

**EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION ON JOB PERFORMANCE IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, POLOKWANE SUB-DISTRICT:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

By

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## DECLARATION

I Manthosi Frans Lesetja declare that **EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION ON JOB PERFORMANCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, POLOKWANE SUB-DISTRICT: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

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Manthosi Frans Lesetja

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Date

## **DEDICATIONS**

I would like to dedicate this research to the following people:

- My late mother Ngobeni Christinah Ramokone for her everlasting love and caring, up until her last day on earth.
- My two brothers Sam and John Manthosi together with their families, and to my one and only sister Celia Ngobeni.

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- Dr. J.R Rammala for editing my research dissertation.

## **ABSTRACT**

The overall aim of the study was to evaluate how Social Work Supervision affects job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. The objectives of the study were to explore how supervision is rendered in the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane sub-district; to investigate the impact of supervision on Social Workers' job performance and to make recommendations from the findings to the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane sub-district regarding how supervision can be improved to enhance service delivery.

The study was qualitative research and researcher used descriptive research design. The data was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interview from six (6) cluster supervisors and twelve (12) Social Workers who are employed by the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. The sample consisted of cluster supervisors who had more than three months experience of providing supervision in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District and no acting cluster supervisor was selected to participate in the study. The Social Workers had more than three months of working experience at Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. These Social Workers were not on internship programme. The researcher used thematic data analysis.

The findings of this study confirmed that supervision which is rendered in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District is conducted by supervisors who did not receive training during their academic years and after being qualified Social Workers; supervisors conduct this critical role because of their years of experience as Social Workers. Secondly Supervision sessions which are conducted by effective supervisors who have good supervisory skills have a positive impact on the job performance of Social Workers, as compare to ineffective supervisors without good supervisory skills and thirdly none adherence to structured supervision under poor working conditions without resources with high caseloads and unfair remuneration leads to burnout, and consequently contributing towards Social Workers having the intention to leave the Department of Social Development.

*Key words:* Cluster supervisors, Social Workers, Job performance and supervision

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# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

The newly appointed and inexperienced Social Workers in practice are expected to be equipped with knowledge and skills of Social Work by experienced Supervisors in order to render services to the clients effectively and efficiently. These knowledge and skills are for professional growth of the newly appointed and inexperienced Social workers. Drawing back to the use of the term Social Work Supervision Kadushin and Harkness (2002) argue there are few and scattered reference to Social Work supervision before 1920. Furthermore back then, supervision referred to the control and coordinating function of a State Board of Supervisors, a State Board of Charities, or a State Board of Control. Originally, the term supervision applied to the inspection and review of programmes and institutions rather than to supervision of individual workers within the programme. It is now regarded as an interactional process within the context of professional relationship whereby an experienced supervisor who is a professional Social Worker use theoretical knowledge and skills of Social Work supervision in supervising Social Worker in order for them to render Social Work services effectively and efficiently (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

The first Social Work text of supervision was used in the work of Brackett (1904) titled "supervision and education in the charity". This is supported by Wonnacott (2012) who argues that the practice of supervision in Social Work is not new. Furthermore it is argued that it has a long history within the profession, although its focus has shifted over time, mirroring the role and function of Social Work within society and the organizational context within which it operates. The roots of Social Work within the charitable sector, with paid staff managing the volunteer workforce, point to supervision emerging first as an administrative task, closely followed by developing emphasis on education and support.

According to DSD (2006) Social Work Supervision in South Africa during the apartheid era was different across the race wherein newly graduated White Social Workers were given supervisory role. This preference made Social Work professionals to be utilized in non-professional tasks, which in itself deprives them of professional growth and increases their workload and thus their stress levels. This has been attributed largely to lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors, who themselves also lacked capacity to conduct professional supervision. This preference defeated the purpose of this critical function, resulting in the development of negative perceptions towards supervision.

The death of supervision in practice is also exacerbated by the perception that trained supervisors are not necessary, given the demand for service delivery. There is a limited understanding of the need for supervision amongst non-Social Work managers and, in some cases, supervisors are non-existent, with new Social Workers not being able to receive guidance/mentorship they need to enable them to become better and capacitated Social Workers (DSD, 2006).

The researcher is of a view that, to date, supervision in the Department of Social Development is still not structured and is conducted by supervisors who do not have supervisory training. This is supported by the recruitment and retention strategy of DSD (2006) that there is lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors who themselves also lack the capacity to conduct supervision.

In the study of Marè (2012) the respondents indicated that work-related stress was caused by pressure to perform, deadlines, amount of work, difficult clients, complicated case, personal goals, dissatisfactions with their salaries and negative professional relationship with managers, colleagues and supervisees. With the high workload, lack of resources and shortage of Social Workers in South Africa, it is still expected that the supervisors, who themselves do not receive supervisory training, should provide supervision to the newly appointed Social Workers and old Social Workers in order to render services to the clients effectively and efficiently.

Despite the fact that the Social Work Supervision is considered as less popular, it is still seen by Botha (2002) as having lost its value in the South African context, but not its significance. DSD (2006) sees supervision as important hence it indicated that an advanced curriculum must be developed to support functions or methods of Social Work such as supervision. The Department of Social Development gave effect to the foregoing, an evaluation of the current practices of supervision must be conducted; gaps identified; and an appropriate framework for supervision developed jointly with stakeholders (DSD, 2006). In 2012, the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa was developed by the Department of Social Development and South African Council of Social Service Profession. The Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa highlighted that the framework is not purported to be a training manual or academic text (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). The envisaged study was conducted in Limpopo Province, around the Polokwane Sub-District.

## **1.2 Research problem**

The unavailability of on-going training or structured training programme of supervisors result in them not being able to perform their task, (Du Plooy, 2011). In agreement with the above researcher Skidmore (1995) argues that one problem in Social Work supervision is that few supervisors have received specific or adequate training for this important position. Although the lack of Social Work supervision training is regarded by the researchers as a problem it is argued that there is not enough study taken to explain the impact of supervision on service delivery, (Du Plooy, 2011).

The research problem of this study stems primarily from the practical observation by the researcher during his third and fourth levels of practical placement. The placement was in one of the Department of Social Development offices in the Polokwane Sub-District, viz., the Capricorn District in Limpopo Province.

The researcher observed that some supervisors were appointed straight from district levels where their primary functions were solely coordination of programs with no supervisory experience or expertise.

Du Plooy (2011) supported this observation that supervisors were not specifically trained for the roles as supervisors, and did not receive in-service training for their appointed supervisory tasks. Botha, as cited in Du Plooy (2011), concurred with the researcher's sentiments that supervisors should be selected to be supervisors on account of their knowledge, skills and experience of direct Social Work service delivery. She further indicated that supervisors need additional knowledge and skills in their task. Training in supervision should be clear and specific. Mbau (2005) argues that lack of supervision has a negative impact on the Social Workers and that Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

The researcher also observed that there was absenteeism of Social Workers from work, Social Workers arrived late at work and even discouraged the researcher about the profession. Whenever the researcher tried to project his future plans about the profession, they always turned him down complaining about more workload, low salaries and some had intentions to leave service owing to lack of resources such as cars, stationery and office accommodation. In support of this observation DSD, (2006) indicating that the lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors, who themselves also lack capacity to conduct professional supervision resulted in the high case loads, emotional and other trauma experienced by Social Workers in service delivery, high stress levels due to management and societal demands as well as lack of resources to deliver on their mandate.

The researcher is interested in exploring how lack of supervision has an impact on Social Workers' job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. Below is the operational definition of terms which provides an understanding of key words which are used in the study.

### 1.3 Operational definition of terms

**Evaluation:** Toseland and Rivas, (2009) define Evaluation as the process of obtaining information about the effects of a single intervention or the effect of the total group experience. In this study evaluation is defined as the scientific process of obtaining information about how supervision affects the job performance of Social Workers.

**Social Worker** – DSD and SACSSP (2012) defines a Social Worker as a professional who is registered with the South Africa Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in terms of chapter 2 section 17 of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978, (Act No. 110 of 1978) as amended. In this study it is a professional who is registered with the South Africa Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in terms of the Social Service Professions Act No. 110 of 1978.

**Social Work Cluster supervisor-** DSD and SACSSP (2012) defines Social Work supervisor as a Social Worker with the required experience and qualifications to whom authority is delegated to supervise Social Workers, student Social Workers, student Social Workers and student auxiliary learners. In this study, is a Social Worker with the required experience and qualifications to whom authority is delegated to supervise Social Workers within a certain cluster.

**Supervision-** Wonnacott (2012) defines supervision as a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organization to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organizational, professional and personal objectives which together promote outcomes for service users. In this study it is the traditional method of transmitting knowledge of Social Work in practice from an experienced Social Worker to an inexperienced Social Worker.

**Job performance-** Campbell cited in Jex and Britt, (2008) explains that job performance represents behaviours employees engage in while at work that contributes to organizational goal. In this research, job performance is defined as the ability of the Social Worker to render services efficiently and effectively to the clients.

## **1.4 Theoretical framework**

### **Ecosystem theory**

The Ecosystem theory comprises of the Ecological theory which is known as a person-in-environment (Social Work supervision and Social Worker in work place). Ecological theory focuses on the context in which individuals live and their interpretations of that context and how that cultural context influences an individual's behaviour. The Ecological theory is concerned with how individuals and the environment achieve an adaptive balance and also why they sometimes fail to achieve the balance (Zastrow, 2006). This theory is relevant to this study given that Social Work Supervisors and Social Workers spend most of their times at work and they are influenced by the social and organizational patterns in their interaction.

The Ecosystem theory was appropriate to be applied in this research in order to investigate how each system (viz., the cluster supervisors, Social Worker and agency) influences another. This will help in tapping into the problems as it is explained by the Systems theory, namely, that changes in one system affects the other system positively or negatively. The change in supervision provided by the cluster supervisors affects the behaviour of practising Social Workers.

The theory may have assisted the profession by giving the practitioner an organizing framework to analyse the ever-shifting, volatile interaction of people in their environments. This theoretical constructs facilitate the process of linking concepts from traditional theories such as "psychodynamic" and "behaviourism" together, enabling practitioners to visualize the human process as an eclectic whole, (Farley, Smith & Boyle, 2010). According to Farley, Smith and Boyle (2010), a system is a combination of elements with mutual reciprocity and identifiable boundaries that form a complex or unitary role. Farley, Smith and Boyle's (2010) Ecological theory is a subset of Systems theory that makes some important contributions to Social Work. They identified three levels of system which are Macro, Mezzo and Macro. In this study the emphasis is on Mezzo and Macro systems.

- **Mezzo system**

This system refers to small groups that impact the individual such as the family, work groups, and other social groups (Farley, Smith and Boyle's, 2010). Social Work Supervisor and Social Worker are from families and have work-place groups. These systems directly affect the behavioural patterns of the practitioners. The relationship between the Social Worker and supervisors is by their interaction. For Social Workers to deliver the services more effectively and efficiently, it depends or relies on the relationship with their supervisors. When there is impaired communication and relating problems amongst supervisors and Social Workers, the practitioners develop work-related stress that results in poor service delivery.

