

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The goals of this study were to 1) explore and describe the motivational function of the social work manager and 2) submit scientifically based guidelines for motivating social workers. The purpose was not to give a complete set of guidelines for each aspect but to identify factors that influence the motivational process, gaps for future research and to propose a variety of possible recommendations regarding the motivational function of social work managers. These goals have been reached given that motivation in the workplace, motivation of human resources as a function of the social work manager, and motivational strategies and guidelines for social work managers were explored and described.

The following objectives of this study were achieved: 1) To explore motivation as sub or additional management function of the social work manager (see pages 30-33). 2) To identify factors that influence motivation of social workers in the workplace (see pages 17-19). 3) To provide recommendations regarding motivational strategies for the social work manager (see pages 44-53). 4) To identify and describe motivational guidelines to be applied by the social work manager (see pages 53-56).

The following research statements were tested:

- *The importance of motivation as management function of the social work manager is very often ignored.*

This research statement could not be proven as true, based on the following results:

- motivation as management function is regarded as important (see page 70);
 - social work managers are aware of the motivational function in respect of employees (see page 71); and
 - the administrative, educational and supportive functions/roles of social work managers are regarded as motivational (see page 71).
- *Factors contributing to the motivation of social workers are not clearly identified.*

This research statement is true in light of

- the inability of social work managers to identify the basic needs of social

workers to improve work performance (see page 66); and

- the inability of social work managers to address the basic needs of social workers to improve work performance (see page 66).
- *The social work manager does not effectively apply motivation as management function to motivate social workers.*

This research statement could not be proven as true or false.

- Most of the respondents agreed that social work managers should apply motivational strategies to motivate employees (page75).
- *Employee motivation is not a shared responsibility of the social worker, the social work manager and top management.*

This research statement could not be proven true or false as

- the majority of social workers believe that the social work manager should be held responsible for motivating social workers (page 75); and
- 97% of the respondents indicated that it is a shared responsibility of the social work manager and the top management of the organisation (page 75).
- *Motivational guidelines as suggested in the literature are neither accessible to social work managers nor implemented by them.*

The research statement seems to be true in light of the following:

- social workers and social work managers are not trained in motivation (see page 6), consequently motivational guidelines are not available to social work managers; and
- motivational guidelines suggested in the literature are not implemented, as such guidelines are not available in the offices of social work managers (see page 62).

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions and recommendations will be presented below, which are based on the literature and findings of the empirical study.

6.2.1 IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS

The 29 respondents were social workers who held positions as social workers, senior social workers and chief social workers, and were employed on both a full time and part time basis. Seven of them were social work managers that were employed full time and all of them were chief social workers.

The length of employment of the social workers and social work managers varied from five months to twenty five years. The majority of the respondents had degree qualifications.

The following findings are concerning:

- The majority of social workers did not attend courses related to motivating personnel. On-the-job training (in-service-training) in DCS focuses on equipping functional personnel (non-professionals) while it is expected of professionals (in this study social workers) to create their own learning opportunities.
- The minority of social work managers attended courses related to motivating personnel. This could potentially be problematic as social worker managers might consequently feel inadequate regarding their knowledge of motivation and that social workers may lack confidence in social work managers' abilities to motivate them.
- Social work managers in the chief social worker position are supervising incumbents on the same post level (findings on question 5.2, annexure 5). It is important to realise that collegial relationships change when the social worker moves into a management position. Social work managers on the same post level as their incumbents may create problems regarding performance evaluation.

6.2.2 MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS

Social work managers should take cognisance of the following factors in terms of their motivational function:

Respondents regard motivation, referring specifically to those self-generated factors that arise from within the person, for example personal pride in a job well done, as the strongest **form of motivation**. The literature refers to this form of motivation as intrinsic motivation that is more powerful than extrinsic motivation.

According to the literature **internal and external motivators** contribute to the motivation of social workers. The majority of respondents regard the need for recognition, the need for achievement and positive interpersonal relationships as the most important internal motivators. The need to be in position of authority is the least important internal motivator for social workers. Feedback on performance, paid vacation, bonuses and special allowances, work security and working independently are regarded as the most important external motivators for social workers. The

assumption can therefore be made that social workers have a good idea of the specific internal and external motivators they would prefer to have emphasised by social work managers.

