internal					
	External					

4.15	Indicate the “type” of support you required from your supervisor in addressing the issue identified at 4.2.	
	Open door supervision	
	Consultative supervision	
	Contracted supervision	
	Observational supervision	
	Review supervision	

4.16.	Indicate the “mode” of support you required from your supervisor in addressing the issue identified at 4.2.	
	Individual	
	Group	
	Team	
	Tandem	

4.17	Indicate one “form” of supervision you would have preferred to be used by your supervisor in supporting you with the challenge identified at 4.2.	
	Managerial supervision	
	Clinical/Professional supervision	
	Peer supervision	
	Cultural supervision	

4.18	What is your overall perception of supportive supervision?	Necessary	Unnecessary
Substantiate your selection:			

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Kind regards,
Ms GB Bhuda

ADDENDUM H: EDITING CERTIFICATE



Office: 0183892451

SCHOOL FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Cell: 0729116600

Date: 24th January, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

I, **Muchativugwa Liberty Hove**, confirm and certify that I have read and edited the entire thesis **SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION: A MODEL FOR SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISORS** by **Gladys Bathabile BHUDA**, submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree **Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Social Work, Department of Social Work, at the University of South Africa (UNISA)**.

Gladys Bathabile was supervised by **Dr J Sekudu**.

I hold a PhD in English Language and Literature in English and am qualified to edit such a thesis for grammatical correctness, cohesion and coherence. The views expressed herein, however, remain those of the researcher/s.

Yours sincerely

Dr M.L.Hove (PhD, MA, PGDE, PGCE, BA Honours – English)