- **Macro System**

According to Farley, Smith and Boyle's (2010) this system refers to groups and systems that are larger than families. Four important macro systems that impact individuals are, namely, organizations, institutions, community and culture. Social Work Supervisors and Social Worker find themselves in an organizational structure executing roles and functions. They are both affected by the agency regulations, departmental rules and regulations, the professional code of ethics and the Acts from the judicial system. All of the above-mentioned variables affect the Social Work Supervisors, Social Worker and the job performance of both practitioners.

## **1.5 Purpose of the study**

### *1.5.1 Aim of the study*

The aim of the study was to evaluate how Social Work Supervision affects job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District.

### *1.5.2 Objectives of the study were:*

- To explore how supervision is rendered in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District.
- To investigate the impact supervision on Social Workers' job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District.



- To make recommendations from the findings to the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District regarding how supervision can be improved to enhance service delivery.

## **1.6 Research questions**

- How is supervision rendered in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District?
- What impact does supervision have on Social Workers' job performance the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District?

## **1.7 Research methodology**

The researcher used qualitative research which intended to help the researcher better understand the meaning and perspectives of the Social Workers and cluster supervisors; and how their perspectives are shaped by the physical and social context through the processes which involved maintaining or altering the phenomenon and relationships (Maxwell, 2013). The research methodology in this study consists of research design, population, sampling method, data collection method and data analysis.

### *1.7.1 Research design*

The researcher used descriptive research design that presents a picture of specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship, and focuses on explaining how the phenomenon (viz., supervision) can impact on human behaviour (i.e., job performance) and why the behaviour is influenced by the phenomenon (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005).

### *1.7.2 Population*

The population of this study was Social Workers and cluster supervisors employed by the Department of Social Development working at the Polokwane Sub-District. Polokwane Sub-District is divided into three sections namely; East, Central and West. The Social Workers and cluster supervisors were not selected based on gender, area of practice or age because; the study was not based on any biographic

characteristics. Instead it was based on the position that the participant is employed for which is a Social Worker or Supervisor.

### *1.7.3 Sampling*

The researcher used non probability sampling particularly purposive sampling. According to Bless, Smith and Sithole (2013) purposive/judgement sampling is based on the judgement of a researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample.

A sample is chosen on the basis of what the researcher considers to be typical units that are judged to be the most common in the population under investigation. The sample consisted of cluster supervisors who had three months experience of providing supervision in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District and no acting cluster supervisor was selected to participate in the study. These Social Workers were not on internship programme because; they do not receive supervision from the supervisor but are mentored by their mentors.

### *1.7.4 Data collection*

The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interview. The face-to-face interview allowed the researcher to get in-depth data from the participants regarding how supervision of Social Workers affects their job performance. The response of the participants, based on the semi-structured interview schedule, was recorded on the interviewing sheets exactly the way they have been presented by the participants.

### *1.7.5 Qualitative data analysis*

The researcher used thematic data analysis. According to Mills, Durepo and Wiebe (2010) coding is a basic analytic strategy used in thematic analysis and it is defined as a process of closely inspecting text to look for recurrent themes, topics, or relationships, and marking passages with a code or label to categorize them for later retrieval and theory-building. There are steps to be followed when analysing data using themes.

The following steps were followed as outlined by Sarantakos (2002):

- Transcription of data

The researcher transcribed data from tape onto paper thematically. The menu scripts were edited in order to eliminate typing errors and contradictions in the menu. Tape recorder was kept in a safe place which is lockable.

Only the researcher and his supervisor have access to the tape recorders as and when the need arises particularly for verification of data. After the completion of the data analysis and interpretation, the data in the tape recorder will be destroyed in two years' time.

- Checking and editing

The researcher scrutinised and edited transcripts. The researcher also related parts of the data in an attempt to prepare them for further analysis.

- Analysing and interpretation

This step entails data reduction and analysis. The researcher developed categories of the data. Codes and categories were used as tools of analysing data. The symbols were assigned to specific sections of the text.

- Generalization

The findings of individual interview were then generalized. The researcher identified the similarities and differences in order to develop the typologies of data.

### 1.6.6 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, according to Botma, Greef, Mulaudzi and Wright (2010) has four epistemological standards attached to it, namely truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Below are the epistemological standards tabled to indicate the strategies and its application to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

**Figure 1: Standards, strategies and applied criteria to ensure the study's trustworthiness**

<b>Epistemological standards</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Application</b>
Truth Value	Credibility	Credibility refers to internal validity. The researcher must have confidence in the truth of the findings with regard to the participants as well as the context in which the research was undertaken. The researcher ensured credibility through prolonged engagement, member checking and peer examination (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010 & Shenton, 2004).

Consistency	Dependability	<p>Dependability refers to the replication of the study done in the same context; making use of the same methods and with the same participants, and in such conditions the findings should stay consistent. To enable dependability the researcher included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dependable audit: the researcher provided a detailed account on how data was collected.</li> <li>○ Description of the methodology: The researcher included in the research design what was planned and executed during the study.</li> <li>○ The researcher ensured that data is correctly coded.</li> <li>● Peer examination of the study was done (Botma <i>et al.</i>, 2010 &amp; Shenton, 2004).</li> </ul>
Applicability	Transferability	<p>Transferability is determined by the degree to which findings can be generalized to the larger population. The researcher improved transferability by selection of resources and sampling, saturation of data and the detailed description of the data (Botma <i>et al.</i>, 2010 &amp; Shenton, 2004).</p>

Neutrality	Conformability	Conformability entails the research process and results are free from prejudice. The researcher will ensure that as far as possible the study's results are objective and are not based upon biases, motives and perspectives of the researcher. The conformability was demonstrated by making field notes available for auditing (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010 & Shenton, 2004).
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### 1.8 Ethical considerations

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005), ethical behaviour is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. The principles underlying research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. Ethical considerations come into play at three stages of a research project, namely:

- When participants are recruited;
  - During the intervention and/or the measurement procedure to which they are subjected; and
  - In the releasing of the results obtained.
- **Permission to conduct a study from the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee**

Prior to the commencement of the data collection, the researcher waited for the approval from the Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee.

The participants were made aware that, firstly, the research will not harm them as research subject and, secondly, that they should take part freely, based on informed consent. Below are the critical aspects that the researcher explained to the participants and were included in the informed consent as outlined and explained by Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole, (2013).

- **Informed consent**

The researcher distributed the informed consent forms to the participants before collecting data which provided them with information about the purpose of the study, how data will be used, and what participation will require of them, the subjects likely to be covered and how much time is required.

- **Voluntary participation**

The researcher ensured that the participants understood that participation is voluntary - an issue that may require particular emphasis. The researcher further indicated that the participants are free to discontinue with the interview at any stage without fear as they are not obliged to partake in the study. This cleared feelings of obligation or gratitude to participants as they share the same professional relationship with the researcher.

- **Anonymity**

The semi-structured interview schedule had no name or identification requirements and, as such, interview schedules were without any indication of who participated in it. As a result, chances are high better that participants have participated in the face-to-face with honesty.

- **Involvement of the researcher**

The researcher did guard against manipulating respondents or treating them as objects or mere numbers rather than individual human beings. The researcher did not use any technique or tactics that are unethical in research to collect data.

- **Confidentiality**

Every attempt was made by the researcher to keep all information collected in the study strictly confidential, except as may be required by court order or by law. Participants were not expected to provide their names, surnames and identity numbers to ensure confidentiality. If any publication results from this research, participants will not be identified either by name, surname or identity and they are allowed to view the outcome results.

### **1.9 Significance of proposed research**

This study is relevant to Social Work Profession and the Department of Social Development as it will contribute positively in delivering services to the clients served and to the professional growth of Social Worker as a whole. The research will help Social Worker and Social Work Supervisors to keep abreast with the current knowledge and practices of supervision as highlighted in the South African Social Service Council of Profession (SASSCP) Policy guidelines for course of conduct, code of ethics and rules for Social Workers. The researcher identified the gaps between the knowledge base of Social Work supervision and made recommendations to deal with them.

### **1.10 Limitations of the study**

The limitations of the study might be influenced because Social Workers were requested to evaluate their cluster supervisors. The cluster supervisor also had to evaluate themselves regarding their knowledge base of supervision and the impact of their supervisory role to the Social Worker's job performance. In addition to the limitations the Social Workers who were the participants raised issues of confidentiality with regard to their responses in evaluating their supervisors. The researcher reassured the participants that the information gathered will be kept confidential and will not be passed to the other person without their consent.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

This first chapter provided an introduction and general orientation of the study. The research problem, operational definition of terms, theoretical framework, purpose of the study which included aim and objective of the study, research questions, research methodology, ethical consideration, significant of the research and the limitation of the study were discussed and explained in details. The next chapter is regarded as Chapter 2 which consists of the detailed literature review on supervision.



# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW: FUNDAMENTALS IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION ON JOB PERFORMANCE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Social Workers are expected to provide services efficiently and effectively to their clients and this can be achieved through supervision. Supervision in Social Work is concerned with helping staff members use their knowledge and skills to do their jobs effectively and efficiently, (Skidmore, 1995). An organization's employees are the major asset, not only in themselves, but also because the organization's whole reputation and future success depends on them. Good supervision combines management, education and support, (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006). There are several statutory requirements of Social Work practices in South Africa, such as the Social Service Professions Act (RSA, 1978), Policy guidelines for course of conduct, code of ethics and the rules for Social Workers (SACSSP, 2007) and the Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2006), which provide a mandate for supervision of Social Workers (Engelbrecht, 2013). In South Africa the framework for supervision of Social Workers was developed in order to standardize supervision within the Department of Social Development in 2012 (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

In this chapter the following will be discussed; The Historical Development of supervision, Definition of supervision, the objectives of supervision, nature of supervision, the causes of the lack of supervision and the impact of the lack of supervision on Social Workers' job performance.

### 2.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISION

According to Kadushin and Harkness (2002) there are few and scattered reference to Social Work supervision before 1920. Back then, supervision referred to the control and coordinating function of a State Board of Supervisors, a State Board of Charities, or a State Board of Control. Originally, the term supervision applied to the

inspection and review of programmes and institutions rather than to supervision of individual workers within the programme.

The first Social Work text of supervision was used in the work of Brackett (1904) titled "supervision and education in the charity". This is supported by Wonnacott (2012) who argued that the practice of supervision in Social Work is not new. It has a long history within the profession, although its focus has shifted over time, mirroring the role and function of Social Work within society and the organizational context within which it operates. The roots of Social Work within the charitable sector, with paid staff managing the volunteer workforce, point to supervision emerging first as an administrative task, closely followed by developing emphasis on education and support.