According to the research study social workers **portray motivation** to social work managers when they show a willingness to work hard, a total commitment to service delivery, reflect a high, cohesive team spirit with full participation, display a willingness to go the extra mile, show loyalty towards clients, etcetera.

The findings in this study reveal that all five needs of **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** are important for social workers and social work managers - although not to the same degree. The need for self-actualisation was denoted as the most important. The need for esteem and status is not regarded as very important. The literature denotes that when social workers' needs are met in terms of Maslow's hierarchy, they will be motivated.

The literature refers to a number of **factors related to organisational structures that motivate** such as policies and a working environment that can sustain or oppress the motivation of social workers in the work situation.

- The assumption is made that social workers and social work managers in the DCS experience **policies** as negative and are uncertain if policies are even intended to motivate employees. Based on the fore mentioned it can be assumed that respondents in this study are convinced of the important role that **policies** play in motivation. According to the literature policies should achieve and increase productivity and overall job satisfaction and this is linked to motivation. It is however evident from the results of this study that those policies in the DCS **do not** contribute to positive attitudes, nor do they encourage employee participation or allow employees to participate in decision making. The findings in this study are contrary to the career pathing principle in the DCS according to which employees must relate positively to policies on promotion, remuneration, performance management in order to promote progression and productivity.
- Respondents experience **the working environment** in the DCS as motivating and conducive to work. A conducive work environment that will promote the motivation of employees is regarded by the respondents and the literature as a work place that is physically acceptable, safe, satisfies social needs, emphasises respect and trust, allows free communication and accepts diverse

opinions.

The majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the **functional levels** of social workers should received attention from social work managers. What is concerning is that social workers are meeting the minimum requirements - nothing more, nothing less. The expected level of functioning is linked to a rigid, low level of remuneration.

The literature described Herzberg's theory on **contextual and content factors** as motivating to employees. The findings with regard to Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory confirm that the satisfaction of social workers is influenced by how satisfied they are with both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In spite of an ongoing debate between researchers as to whether intrinsic or extrinsic factors are more important, the results of this study reveal that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are important to social workers.

In this study the majority of social workers regard the contextual factors (also called hygiene factors) namely, job security and good working conditions, as the most favourite job satisfiers. The respondents were neutral regarding their feelings on status. They all mentioned that content factors (also called motivation factors) such as challenges, freedom, responsibility, potential for growth, achievement and feedback are motivational. Potential for growth received the highest rating from respondents. Based on the findings and the assumptions made in the empirical study, it can be concluded that the need for feedback amongst social workers in the job context is significant. Social workers want to know how they are doing, how social work managers are perceiving them and how they can make adjustments to perform better. Performance management is motivational when social work managers provide or promise a reward.

The literature as well as the majority of the respondents regard all the **facets of job satisfaction** that were mentioned as important. The findings reveal that even more important, from a motivational perspective, are the relationships with co-workers and the quality of supervision.

6.2.3 THE PROFILE OF A MOTIVATING SOCIAL WORK MANAGER

The minority of social work managers **attended courses related to motivating personnel**. It is imperative that social workers in supervisory positions be adequately trained on issues surrounding

the motivation of social workers.

Most of the respondents 27 (94%) agree that **motivation, as a management function**, is important. Both the literature studied and the respondents emphasised motivation as a sub or additional management function of the social work manager.

Although social work managers show a keen interest in their work, most respondents are of the opinion that social work managers are seldom **aware of their motivational function** in respect of employees. Although three social work managers (see p. 70) attended courses/sessions related to motivating personnel, the assumption can be made that these courses/sessions did not provide social work managers with the necessary awareness of their motivational function in respect of employees.

A small number of respondents are of the opinion that social work managers, in the motivational process, are only sometimes able to **identify and address the basic needs** of social workers to improve work performance. The assumption can therefore be made that social work managers in the DCS do not have the expertise to apply the motivational process to improve work performance, although they are aware of the importance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs for social workers. In operational guidelines for training human resources (2002) the DCS made amongst others a commitment to support employees in updating their knowledge, skills and job-related competencies; increasing job satisfaction and the fulfillment of personal goals; and building self-awareness, self-confidence and motivation. The failure to execute these commitments seems to be based on social work managers lack of knowledge and skills regarding motivation as a sub or additional management function.

Respondents agree with the literature when stating that **administrative, educational and supportive functions/roles** of the social work manager in the organisation are motivational in nature. The assumption can be made that social work managers implement their **administrative and educational functions** successfully, although the respondents rated the supportive function higher. The overall impression gained is that social work managers take their administrative, educational and supportive functions/roles seriously.

The literature study identified and described the importance of the **leadership styles of social work**

managers in motivating social workers. Social work managers with an autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style will not promote social workers' motivation in the DCS. From a motivational perspective, it is clear that a democratic, transformational or participative leadership style on the part of social work managers will enhance the motivation of social workers in the DCS.

Although the social work manager is rated by 23 (79%) of the respondents as **responsible for the motivating of employees**, the assumption can be made that both the social worker himself/herself and the top management of the organisation also have a role to play in the motivation process. The majority of the respondents regard the motivation of social workers as a shared responsibility of the social work manager and top management of the DCS.

Both the literature and the respondents confirm the importance of job design, incentives and personnel development as **motivational strategies**. Social work managers who apply these motivational strategies will motivate employees. Respondents and the literature described **incentives** (monetary and non-monetary) as motivational. Incentives, pay/salary, money, wages, some fringe benefits such as pension, etcetera are financial rewards that are important to social workers. Social work managers' recommendations on and distribution of incentives should be fair and equitable.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based on the above conclusions are presented as follows:

6.3.1 Development and training of social work managers

The investigation points out that the majority of social workers (production social workers and social workers in management positions) do not receive exposure to sessions/courses on motivating personnel. It is recommended that social work managers be exposed to training related to motivating personnel. Training by means of on-the-job training and off-the-job training can be used for developing management skills of social work managers to motivate employees. By attending refresher courses on the motivation of personnel and by participating in research on motivation, social work managers can be updated on aspects related to their motivational function.

6.3.2 Internal and external motivators

It is recommended that social work managers make use of internal and external motivators to cultivate a sense of well-being, a sense of making a contribution to the community and a sense of joy for social workers. Social workers will be motivated when they feel that they are rewarded for the work they do. Applying these internal and external motivators, the motivation of social workers can be instigated and strengthened to improve the employing organisations' policies and the efficiency and effectiveness of its services. Social work managers, when implementing the policies of the organisation, should also consider utilising internal and external motivators that can enhance or weaken the effect of motivation. It is recommended that social work managers use the principles of the content theories of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor model and McClelland's achievement motivation theory to motivate social workers best.

6.3.3 Identifying and addressing basic needs to improve work performance

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's job enrichment theories and McClelland's needs theory are useful to the social work manager in assessing social workers' motivation and in promoting appropriate and productive behaviour. Research findings on motivation are available, which attempt to provide explanations for the behaviour-outcome relationships between social workers, social work managers and top management. It is also recommended that social work managers use supervision and consultation to identify and address the needs of social workers. In facilitating the motivational process the social work manager must be aware of *Ubuntu*, which means people are people through other people. Adequate preparation to maximise the performance of social work managers in motivating social workers is of vital importance.

6.3.4 Statements that portray motivation

The social work manager must ensure social workers' motivation and improve their performances to benefit the organisation by increasing the productivity and quality of services rendered. Social work managers should, amongst others, take note of social workers' willingness to work hard, their commitment to service delivery and high, cohesive team spirit with full participation, and if this is absent then apply motivational guidelines that deal with unmotivated social workers. In order to maintain and sustain motivation, it is recommended that social work managers personally congratulate social workers as a way of acknowledging their work performance.

6.3.5 Factors related to organisational structures that influence motivation

The social work manager should be aware of the importance of **policies** in motivating employees, as he/she is responsible for bringing aspects regarding policy to the attention of social workers. It is recommended that policies in the DCS be revised in accordance with the principles of participative management by means of a democratic process. A system can be utilised whereby social workers generate, evaluate and suggest better ways of implementing policies. It is recommended that this aspect be further investigated by the DCS (also see 6.4).

6.3.6 Awareness of the social work manager's motivational function in respect of employees

It is important to distinguish between the inputs that motivate such as motivators and satisfiers, and the resources that bring about that motivation. Social work managers should have the information they need to measure performance. This information should go to the subordinates and not to his/her superior. It should be used as a means of self-control, not as a tool to control from above. Every social work manager should be held strictly accountable for the results of his/her subordinate's performance.