In South Africa during the apartheid era supervision of Social Workers was different across the race wherein newly graduated White Social Workers were given supervisory role. This preference made Social Work professionals to be utilized in non-professional tasks, which in itself deprives them of professional growth and increases their workload and thus their stress levels. This has been attributed largely to lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors, who themselves also lacked capacity to conduct professional supervision. This preference defeated the purpose of this critical function, resulting in the development of negative perceptions towards supervision (DSD, 2006).

Botha (2002) argued that supervision lost its value in the South African context, but not its significance. The death of supervision in practice is also exacerbated by the perception that trained supervisors are not necessary, given the demand for service delivery. There is a limited understanding of the need for supervision amongst non-Social Work managers and, in some cases, supervisors are non-existent, with new Social Workers not being able to receive guidance/mentorship they need to enable them to become better and capacitated Social Workers (DSD, 2006). According to DSD (2006) there is a lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors who themselves also lack the capacity to conduct supervision.

Despite the fact that the Social Work Supervision is considered as less popular, it is still seen by DSD (2006) as important hence it indicated that an advanced curriculum must be developed to support functions or methods of Social Work such as supervision. It furthermore gave effect to the foregoing that, an evaluation of the current practices of supervision must be conducted; gaps identified; and an appropriate framework for supervision developed jointly with stakeholders (The Department of Social Development, 2006).

In 2012, the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa was developed by the Department of Social Development and South African Council of Social Service Profession. DSD and SACSSP (2012) highlights that the framework is not purported to be a training manual or academic text. There are several statutory requirements of Social Work practices in South Africa, such as the Social Service Professions Act (RSA, 1978), Code of Ethics (SACSSP, 2007) and the Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2006), which provide a mandate for supervision of Social Workers (Engelbrecht, 2013).

### **2.3 Definition of supervision**

Skidmore (1995) argued that supervision in Social Work is concerned with helping staff members use their knowledge and skills to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. In the etiological sense, the word supervision means "oversight, control, surveillance". It is also supported by Goodman and Trowler (2012) when they found the two meanings of supervision which caught their attention. They indicated that supervision on the other hand means having "super" (or better) vision, the ability to see things that others cannot, not because they have defective eyesight but as the results of them being too close to the subject, leaving them with blurred focus. On the other hand they explained that the idea of "super" "vision" also means to "over" "see". Kadushin (1992) defines supervision as an agency administrative staff member to whom authority is delegated to direct, coordinate, enhance, and evaluate on the job performance of the supervisees for whose work he is held accountable.

Kadushin and Harkness (2002) and Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (2000) support the second definition of supervision as seen by Goodman and Trowler that, the word supervision derives from a Latin *super* (over) and *videre* (to watch, to see). Tucker

and Pounder, (2010) argue that Supervision is conceptualized as a formative process with the primary purpose being the improvement of instruction and includes classroom observation, group development, and professional development.

Farley, Smith and Boyle (2010) define supervision as a response to the needs of clients and the mandate of the community to relieve suffering and to restore people to greater usefulness.

## **2.4 Objectives of supervision**

There are five objectives of supervision as outlined by Kadushin (1992) which are as follows:

- To assist professional development and growth.
- To ensure that the worker has the capacity to render services to clients.
- To ensure that the worker is given work context and resources to do his job.
- To reduce stress and help the worker feel good about his job.
- To ensure that the worker meets agency's objectives.

Coulshed and Mullender (2006) outlined three purposes of supervision and gave more explanation on what supervision is intended to do.

- Meet managerial and administrative needs by:
- Meet the educational and developmental needs by:
- Meet the supportive needs by:

## **2.5 Nature of supervision**

According to Munson (2002) that there is nothing magical, mystical, or arcane about good supervision and effective supervision's foundation lies in the five basic propositions namely; Structure, regular, consistent, case oriented and evaluate. Mboniswa (2007) added Preparation. Furthermore argued that the effectiveness and efficiency of supervision propositions must be followed and a contract needs to be in place to outline the conditions for supervision.

Six basic propositions that serve as the foundation of effective supervision as outlined by above mentioned authors are as follows:

- Structure

A formal structure for supervision is made clear to the supervisee. Structure refers to the formats for conducting supervision, such as individual supervision and group supervision. Together, the supervisor and supervisees must plan the structure that is best for their learning needs, for instance which method of supervision must be used and when.

- Regular

Supervision should be conducted regularly. It is easy for busy supervisors to fail formalize the regularity of supervision and as a result, supervision is delayed or avoided completely. Both the supervisees and the supervisors must adhere to the date scheduled for supervision and if it is postponed for reasons that were beyond their control, a new date must be agreed on, so that supervision is not delayed or avoided.

- Consistent

The supervisor should work to ensure that the style and approach used with supervisee is consistent.

- Case oriented

To be effective and efficient, supervision should be case oriented at all times. Administrative issues, personal matters, and learning should all be connected to case material when discussed. When personal matters are discussed, it must be those that affect supervisee's work performance.

- Evaluated

Supervision itself should be evaluated. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to always or periodically give formal or informal feedback about supervision practice they are conducting.

- The preparation for supervision session

- Description

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) the aim at this stage is getting to know what happened, allowing the staff member to describe each situation with the supervisor intervening minimally, just to check that silent facts have been covered and understood. The supervisor's role at this stage is to

encourage the worker, withholding criticism, but avoiding reinforcement of any poor practice. The supervisor must not create a situation where it seems as if they have a joint responsibility of the work; otherwise the supervisee does not acquire a sense of responsibility. The supervisor must guard against criticism (Mboniswa, 2007).

- Clarification

It focuses on “what did this mean?” The main aim of this stage is for the supervisor to establish a common understanding of the situation as it is perceived by the supervisee. The who relate issues should be noted here are the objective problem as brought by client and the problem as diagnosed by the worker, as well as reasons for bringing it to supervision. The supervisor should focus on the difficulties of the supervisee in handling cases, in order to help him/her to still feel in control and responsible.

At this stage, the supervisee’s tension becomes reduced and the level of confidence in doing her/his work is increased. The supervisor’s role is to give support, (Mboniswa, 2007 & Coulshed & Mullender, 2006). This stage can be explained using by Karl Roger proposition 7: frame of reference and proposition 12: human perception. According to Rogers cited in Grobler and Scheck (2009), proposition 12: human perception- the organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is, for the individual. Proposition 7: Frame of reference-The best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself.

Supervisees know themselves and their work better than the supervisor so it is important for the supervisor to look at the situation as perceived by the supervisee to get a broader understanding and be able to fill the gaps left by the supervisee. The case and the reasons for taking some decisions are known by the supervisees.

- Analysis

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) the supervisee is helped to form a pattern out of all the information that has been shared by asking “How do we make sense of it?” This stage needs to be grounded in relevant

knowledge, policy, law, and practice wisdom. Supervisors have more knowledge and understanding than supervisees regarding the organizational policies, law and practice. They help the supervisees by viewing the situation and decision taken by them through the expert knowledge of policies, law and practice in order to get a sense in it.

- Implementation

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) the worker is enabled to look at “what are the aims in this piece of work?” and “How can we begin moving in that direction?” This helps the worker to take the next step in service delivery. The starting point of how the goals are to be achieved is implementation. If the supervisor and supervisee do the three stages named above and do not implement, it will be efforts that went worthless and time wasted. The supervisor provides the support through giving advises, guidance, direction and encourages the supervisee in taking the step. The supervisor puts the required knowledge and skills relevant of the policies, practice and law into action. He or she acts upon the required knowledge and skills.

- Evaluation

In everything the supervisor and the supervisee engage there should be evaluation, to see the progress and, if need be, new strategies be implemented. At this stage, the supervisee seeks confirmation of the way in which he/she has handled the case or task. The question here is “how will we know when the aims have been achieved?” The supervisor’s role is to encourage positive results or achievement, and to identify those aspects that were difficult to handle, (Mboniswa, 2007 & Coulshed & Mullender, 2006). Evaluation is important in Social Work and supervision because it helps in bringing feedback and positive and negative evaluation if all taken with good spirit they develop both supervisors and supervisees.

### 2.5.1 *Characteristics of effective supervisor*

Skidmore (1995) outlined six characteristics of effective supervisor as follows:

- Knowledgeability

Knowledgeability is an essential characteristic of an effective supervisor. This means professional knowledge as well as knowledge about the agency in which practice is taking place. Supervisors need comprehensive knowledge, professional attitude, and practice skills and should be able to tie them in with the organization and services of their agency. Supervisors should also be acquainted with the current professional literature in order to refer supervisees to further study.

- Practice skills

Practice skills are essential for competent supervisors. This may mean professional competency in a particular Social Work method or methods, with general abilities in all basic Social Work methods. Such abilities would depend on what the supervisors are doing, in which area they are working, and on the needs of students or workers.

- Open-door policy

Having an open door policy is highly desirable. This means the supervisor can be reached in emergencies and that the door is usually open for the supervisee to come in, ask questions, and be given guidance when necessary. It does not mean that the door is open at all times. Usually a weekly interview between supervisor and supervisee can take care of most questions and problems.

- Commitment to supervision

A genuine conviction of the need for effective supervision is essential. Capable supervisors have a dynamic interest in the agency, in themselves, and in their supervisees. This should not be artificial or superficial. The supervisee can tell whether this interest is genuine.

A sustained concern can be a positive motivating factor and can help to increase the supervisee's knowledge and skills.



- Openness

Effective supervisors are open-minded. This means that although they ordinarily have answers to the questions that may be raised, they will admit it when they do not know the answer to a problem or question and they will acknowledge their mistakes when they make them. Supervisors who recognize that they are human are the ones most likely to reach their workers.

- Showing appreciation and giving commendation

New workers in particular hunger for commendation and appreciation. Such positive reinforcement can increase motivation and professional development. Supervisors who fail to show appreciation limit their effectiveness, slow down professional development, and decrease the competency of supervisees.

### 2.5.2 *Models of supervision*

Skidmore (1995) argued that supervision can be provided in an agency through supervision on wheels, task supervision, adaptive supervision, live supervision and supervision by objectives (SBO). Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (2000) also mention that supervision can be provided through individual supervision, group supervision, Ad hoc supervision, peer supervision, and formal case presentations. Coulshed and Mullender (2006) state that supervision can be individual or group, formal or informal, direct or indirect. For the purpose of this research the focus will be on model of supervision as described by Coulshed and Mullender.

- Individual supervision

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) Individual supervision allows for the development of professional and personal practice, recognising each staff member's stage of experience and confidence and dealing with needs that cannot be met or may be threatening in some way when talked about in groups. The individual can talk about problems that may be affecting their work and can also receive acknowledgement of work well done.

- Group supervision

For Coulshed and Mullender (2006) there is greater scope in a group, too, for using different methods, such as role play, case studies or sculpting. Ford and Jones in

indicated that groups reduce the impact of personality clashes or of the supervisor imposing ideas on the supervisee.

- Formal supervision

In Coulshed and Mullender (2006) Formal supervision is geared to developing practice to an optimum level and in which the supervisee is formally accountable to the supervisor, is distinguished by four dimensions

- A structure- needed to ensure that there is adequate participation, regularity, a flexible agenda and time boundaries.
- A focus- clear aims and objectives for the sessions, spelled out and reviewed from time to time, and even a formal learning agreement.
- A setting- a context within which supervision is undertaken and which actual features as a basis for any discussions and strategies; again, the organizational context has implications for practice and thus may be at forefront of supervisory discussions.
- A record-keeping system- with a planned agenda and a note of points discussed, action to be taken, by whom and by when, and any issues that are to be referred elsewhere, future training needs can be noted and acted upon, and both parties have a record of each supervision session, should they need to refer back to this for any session. It may be seen as good practice to alternate between supervisor and supervisee in taking the notes.

- Informal supervision

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) Informal supervision is inevitable and necessary, as one aspect of the support offered. It can be useful as an addition, either when the staff member newly in post and needs to feel that he or she can pop in for practical information or advice or in a crises situation when individual needs immediate help. On occasion, too, the worker might be in the middle of an incident that holds tremendous learning potential that the supervisor witnesses. Informal supervision is regarded as insufficient and inherently unreliable model.

Ad hoc chats do not allow individuals time to reflect to their work or plan the agenda beforehand and neither do these types of discussion usually get recorded. It is too

easy for managers and staff, who feel uncomfortable about supervision, to settle for formality.

Relying on informal contact is a perfunctory, dismissive and inadequate form of support, keeping workers at a distance rather than using supervision to pull people together as a team.

- Direct supervision

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) this model or method is fairly new to field agencies, less so in residential and day care establishments. It is now required in all the professional awards in Social Work that there must be direct observation of the candidate's practice in order to verify the claim that competence has been demonstrated. "Live" supervision and sitting in supervision are further examples of gaining direct access to an individual's practice, with scope, if appropriate, to correct any bad habit.

- Indirect supervision

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2006) Indirect supervision is normally the main approach available to most supervisors who cannot directly observe what contacts the staff member is making or what skills are employed, although in open plan offices a great deal of information about dealings with others is evident. The supervisor rely on free ranging or topic discussion methods, reading through records and possibly some experiential exercises, such as role play or simulations.

### *2.5.3 Functions of supervision*

Dawson cited in Kadushin and Harkness (2002) explicitly states the functions of supervision in traditional terms, as administrative (the promotion and maintenance of good standards of work, coordination of practice with policies of administration, the assurance of an efficient and smooth-working office); Educational ("the educational development of each individual worker on the staff in a manner calculated to evoke her fully realize her possibilities of usefulness"); and supportive (the maintenance of harmonious working relationships, the cultivation of esprit de corps).

Engelbrecht (2014) mentions that these functions of supervisions may be regarded as an ultimate determining factor in supervision practice. These functions of

supervision do not work separately but, they overlap or are interrelated with each other.

Even though they overlap they still have different goals to achieve and different problems to overcome. For an example administrative supervision it is concerned with the correct, effective and appropriate implementation of agency policies and procedures. The primary goal is to ensure adherence to policy and procedure. In educational supervision the primary problem is worker ignorance and/ or ineptitude regarding the knowledge, attitude and skills required to do the job. The primary goal here is to dispel ignorance and upgrade skills. In the last function which is supportive supervision, the primary problem is worker morale and job satisfaction. The primary goal in this function is to improve morale and job satisfaction, (Kadushin & Harkness 2002).

The above mentioned functions are implemented through supervisory process. According to Farley, Smith and Boyle (2010) the use of supervisory process provides for guidance and direction of inexperienced workers and for continuing growth of the experienced. Both in academic study and in practice, Social Workers are provided supervision by qualified, professional personnel to help them continue to grow professionally and acquire increased understanding and skill. The supervisor is available regularly to help the worker do a better job and increase his or her understandings and skills in working with people.

This process is particularly important because Social Workers themselves are the tools in helping troubled persons, and they need to grow professionally, keeping abreast of new knowledge and skills.

#### \* Administrative function of supervision

Kadushin and Harkness (2014) mention that supervision is a special aspect of organizational administration. They further explained that the short objective of administrative supervision as to provide the worker with a work environment that permits him or her to do the job effectively. Administration is a process of that implements organizational objective.

The supervisor is a link in the chain of administration-the administrator who is direct contact with the worker. As an administrator, the supervisor has responsibility for

agency management and assigned specific, clear defined, administrative-managerial functions. In support of the above researcher Engelbrecht (2014) argues that a supervisor who acts as a manager must develop knowledge and skills in the areas of planning, organising, developing human resources and evaluating programmes and personnel.

#### \*Educational function of supervision

Kadushin and Harkness (2014) argue that the short objectives of educational supervision are to improve worker's capacity to his or her job more effectively, help the worker grow and develop professionally, and maximize the worker's clinical knowledge and skills to the point where he or she can perform autonomously and independently of supervision. They explain that supervision is concerned with teaching workers what they need to know in order to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. Its primary concern is with increasing the effectiveness of the worker through upgrading knowledge and skills.

According to Hawkins and Shohet cited in Engelbrecht (2014) educational function of supervision has four stages which are firstly, the self-centred (the Social Worker's dependence on the supervisor); secondly, client centred (fluctuating between dependency and autonomy); thirdly, process centred (professional self-confidence and only conditional dependence on the supervisor); and lastly, process-in-context-centred (insightful awareness, security, motivation and confrontation of personal and professional problems).

#### \* Supportive function of supervision

Kadhushin and Harkness (2002) view supportive component of supervision primarily as concerned with expressive consideration. In defining supportive supervision Clare (1990) refers to it as maintenance supervision, because supervisors in Social Work supervision are not seen as authority figures but rather people who understands the needs of their subordinates by listening to them, lead and motivate them. The supervisor provides the psychological and interpersonal support to enable the worker to mobilize his emotional energy for effective job performance.

Kadushin and Harkness (1992) define supportive function as the maintenance of harmonious working relationships, the cultivation of *esprit de corps*. Robbins and

DeCenzo (2008) explain *esprit de corps* as promoting team spirit which will build harmony and unity within the organization. Farley, Smith and Boyle (2010) argue that the role of the supervisor is one of support, encouragement, the imparting of information and listening to the worker, particularly to the new and inexperienced staff. They give psychological support by allaying anxiety and by their interest and understanding.

Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (2000) gave a broader view of supportive supervision as supervisory activities that addresses issues and concerns related to staff morale; work-related anxiety and worry; job satisfaction; commitment to the agency's mission and policies; worker self-confidence and self-esteem; and emotional well-being. This aspect of supervision is extremely important in human service agencies where high level of stress and worker burnout are serious personnel problems.

Kadushin and Harkness (2002) conclude that, the ultimate component of supportive supervision is the same as administrative and educational supervision which is to enable the workers, and the agency through the workers, to offer the client the most effective and efficient service.

The need for supportive supervision has long been recognized in Social Work supervision, (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

Žemguliėnė (2012) indicates that it appears that appropriate information about the task and supervisor-subordinate communication about the career have stronger relationships with employees' behavioral intentions toward job (task accomplishment, quality service performance) than with employees' job satisfaction. According to Boyas and Wind (2010) supervisory support is a formal mechanism of support and to a degree out extension of the agency; its rewards are more beneficial than those informal workplace supports provided by coworkers. Supervisory support has more impact in reducing job stress.

In the findings of Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly and Lane (2006) a good supervision was noted by the interviewees as an important reason for people to stay in the organization and supported by the quantitative data that showed a significant connection between supervisor's support and stronger sense of inclusion in the organization.

## **2.6 The impact of the supervision on social workers' job performance.**

According to Engelbrecht (2014) less is known about how supervision affects the level of practice and, importantly, service user outcomes. Although the above researcher have argued that less is known about how supervision affects the level of practice and, importantly, service user outcomes in his study (Engelbrecht, 2010b) mentioned the integrated service delivery model towards social service of the South African National Department of Social Development, which has the role and responsibility to inter alia, provide strategic direction for social service delivery, recognizes the need for integrated strength-based approaches to service delivery in a social development approach. In this social development paradigm, Social Workers are expected to deliver services to the clients under professional supervision of qualified Social Workers with the knowledge and skills of this field and those Social Workers should be registered with the South African council of social service professions, (SACSSP, 2007).

International and local authors such as Brashers (1995), Kadushin (1992) and Botha (2002) highlighted that firstly the need for Social Work supervision is that it is used as a means to control and develop the quality of social welfare services to communities. Secondly, it increases accountability within social welfare organizations. Thirdly, Social Work supervision equips new and inexperienced Social Workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective social welfare services to the clients system (Cloete, 2012).

The above authors are supported by Mbau, (2005) that Social Work supervision has to do with monitoring the work performance of Social Workers with the aim of improving and motivating them to render effective and efficient services to meet the agency or organizational client's needs. He further highlights that this implies a professional relationship between the supervisor and supervisees.

According to Mbau (2005) literature revealed the following in his study objective one, just to mention few and most important:

- Social Work supervision is directed towards benefitting the Social Worker and the agency in which the Social Worker is employed.

- Supervision is needed to promote Social Worker's opportunity for professional and personal growth and gives the worker support to integrate theory and practice.
- The ultimate goal of Social Work supervision is to ensure that effective and efficient Social Work services are rendered to clients in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures.
- A healthy supervisory relationship plays a very important part to stimulate positive attitudes, confidence, trust and openness for both supervisor and supervisee.

Mbau, (2005) mentions that lack of supervision has negative impact on the Social Workers. Those Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

Below the researcher will identify and discuss factors that cause the lack of supervision in details.

## **2.7 Causes of the lack of supervision**

Causes of the lack of Social Work supervision will be discussed in accordance with the themes that emerged in the study of, Engelbrecht (2013) which are as follows:

- Theme 1: Training of supervisors
- Theme 2: Competencies of supervisors
- Theme 3: Structural supervision issues

### *2.7.1 Training of supervisors*

According to Skidmore (1995) there is one problem in Social Work supervision which is that few supervisors have received specific or adequate training for this important position. This was also supported by the findings in the study of Mbau (2005) which highlighted that majority (81%) received their Social Work supervision during their undergraduate program. In the study of evaluating the fieldwork practice in Social Work education at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus), Aligning theory and practice, Dimo (2012) found that there was lack of supervision for students during field work practice and this was because supervisors in the field do not update their



theoretical knowledge base. They rely on the knowledge acquired during undergraduate training.