Social work managers should be sensitive to variations in social workers' needs, abilities, and goals. The social work manager is responsible to continuously monitor needs, abilities, goals and preferences of social workers. Managers must also consider individual differences in preferences for rewards.

6.3.7 Levels of functioning

This result challenges social work managers to be creative in setting up team events that serve to motivate social workers. It is recommended that team successes be celebrated to enhance group cohesion. Social work managers can use meetings to praise and recognise the contributions and achievements of successful work teams. Other forms of acknowledgement may include time off or gift vouchers. For social workers with a strong need for social acceptance the social work manager can publicly recognise their accomplishments by means of an article in the newsletters of the organisation.

Evidence in practice consistently indicates that part time social workers will do more than what is required because of their desire to be permanently employed. In order to raise the level of

functioning of incumbents, social work managers in collaboration with the top management in the DCS should consider providing social workers with continuous challenging projects and give them autonomy to pursue their interests.

6.3.8 Leadership styles of social work managers

It is recommended that social work managers adopt a democratic, transformational or participative leadership style characterised by managing and rewarding performances of social workers, showing individual consideration, providing intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation. Managers who display leadership behaviour, which includes characteristics such as integrity, approachability and objectivity will motivate employees.

6.3.9 Whose responsibility it is to motivate

It is recommended that top management, middle level management and first-level/supervisory management regard the motivation of social workers as part of their managerial responsibilities. Such an approach will result in job satisfaction and be accompanied by a higher rate of productivity on the part of social workers.

6.3.10 Motivational strategies

To understand how financial rewards modify behaviour is a challenging task for the social work manager. Social work managers must ensure that social workers see a link between performance and salary increase/monetary rewards/remuneration. Financial rewards that are perceived as satisfying will enhance motivation. Managers can use job design, incentives and job satisfaction as a motivational tool for motivating their employees. The results highlighted the fact that the application of the above mentioned **motivational strategies** by social work managers will motivate employees and, as a consequence, promotes productivity, a decrease in resignations and staff turnover.

6.3.11 Contextual factors

It is clear that social worker managers should be aware that intrinsic and extrinsic factors satisfy different needs of social workers and therefore motivates them. Through regular evaluations collected from a variety of evaluators (for example individual and group supervision, peers, term reviews and annual performance evaluations) social work managers can keep themselves updated on the needs of social workers. It is recommended that the contextual factors such as job security and

good working conditions, which satisfy and content factors like potential for growth and feedback, which motivate, be utilised in combination with each other by social work managers to enhance the motivation of social workers.

6.3.12 Applying motivational guidelines

By applying motivational guidelines social work managers will connect with the **core values** of the DCS that focus on **development** (enablement and empowerment, faith in the potential of people, providing opportunities for growth), **efficiency** (productivity, the best methods, procedures and systems to achieve set goals, excellent services) and **accountability** (desire to perform well, accepting accountability for behaviour, commitment).

6.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

6.4.1 An investigation done in 2000 by the EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) of the DCS identified the reward systems (merits and notch increases) as perhaps one of the greatest reasons for the dissatisfaction of employees. The findings in this research study emphasised the importance of reward systems as increasing or decreasing motivation. The EAP also suggested that managers must be educated on the early identification of work related problems that cause de-motivation of employees. This study supports the suggestion made by the EAP, which suggested that social work managers must engage in more advance research and training to identify work related de-motivators. They have to develop the ability to identify and address the needs of social workers and to apply appropriate motivation theories, motivational strategies and motivational guidelines that will motivate social workers by increasing accountability, providing support and opportunities for development and improving quality of services.

6.5.2 It is recommended that the following aspects which linked to motivation be investigated: 1) regular supervision/consultation sessions by social work managers, 2) the competencies of social work managers to perform their management functions/roles, 3) social work managers destructive criticism of the work performance of social workers, 4) limited resources that social work managers have access to and 5) the isolation of social work managers within the organisation.

6.5 3 It is recommended that further research be done on the measuring of motivation in respect of social workers.

6.4 CLOSING REMARKS

Top management must support and show commitment towards social work managers thereby enabling them to fulfill their motivational function. It is important to note that in an increasingly turbulent business environment, motivation and motivational and/or strategies in an organisation are of vital importance and must be integrated into the organisation.

Social work managers must be empowered to fulfill their management functions/roles as outlined in the literature as they engage in several management functions simultaneously. Knowledge about the importance of motivation will make management more effective and efficient.