The issue of supervisors who are appointed on this role without the supervision training is not only seen by above researchers but also by other researchers such as Cloete (2012), Engelbrecht (2010a) and, DSD and SACSSP (2012) in South Africa, just to mention few. The results of the above researchers are clear indication that the requirements that has been indicated in the framework for supervision of Social Workers, DSD and SACSSP (2012) which requires Social Work supervisor to have attended supervision course presented by the accredited service provider recognised by the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) is not yet met or adhered to by the current Social Work Supervisors.

Engelbrecht (2013) emphasised that academic institutions in partnership with practice institutions are challenged to introduce or extend supervision training in whatever form, which is holistic and specifically focused on grounded theories, models and perspectives on supervision in order to produce scholarly professionals and not just managerial supervisors who only mechanically “tick the right boxes”.

The issue of training supervisors is of paramount importance because, the new curriculum of Bachelor of Social Work programme has supervision to the students and their agency supervisors have not received any academic training on supervision. They only supervise because of their work experience without academic training. Engelbrecht (2013) also mentioned that the undergraduate Social Workers are trained at academic institutions to render quality Social Work intervention; supervisors of those graduates should in turn also receive appropriate academic training to conduct quality supervision.

Kadushin and Harkness (2014) conclude that the long objective of supervision which is to provide efficient, effective and appropriate Social Work services to clients makes the supervisor to administratively integrates and coordinates the supervisees' work within the agency, educates the worker to a more skilful performance in their tasks, and supports and sustain the workers in motivated performance of these task.

### 2.7.2 *Competencies of supervisors*

The competency of supervisors is based on the knowledge base and skills on supervision. A supervision conducted without supervisory training will just be fruitless because the supervisors will not have academic supervision training which was to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge of supervision. This training would help supervisors to know the long term goal and short term goal of supervision as explained by Kadushin and Harkness (2002). In the study of Engelbrecht (2013) one of the respondents mentioned that "...they are managing behind closed doors" and he regards this as the result of lack of skills. Due to lack of competencies the following aspects may hinder effective and efficient service delivery to the clients.

#### \* Organizational structure

The National Department of Social Development develops strategic plans. There are targets which are developed from the strategic plan and these targets are found in the Annual performance plan (APP). The targets are allocated to the provincial department, to the district, to the sub-district and lastly to the area Social Worker. The district office also develops their operational plan (OP). The Social Worker then develops his or her Performance agreement (PA) for that financial year based on the targets allocated from the Annual performance plan (APP) and Operational plan (OP).

The Social Worker does not have an input in how targets are to be made for that financial year or in the strategic planning of the department. This organizational structure is one of the factors that can increase stress on employees. Excessive rules and an employee's lack of opportunity to participate in decisions that affect him or her are examples of structural variables that might be potential sources of stress, (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2008). Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) refer organizational structure to bureaucracy and define it as stress experienced due to rigid and strict controlled rules, procedures and protocols.

According to Engelbrecht (2012a) structural and organizational issues such as scarce resources, unmanageable workloads and counterproductive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees are sometimes ultimate determinants in the execution of supervision. These issues may result in "on the run" supervision or

an “open door supervision policy”, which are both crises-driven, and which cannot be defined as supervision as such. He further argue that these supervisor-supervisee interactions are based on unstructured advice or instruction, and may also culminate in reducing supervision to a one dimensional control function in order for the supervisor and supervisee to be accountable.

According to Robbins and DeCenzo (2008), this represents the supervisory style of organization’s company officials. Some managers create culture characterized by tension, fear and anxiety. They establish unrealistic pressures to perform in the short run impose excessively tight controls and routinely fire employees who do not measure up. This style of leadership flows down through the organization to affect all employees.

Despite the fact that Social Workers are not involved in the developments of targets, the Department of Social Development has gave Social Workers in South Africa platform to voice out their concerns through The national Social Workers’ indaba which was hosted at Durban ICC on the 24<sup>th</sup> until the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 by the minister of the Department of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini. The indaba began to be prepared as from 2014 at the Sub-District level where Social Workers had to compile their reports under their four themes and in these themes “Supervision and Management” was included. The title of the indaba was “Revitalizing Social Work”. Therefore Social Workers were given an opportunity to give their inputs on things that affect their day to day activities as they render services to the clients.

#### \* Task demand

These are factors related to an employee’s job. They include the design of the person’s job (autonomy, task variety, degree of automation), working conditions, and the physical work layout. Work quota can put pressure on employees when their “outcomes” are perceived as excessive. The more interdependence between an employee’s task and the task of others, the more potential stress is, (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2008).

#### ➤ Autonomy

Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) define autonomy as stress experienced due to inadequate empowerment. It tries to lessen stress but when an employee is

working in an overcrowded room or in a visible location where interruptions are constant there is more likely to increase stress, (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2008). Kadushin and Harkness (2014) also highlighted that the working environment is not the only condition that makes a worker to be autonomous but also that Social Workers have a greater tendency to share the decision responsibility with the supervisor and less readiness to resist supervisory suggestions and rule that dictate action. Social Workers need to be confident in their ability to make use of autonomy if they are going to claim aggressively and defend it tenaciously.

\* Abusive supervision

According to Engelbrecht (2014) a good supervision motivates and assists Social Workers in building purposeful relationships, making professional judgements, and providing a constructive overview of their work. If one has to make judgement based on the views of the above researcher then, it might be that the abusive supervision does the opposite of what the researcher has mentioned. Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter and Kacmar (2007) define abusive supervision as a phenomenon that negatively affects a substantial number of organizations and their members. Tepper (2000) expected that the degree to which supervisors engaged in abusive behaviour would affect subordinates' perceptions of organizational justice, which would, in turn, affect their decisions to quit, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organizational commitment, conflict between work and family life, and psychological distress. Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter and Kacmar (2007) found out that, the abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion relationship was positive in their study.

According to the study of Tepper (2000) the results showed that subordinates whose supervisors were more abusive reported higher turnover, less favourable attitudes toward job, life, and organization, greater conflict between work and family life, and greater psychological distress. Moreover, the effects for job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family-to-work conflict, depression, and emotional exhaustion were more pronounced for subordinates who had less job mobility. Hence, abusive supervision had broader effects on indexes of subordinates' attitudes and psychological distress when they had no viable means of escape.

Lizano and Mor Barak (2012) their study's findings confirm that workplace demands and resources predict burnout development among public child welfare workers over time. Organizational tenure, job stress, and work–family conflict serve as predictors of emotional exhaustion. A negative relationship was found between tenure and the development of emotional exhaustion. Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter and Whitten (2012) in their study they concluded that the research demonstrates that abusive supervision relates to family-to-work conflict just as much as it does to work-to-family conflict. Furthermore, this process is partially mediated through the surface acting to burnout relationship. Lian, Ferris and Brown (2012) argue that supervisors who still maintain abusive aspects of their supervisory style are apparently no better than supervisors who provide less support. Lian, Ferris and Brown (2012) further indicate that abusive supervisors negatively impact the overall basic need satisfaction of subordinates. When subordinates' basic need satisfaction is blocked by an abusive supervisor, subordinates may develop the desire to retaliate against the supervisor.

### *2.7.3 Structural supervision issues*

#### *\* Attitude of supervisors*

The researcher is of the view that a negative attitude towards supervision or supervisees creates a supervisory relationship which will not be fruitful. This was also supported by Lizano and Mor Barak (2012) that a negative relationship was found between tenure and the development of emotional exhaustion. In South Africa, Social Workers and supervisors are expected to treat colleagues with respect and should represent their qualifications, views and obligations accurately and fairly. The other aspect is that supervisors should be responsible for setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries, (SACSSP, 2007). According to these code of ethics supervisors are not expected to have negative attitude towards their supervisees and even think they are better than them because they do not have more knowledge and skills. In everything that the supervisor and Social Worker do should be informed by the code of ethics especially the one of upholding the integrity of the profession, (SACSSP, 2007).

## \* Role demand

### ➤ Handling role conflicts

According to Skidmore (1995) supervisors often experience conflicts in their daily practice role. He mentioned the results of Erera who conducted research in role conflict among public welfare supervisors in four urban New York that strongly indicated that supervisors' role conflict is associated with the state's external control in the form of incompatible policies.

A trained and competent supervisor will be able to set clear direction in terms of his/her roles and responsibilities and the core function of supervision to the supervisee during contracting. If the supervisors are unable to mitigate the destructive effects of state policies, which make them feel powerlessness as a result, they will put the supervisory process in jeopardy. Role conflict rose between the supervisor and the supervisee (Supervisor of the researcher) especially during the block placement of University students who came for practicums. As the researcher who witnessed this conflict during fourth level internship, the agency supervisor and the field supervisor for students they all wanted to supervise the researcher as a student. The supervisor and the Social Worker should clearly clarify each other's roles and the limitations thereof in order to avoid the role conflict.

Conflict should not be based on emotions because emotions will jeopardise the supervisory process. The supervisor and the Social Worker should not be personal in handling the role conflicts. Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) indicate that interpersonal demands are created by other employees. Lack of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships can cause considerable stress, especially among employees with high social needs. This is also supported by Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) that there is stress experienced through poor relationship with colleagues and supervisors.

### ➤ Role overload

According to Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) role overload is experienced when the employee is expected to do more than time permits. Foxcraft and

Roodt (2009) refer to role overload as workload which is a stress experienced due to, for example, a perceived inability to cope with work demands. This is supported by the recruitment and retention strategy of Social Workers that indicated that one of the perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity and quality of services rendered by Social Workers is explained by high case load, (DSD, 2006)

➤ Role ambiguity

This role Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) define as a role created when role expectation are not clearly understood and the employee is not sure what he or she is to do. Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) explain role ambiguity as stress experienced due to, for example, aspects such as constant change in expectations and vague job satisfaction.

\* Supervision and Ethics

Supervisors who are supervising Social Workers are expected to comply with the code of ethics as outlined in the policy guidelines for course of conduct, code of ethics and the rules for Social Workers, SACSSP (2007). Skidmore (1995) levy explains that supervisors need to focus on what is morally right in situation involving their supervisees and reaffirms the importance of ethical behaviour.

Ethics and supervision starts to be a barrier when the supervisor during the supervision ignores what is morally right and works to the favour of the supervisor or the supervisee. Respect for each other should be fundamental during the supervision. If respect is ignored the dignity, value and worth of the supervisor or supervisee will be threatened and ultimately the supervision will not be effective to bring the desired goal. Lack of supervision may result in stress.

\* Occupational stress

According to Marè (2012) occupational stress is a very real problem in the Social Work profession, especially in South Africa, with its high caseload, lack of manpower, change and poverty. Baron (2001) defines stress as our response to events that disrupt our physical or psychological functioning. Stress is caused by stressors, which are events or situations in our environment that causes stress. Most adults spend more time at work than in any other single activity. It is not surprising

then, that job or careers are a central source of stress. Some of the factors producing stress in work are central for example, extreme overload-being asked to do too much in too short of time, (Baron, 2001).

#### \* Personal factors

According to Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) personal factors that can create stress include family issues, personal economic problems and inherent characteristics. Employees come to work with their personal problems. The personality type of an individual is also related to stressfulness.

- Personality type

Personality type A and B. Van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2011) describe Type A people as those people who have an intense drive to achieve, and eagerness to compete, the need to accelerate the execution of all physical and mental activities, an extraordinary mental and physical alertness, and a persistent need for recognition, and they are constantly involved in many things with deadlines. These people are prone to higher stress level than Type B people who are basically the opposite. Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) conclude that Type A people are more likely to experience stress on and off the job.

- Work-family conflict

Work–family conflict is defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2011) any employee who experiences the dual pressure of having to comply with the competing requirements and expectations of work and family life may suffer from the conflict. Research has shown that the conflicts between family and working life are related to aspects such as increased health risk for parents, poor morale, depression, reduced life satisfaction, absenteeism, poorer work performance and decreased productivity. Insufficient social support at home result in stress, (Foxcraft & Roodt, 2009)

In the study of Marè (2012) respondents felt that the main cause for their stress were mostly work-related, whether it was work itself, circumstances at work, personal goals that were not being reached professionally, financial factors-due



to salaries perceived not to be enough, and professional relationships at work, that contribute to their stress levels. Social Workers perceived themselves not to experience major stress related to their family life or personal relationships.

When the stress that the worker is experiencing is not taken care of there may lead to burnout and ultimately turnover. They become emotionally exhausted and lack interest to the job and they are likely to leave the agency.

- Burnout

According to Skidmore (1995) burnout among Social Workers in practice is on the increase. A robust literature identifies difficulties in the social services workplace. Related to these negative conditions, burnout has become a significant concern in the social services, (Graham & Shier, 2011). Kim (2011) explains that burnout is characterized as a state in which members of helping professions feel overextended and depleted of emotional and physical resources (i.e., emotional exhaustion). Since the helping professional no longer has sympathy or positive feelings for clients and co-workers, he or she tends to have detached responses to aspects of the job (i.e., depersonalization).

Kim and Lee (2009) indicated that in a recent report on the difficulties of the Social Work Profession in general, examples of job demands included increasing paperwork and caseloads as well as staff shortages and reduced availability of adequate supervision (Center for Workforce Studies, 2006). Social Worker's burnout is a critical managerial issue because Social Worker's burnout negatively affects the quality, consistency, and quality of client services. Considering that Social Work is done in the context of supervisory relationships, effective supervision is essential to preventing burnout and turnover. An effective supervisor must provide frontline Social Worker with essential guidelines, professional skills, and knowledge related to services while also communicating with Social Workers about opinions, feelings, and decision making with mutual trust and respect.

According to Kim and Lee (2009) it is expected that role-related job stress (i.e., role stress), characterized as high levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, is positively associated with burnout, and that burnout is positively associated with turnover intention among Social Workers. This is also supported

by Skidmore (1995) that role conflict has been suggested as significant factor in burnout among Social Workers.

The present study also found that upward communication buffers the effect of role stress on burnout. This suggests that, although Social Workers perceive high levels of role stress, they are less likely to experience burnout if they can discuss role stress with their immediate supervisors, (Kim & Lee, 2009).

- Job turnover

According to Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly and Lane (2006) in their study results found out their results support the notion that diverse individual characteristics together with stressful, unjust, exclusionary and non-supportive organizational climate negatively influence individual well-being and lead to lack of job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment, which in turn lead to stronger intentions to leave the job.

The strongest direct predictors of intention to leave, based on the quantitative analysis, were lack of job satisfaction, low organizational commitment, younger age, high stress and exclusion from the organizational decision-making process. These findings were echoed by the qualitative data indicating that stress (too much work, not enough time to do it), dissatisfaction with the job (too much paper work not enough face to face time with clients), being younger (older workers saw advantage in staying and keeping their benefits) and low organizational commitment (feeling committed to the field of child welfare, not to the organization) were all major contributors to intention to leave.

It was also supported by Smith (2005) that low levels of support are linked to turnover. Smith (2005) is of a view that Social Workers would leave the child welfare if the agency does not take good care of pay and promotional opportunities and greater perceptions of job alternatives, higher level of perceived supervisor support and greater perceptions of work-life balance. Engelbrecht (2014) also mentions and discusses what he call potential factors impacting on supervision such as gender differences, generation differences, cultural dimensions, adult education principles, supervisee learning styles and supervisor

education strategies and lastly the blockages and power games of supervisors and supervisees.

#### *2.7.4 Additional sources of support for supervisees*

Kadushin and Harkness (2002) identify other sources of support apart from supervisor's support which could help the Social Workers in rendering the services effectively and efficiently to the clients; they regard these sources of support to the supervisees as additional source of support.

- The client

The supervisor is not the only source of support for supervisees in dealing with stress encountered on the job. Clients can be a source of support as well as stress. In their responses to workers and to the service offered by workers, they confirm the workers' competence and sense of self-worth. Appreciative comments regarding the workers' efforts are supportive. Client movement and change for the better provide workers with a feeling of achievement.

- The peer group

The supervisee peer group is an additional source of support for the supervisee that can supplement the supervisor's efforts. Workers turn to peers with whom they feel comfortable to talk about their dissatisfactions, discouragements, or doubts about the job and to express feelings of anxiety about inadequate performance and feelings of guilt about mistakes. The peer group on the job, the work clique, is often the primary resource to which workers turn to talk about such concerns. These are people who most likely have experienced similar problems. They are knowledgeable about the job situation and can discuss these matters with some sophistication. The worker who feels the need to talk about these feelings and the peer group to whom he or she turns share experiences and a common frame of reference, increasing the likelihood of empathetic understanding. In addition, they have no administrative power to evaluate the worker. Consequently the worker may feel freer in sharing doubts and dissatisfactions with fellow worker than with the supervisor.

The additional advantage of being not only psychologically accessible, because social distance between peer and peer is minimal, but also physically available. The workers do not make appointments to see their co-workers. The supervisor can actively mobilize the assistance of peer group resources. The supervisor can stimulate supportive peer-peer interaction and encourage cooperative, mutual relationships among staff in reinforcing the supportive activities of the supervisor. The supervisor might facilitate the development of the peer-peer interactional system by arranging for group supervision and frequent unit meetings. The supervisor might also encourage supportive peer-peer interaction by helping organize peer supervision and consultation.

- Social support network

Supervisee's social support network also supplements supportive supervision. Although family and friends do offer a haven against stress, their lack of intimate knowledge of nature of on the job stress limits the impact of their emotional support. Because stress originates in the workplace, the workplace is the best context for dealing with work stress. The supervisor, who is intimately aware of the sources and nature of work stress, can offer the most relevant feedback to help the worker. To be effective, social support needs to be significantly related to the particular stress that is the source of strain. The particularity of the supervisor's support directly related to specific work stress is likely to have more significant supportive effect.

- Supervisees' adaptations

Supportive supervision is further supplemented by the workers' own capacities to adjust. Supervisees respond to the stress of supervision by actively "psyching out" the supervisor. Their purpose is to determine the kinds of behaviour that will obtain acceptance and those that will elicit disapproval. Supervisees then manage a presentation of self that will net maximum approval and minimal disapproval.

- Supervisees' games

Supervisees have developed a series of well-established, identifiable games that are, in effect, defensive adjustments to the threats and anxieties that the supervisory situation poses for them. These games are namely; Manipulating

demands levels, redefining the relationship, reducing power disparity, controlling the situation and countering games.

- Humour in supervision

Humour helps control and mitigates job stress. It may be used by the supervisee to communicate gripes and dissatisfactions he or she may be hesitant to raise directly. Humour helps to reduce worker tension by making the impermissible permissible. Supervisees use humour to mask opposition and hostility to supervisors, whereas supervisors may use humour to mask the authoritarian nature of some of their communications. Message is conveyed in a way that is less likely to create resentment or provoke repercussions. Reciprocal humorous give-and-take increases a sense of bonding. Humour depends on the reaction of the person with whom it is shared with.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Supervision is important to the newly appointed and inexperienced Social Workers as it helps them to grow professionally and which in turn enhance service delivery. This important role needs a cluster supervisor who is well trained in the field of supervision and has the necessarily knowledge and skills which will enable him/her to supervise the Social Workers. The years of experience cannot be ignored when appointing someone to this critical post.

In this chapter, overall view was provided regarding the historical development of supervision, definition of supervision, the objectives of this critical aspect, nature of supervision, the impact of supervision on Social Worker's job performance and the causes of the lack of supervision.

Several authors argued that supervisors do not receive supervision training for them to be able to be effective when appointed t this role. They further argued that the lack of supervision results in declined productivity, burnout, intention to leave their organisations. This critical function is at times expected to be performed under conditions which are not conducive which impact on the effectiveness of this role. The next chapter aims at presenting, analysing and interpreting data of the study.

# CHAPTER 3

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at presenting, analyzing and interpreting the empirical findings. The researcher used non probability sampling particularly purposive sampling. According to Bless, Smith and Sithole (2013) purposive sampling is based on the judgement of a researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. A sample was chosen on the basis of what the researcher considered to be typical units that the cluster supervisors had more than three months experience of providing supervision in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District and no acting cluster supervisor was selected to participate in the study. The Social Work supervisees had more than three months of working experience working at Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. These Social Workers were not on an internship programme. The data to be presented was collected from six (6) cluster supervisors and twelve (12) Social Workers who are employed by the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District.

The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interview. The face-to-face interview allowed the researcher to get in-depth data from the participants regarding how supervision of Social Workers affects their job performance. The responses of the participants, based on the semi-structured interview schedule, were recorded on the interviewing sheets exactly the way they have been presented by the participants.

- The researcher used thematic data analysis. According to Mills, Durepo and Wiebe (2010) coding is a basic analytic strategy used in thematic analysis and it is defined as a process of closely inspecting text to look for recurrent themes, topics, or relationships, and marking passages with a code or label to categorize them for later retrieval and theory-building. There are steps to be followed when analysing data using themes.

The researcher followed the steps of thematic data analysis as outlined by Sarantakos (2002) which are transcription of data, checking and editing, Analysing and interpretation, and Generalization.

### 3.2. *Working conditions*

The issue of working conditions will be discussed in three sub-themes as follows:

#### \* Resources

The confidentiality which is a cardinal value of Social Work is understood as the right to privacy of client which needs to be protected. This ethical standard of protecting the privacy of the clients must be held in highest regard (the South African Council of Social Service Professions, 2007). This requirement is hindered by the office accommodation that has to be shared. These are what participants have expressed:

*“We do not have resources to execute work. Resources such as office accommodation which we have to share being four Social Workers...”*

In support of the above another participant echoed that:

*“There is no privacy due to the fact that we share an office being three...we share an office being three to four Social Workers...”*

Despite office accommodation as the main concern the participants also repeatedly talked about other resources such as telecommunications, transport, stationery, office furniture and electronic devices. This was supported by statements like:

*“..We have two cars shared by 67 Social Workers...” “We have no files, steel cabinet, stationery, office accommodation and we have to share one pc being four Social Workers.”*

The lack of resources to deliver on mandate given to Social Workers resulted in a perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity and quality of services rendered by Social Workers (DSD, 2006). According to Social Work Indaba the resolution under working conditions, was that the Department of Social Development should develop and implement resource policy that is aligned with the service

delivery model for provision of appropriate social infrastructure for Social Workers to render effective Social Work services and standardise the package tools of traits.

Confidentiality, as a cardinal value of Social Work, is also right in terms of the constitution of the republic of South Africa which is the right to privacy. When offices are congested the environment becomes not conducive for clients to ventilate thereby hindering a helping process. When clients consult to the Social Worker's office, they are hoping to get better service including referred clients. The ultimate goal is to get better professional service. If resources such as cars which serves to be an obstacle for Social Workers to conduct home visits are not adequate and road worthy, this tend to be make client lose hope and experience secondary victimization. The resources should be adequate enough to allow service delivery to reach clients including human resource which is manpower.

#### \* Anatomy

Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) define autonomy as stress experienced due to inadequate empowerment. It tries to lessen stress but when an employee is working in an overcrowded room or in a visible location where interruptions are constant there is more likely wood to increase stress, (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2008).

A participant said:

*"I feel intimidated by conducting a joint sessions in front of two Social Workers. There is a lot of interference that hinder service delivery..."*

*"...we share an office being three to four Social Workers..."*

Kadushin and Harkness (2014) also highlight that the working environment is not the only condition that makes a worker to be autonomous but also that Social Workers have a greater tendency to share the decision responsibility with the supervisor and less readiness to resist supervisory suggestions and rule that dictate action. Social Workers need to be confident in their ability to make use of autonomy if they are going to claim aggressively and defend it tenaciously.



The participant said:

*“You know my supervisor is objective and never subjective...” “I have stress due to PMDs, authoritative leadership...” “She has dictatorship leadership”*

Social Work Profession is unlike other professions like teaching where you teach learners what has been written in the book and you impart the knowledge to them. Social Worker deals with diversity, unique clients and complex cases in different location. Each client is treated unique and thus making all cases to be treated unique although it might be the same clients who need the same service. There are various social and personal factors that affect the clients differently.

Taking recognition of this, it is important that helping these clients need no interruptions either from another Social Worker or the environment itself. Every individual wants to do things the way they perceive them and this also is happening to Social Workers that they need to help clients without someone interrupting the helping process, because of overcrowding or consulting to the supervisor who dictates what should be done to the case. The Social Worker loses confidence and creates dependency on the supervisor. The Social Worker handling the case is the only one who knows the best service that needs to be given to the client and if confusion arises he or she should consult with the immediate supervisor.

The Department of Social Development, Capricorn District, Polokwane Sub-District should ensure that Social Workers have enough office accommodation in order to avoid overcrowding which hinders the helping process and autonomous of the Social Worker. The supervision should not be traditional supervision but it should be strength based supervision of working together, (Engelbrecht, 2014).

#### \* Occupational stress

According to Marè (2012) occupational stress is a very real problem in the Social Work profession, especially in South Africa, with its high caseload, lack of manpower, change and poverty.

This is evident as some participants have expressed that

*“Jesus I experience stress every day even last week” “I had language barrier whereby I had to intervene to help clients but I could not and that affected my work though supervisors where there doing nothing to assist me” “I am overwhelmed by workload some foster care cases lapsing. We had two interns who left and their work has being added to ours”*

From the participants’ expression one can agree with Baron (2001) as he defines stress as our response to events that disrupt our physical or psychological functioning. Stress is caused by stressors, which are events or situations in our environment that causes stress. Most adults spend more time at work than in any other single activity. It is not surprising then, that job or careers are a central source of stress. Some of the factors producing stress in work are central for example, extreme overload-being asked to do too much in too short of time, (Baron, 2001).

*“My stress is caused by cases which affect me even when I am at home. “Stress in my office is caused by lack of resources and supportive supervision”* these are what some participants have said.

Drawing a conclusion from the above view of the participants one can assert with Engelbrecht (2014) that the supervision framework’s envisaged aim to “strike a balance” between the supervision functions of support, education and administration is hardly attainable within the prevailing neoliberal discourse, when the improvement of structural supervision issues such as scarce resources, unmanageable workloads and counter-productive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees is not prioritised as a prerequisite for the establishment of the supervision framework.

\* Absenteeism, reporting time and bunking

Under this sub-theme the supervisee participants reported that they never got absent without informing the supervisor. They knocked off before 16h30 and they always reported on time. They only came late only due to traffic or transport issues.

Supervisee participants said

*“I report on time and I sometimes come late because of traffic” “I am delayed by transport and I have never got absent from work without informing the supervisor”*

It was realised that the supervisee participants worked in the same office or building with the supervisors so their movement is always spotted. That is the reason they cannot do as they please.

### 3.3 Training of supervisors

DSD and SACSSP (2012) requires Social Work supervisor to have attended supervision course presented by the accredited service provider recognised by the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP). This requirement is not met by the current cluster supervisors in Polokwane Sub-District.

One participant indicated that

*“I received training on supervision and a detailed training last year”*  
while others said *“No I have not received training on supervision”*.

#### \* Knowledge based

Wonnacott (2012) define supervision as a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organization to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organizational Professional and personal objectives which together promote outcomes for service users. It is evident that Social Workers and supervisors understand traditional (problem-oriented) supervision theoretical knowledge as compared to strength-based supervision as described by (Engelbrecht 2014).

The participants defined supervision as a process whereby the supervisor supports and educates the new qualified Social Worker to execute her/his work in order to achieve the Departmental goal, because the newly qualified Social Worker needs to be assisted in integrating theory into practice.

Supervisors' participants defined it as

*“To offer support to employees which is minimal not personal, educate supervisees on policies and also to help them in administrations such as monthly reports, quarterly assessments and etc.” “It’s all about giving supervisees support and education on things they do not know”*

It was recognised that the supervisors have traditional theoretical knowledge about the supervision even though some could not be able to integrate theory into practice. Supervision should be a two way process whereby the Social Worker and the supervisor work together for betterment of service delivery and for their professional growth. The supervisor should apply the principle of strength which is assume that you do not know the upper limits of the capacity to change and grow. They should not act as if they are the only knowledgeable but also allow supervisees to educate them with their theoretical knowledge as they are still fresh from the University.

\*Academic training

According to Skidmore (1995) there is one problem in Social Work supervision which is that few supervisors have received specific or adequate training for this important position. This was also supported by the findings in the study of Mbau (2005) which highlighted that majority (81%) received their Social Work supervision during their undergraduate program. In the study of Evaluating the fieldwork practice in Social Work education at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus) Aligning theory and practice, Dimo (2012) found that there was lack of supervision for students during field work practice and this was because supervisor in the field do not update their theoretical knowledge base. They rely on the knowledge acquired during undergraduate training.

This is evident as participant supervisors have mentioned that they did not receive educational training during their academic studies.

*“No I did not receive training on Social Work supervision during my academic studies” “I have not received formal training during my studies at the University”*

Participant supervisees indicated that most supervisors are appointed to this important position without any academic training and that they lack the theoretical knowledge of supervision. They further mentioned that they supervise because there is shortage of supervisors so; their working experience grants them an opportunity to become a supervisor. Hence one said their supervision is regarded as “*learn as you work*”. In support of what other participants have said one participant highlighted that the supervisors are appointed to supervise while they were coordinating programmes which had nothing to do with supervision.

When taking a close look at what the participants’ views then it can be agreed with Engelbrecht (2013) that the undergraduate Social Workers who are trained at academic institutions to render quality Social Work intervention should have supervisors who in turn also receive appropriate academic training to conduct quality supervision.

#### 3.4 *Competencies of supervisors*

Within the context of competencies of supervisors specifically effectiveness and supervisory skills of supervisors, some participants declared that

*“Everything is done when there is an audit... she plans and not adheres to the planned sessions.”*

Incompetent supervisors are regarded by supervisees as those supervisors, who never conduct supervision on regular basis; who conduct unplanned sessions which are hurried; who are unable to render proper supervision with proper knowledge.

The participant supervisor avers that their supervision depends on the tools of traits and her supervisees do not have them thereby affecting the supervision. This including lack of training made them to regard herself as an ineffective supervisor.

Despite the view of participants of effectiveness and good supervisory skills of supervisors which was regarded as negative some participants showed that their supervisors are effective. They indicated that their supervisors are effective because they attend to cases when referred to them; there is good communication between them; and they are supportive in a sense that they receive guidance.

The supervisee participants who had effective supervisors who have good supervisory skills had positive response towards supervision and how it helped them in dealing with cases, as opposed to those supervisee participants who had regarded their supervisors as ineffective with lack of good supervisory skills. It can be concluded that effective supervisor with good supervisory skills have positive impact on service delivery and also on the supervisees.

\* Abusive supervision

According to Engelbrecht (2014) a good supervision motivates and assists Social Workers in building purposeful relationships, making professional judgements, and providing a constructive overview of their work.

This was supported by the views of participants that

*“...When I do not come on time she does encourages” “she does help a lot” “...she also communicate with us” “she is the best and knows her supervision” “she guides me and able to identify loopholes which needs to be attended to...she is also able to apply all the functions of supervision”*

Although the supervision was regarded as good other participants viewed it negatively as follows:

*“Since we had her lots of conflicts arise between her and our colleagues. She is authoritative without qualifications.” “We do not have supervision regularly. We are hijacked and the sessions are hurried. She needs supervision herself. She is stressed” “I am not satisfied. I do not see her doing her duties. She is not the person to lean on”.*

This is supported by most researchers who describe such a view as abusive supervision. Lian, Ferris and Brown (2012) argue that supervisors who still maintain abusive aspects of their supervisory style are apparently no better than supervisors who provide less support.

Supervisee participant sadly said

*“Supervision session is more educational than supportive. She teaches us how to complete intakes and we never get to debrief”.*

Tepper (2000) expected that the degree to which supervisors engaged in abusive behaviour would affect subordinates' perceptions of organizational justice, which would, in turn, affect their decisions to quit, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organizational commitment, conflict between work and family life, and psychological distress.

This was supported by the supervisee participants who lacked drive and passion for the profession because they regard their job as stressing which they can even opt for another job which pays them the same salary as Social Workers. This simply means that they emotionally exhausted due to the abusive supervision.

\* Supervision functions and models

Dawson cited in Kadushin and Harkness (2002) explicitly stated the functions of supervision in traditional terms, as administrative (the promotion and maintenance of good standards of work, coordination of practice with policies of administration, the assurance of an efficient and smooth-working office); Educational (“the educational development of each individual worker on the staff in a manner calculated to evoke her fully realize her possibilities of usefulness”); and supportive (the maintenance of harmonious working relationships, the cultivation of esprit de corps).

Supervisor participants showed that they do understand this function.

One explained them as:

*“Functions of supervision are supportive, educational and administrative. Supportive is when I offer support to employees which is minimal not personal, educate supervisees on policies and also to help them in administrations such as monthly reports, quarterly assessments and etc.”*

The most commonly used function as described by the participants was educational function. The participant bluntly said

*“I am familiar with the educational function”* this was also echoed by the other participant that *“we use educational function during our supervision sessions”*.

Kadushin and Harkness (2014) supervision is concerned with teaching workers what they need to know in order to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. Its primary concern is with increasing the effectiveness of the worker through upgrading knowledge and skills.

Although participants have singled one or two functions of supervision Engelbrecht (2014) argues that these functions of supervision do not work separately but, they overlap or are interrelated with each other.

### 3.5 *Structural supervision*

The South African researcher Engelbrecht (2010a) as well as English research findings (Carpenter et al., 2012b) revealed that supervision sessions are sometimes cancelled or delayed because supervisors are too busy or supervision is being conducted “on the run” (Noble & Irwin, 2009) and “often focused more on workers completing forms on time rather than on the quality of outcomes for service users” (Bourn & Hafford-Letchfield, 2011).

This is supported by supervisee participants who mentioned that the supervision sessions are not structured because they are hijacked into sessions which are even hurried. They spent most of their time completing ‘sws’ forms than rendering services to the clients. This is an indication that the sessions are not planned and the contracts that they have signed during the new financial year are not adhered to.

#### \* Role overload

The issue of Social Work interns who completed their internship and had to leave the Department of Social Development, is regarded by the supervisee participants as the cause of their unmanageable workload. They had to add the workload of those interns to theirs. Resources were also regarded as a burrier and a source that cause more workload as they had to leave cases pending unattended because of



resources such as transport, telecommunication, stationery etc. They also reported that they are expected to do so much within a limited space of time.

Participant supervisor said

*“I am currently supervising more than 10 Social Worker and this serves as a barrier to facilitated proper supervision. They are a lot...”*

This could be what Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) defines as a role overload which is experienced when the employee is expected to do more than time permits. Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) also gave another view of the definition that role overload as workload is a stress experienced due to, for example, a perceived inability to cope with work demands. This is supported by the recruitment and retention strategy of Social Worker that indicated that one of the perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity and quality of services rendered by Social Worker is explained by high case load, (DSD, 2006).

\*Role ambiguity

This role Robbins and DeCenzo (2008) defines it as a role created when role expectation are not clearly understood and the employee is not sure what he or she is to do. Foxcraft and Roodt (2009) explain role ambiguity as stress experienced due to, for example, aspects such as constant change in expectations and vague job satisfaction.

This was affirmed by supervisee participants that unplanned activities from their supervisors, given an office without orientation, unmet targets which seem to be unrealistic, completion of forms that they do not understand, and unplanned supervision sessions are the main stress that they experience at work. This brings confusion to the Social Workers and ended up not understanding what is expected from them, even though they have performance agreement which clearly articulate their job description for that financial year.

\* Work-family life

Work–family conflict is defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Van der Westhuizen & Wessels

(2011) any employee who experiences the dual pressure of having to comply with the competing requirements and expectations of work and family life may suffer from the conflict.

The competing requirements and expectations of work and family life of supervisee participants was that some participants had to complete their work at home while others had to work after office hours and also during weekends. The family lives of these participants had to be interrupted by their work. The issues of resources such as sharing a computer had a bearing on some participants to work overtime and during weekends. The pressures of meeting targets and reporting could not be left out as they were other contributing factors towards participants not coping with work and family life.

Taking a look at what the participants have said then it can be agreed with that research has shown that the conflicts between family and working life are related to aspects such as increased health risk for parents, poor morale, depression, reduced life satisfaction, absenteeism, poorer work performance and decreased productivity. Insufficient social support at home results in stress, (Foxcraft and Roodt, 2009). Some participants also indicated that they do report to work after the reporting time which is 07h30 and leave work before knock of time.

These are the views of the supervisee participants

*“Yes I have left work before knock off time” “I report to work after 07h30 because I lack motivation. I do not longer wake up to this place”*

The participants' views correlates with the respondents in the study of Marè (2012) who felt that the main cause for their stress were mostly work-related, whether it was work itself, circumstances at work, personal goals that were not being reached professionally, financial factors-due to salaries perceived not to be enough, and professional relationships at work, that contribute to their stress levels. Social Workers perceived themselves not to experience major stress related to their family life or personal relationships.

## \* Burnout

It is evident that burnout among Social Workers in practice is on the increase (Skidmore, 1995). A robust literature identifies difficulties in the social services workplace and these negative conditions, resulted in burnout becoming a significant concern in the social services, (Graham & Shier, 2011).

It was confirmed by supervisee participants when they boldly said

*“I am experiencing burnout due to low salary, lack of resources and that I am not appreciated for the efforts that I make.”*

Burnout that supervisee participants experienced is mainly caused by the scarce resources, lack of trained supervisors, unmanageable workloads, unfair remuneration, counter-productive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees and unmet targets.

This is supported by Kim (2011) that burnout is characterized as a state in which members of helping professions feel overextended and depleted of emotional and physical resources (i.e., emotional exhaustion). Since the helping professional no longer has sympathy or positive feelings for clients and co-workers, he or she tends to have detached responses to aspects of the job (i.e. depersonalization).

Moreover Kim and Lee (2009) indicate that in a recent report on the difficulties of the Social Work Profession in general, examples of job demands included increasing paperwork and caseloads as well as staff shortages and reduced availability of adequate supervision (Center for Workforce Studies, 2006). Social Work burnout is a critical managerial issue because Social Work burnout negatively affects the quality, consistency, and quality of client services. Considering that Social Work is done in the context of supervisory relationships, effective supervision is essential to preventing burnout and turnover.

The works of Kim and Lee (2009) cannot be ignored when burnout is discussed because they showed how job related stress can lead to burn out and intention to leave. They argued that it is expected that role-related job stress (i.e., role stress), characterized as high levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, is positively associated with burnout, and that burnout is positively associated with

turnover intention among Social Workers. This is also supported by Skidmore (1995) that role conflict has been suggested as significant factor in burnout among Social Workers.

There is a communication breakdown between some supervisors and supervisees, poor planning, lack of supervision and conflict management. This was shown when participant supervisees mentioned that

*“Since we had her lots of conflicts arise between her and our colleagues. She is authoritative without qualifications.” “she has dictatorship leadership”.*

The present study also found that upward communication buffers the effect of role stress on burnout. This suggests that, although Social Workers perceive high levels of role stress, they are less likely to experience burnout if they can discuss role stress with their immediate supervisors, (Kim & Lee, 2009).

#### \* Job turnover

Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly and Lane (2006) in their study results found out that their results support the notion that diverse individual characteristics together with stressful, unjust, exclusionary and non-supportive organizational climate negatively influence individual well-being and lead to lack of job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment, which in turn lead to stronger intentions to leave the job.

This study results is supported by supervisees participants who reflected that

*“I have lost my drive for Social Work I have lost the reason for being a Social Worker and also my seniors are just tired”*

Other aspects that leads supervisee participants to have the intention to leave the Department of Social Development is salary, lack of manpower, lack of appreciation for working extra miles, unmanageable caseload, lack of resources and more expectations within a short period of time.

The views of the participants are not new around supervision research. Other international researcher Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly and Lane (2006) found out that the strongest direct predictors of intention to leave, based on the quantitative analysis, were lack of job satisfaction, low organizational commitment, younger age, high stress and exclusion from the organizational decision-making process.

These findings were echoed by the qualitative data indicating that stress (too much work, not enough time to do it), dissatisfaction with the job (too much paper work not enough face to face time with clients), being younger (older workers saw advantage in staying and keeping their benefits) and low organizational commitment (feeling committed to the field of child welfare, not to the organization) were all major contributors to intention to leave.

Furthermore this was also supported by Smith (2005) is of a view that Social Workers would leave the child welfare if the agency does not take good care of pay and promotional opportunities and greater perceptions of job alternatives, higher level of perceived supervisor support and greater perceptions of work-life balance.

It is evident that Social Workers do not leave the profession or have the intension to leave because they are bored by the Social Work methods of intervention or anything to do with its theoretical knowledge. They leave because of the organizational climate such as lack of good supervision, fair remuneration, adequate resources and enough manpower.

### *3.6 The impact of supervision on job performance*

#### *\* Supervision sessions*

The integrated service delivery model towards social service of the South African National Department of Social Development, which has the role and responsibility to inter alia provide strategic direction for social service delivery, recognizes the need for integrated strength-based approaches to service delivery in a social development approach (Engelbrecht, 2010). In this social development paradigm, Social Workers are expected to deliver services to the clients under professional supervision of a qualified Social Worker with the knowledge and skills of this field and that Social

Worker should be registered with the South African council of social service professions (SACSSP, 2007).

It is unfortunate that within this social development paradigm there are still Social Workers who are using traditional approach as opposed strength-based approach. The Social Workers are still delivering services to the clients under professional supervision of qualified Social Worker who do not have the knowledge and skill of supervision as required by the South African council of social service professions, (SACSSP, 2007).

In support of this statement supervisee participants mentioned that their supervisors are authoritative and they do not adhere to the planned supervision session. Furthermore they are incompetent, because they have not received training in supervision which makes them to supervise using their experience of being supervised. Most of the supervisee participants do not see the importance of supervision, as it is done by Social Workers who have experience in practice without supervision training and that there is shortage of supervisors. They lack the passion looking burnout and clueless about supervision thereby doubt their competencies.

It is interesting that supervisee participants have indicated that the supervision sessions help them even though their supervisors have not received training on supervision whether during their study or after completion.

Here is what was said:

*“supervision sessions help me to do my work better and creates independency” they are helpful because we are dealing with complicated cases” “we get the best supervision sessions” “they are helpful and make me grow” they are educational than supportive. They teach intake without debriefing” “they help to do cases alone in her absence...”*

These sessions which are conducted were not planned and prepare, while some supervisors are expected to supervise more Social Workers than expected in terms of the framework of supervision, (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

Supervisor participant with a concern mentioned that “I am supervising more than 10 Social Workers which include those on probation, those who need structured supervision and those on consultation. They are too much for me. At least if the ration can be reduced to 1:5. The framework of supervision stipulates sessions that should be planned and prepared. Furthermore the supervisor supervisee ratio of those who are on structured supervision should be 1:10 when the supervisor is excluded from other duties (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

There seem to be confusion between consulting to a supervisor when one has a case that is difficult and conducting supervision sessions. Most Social Workers regard consulting on a case as supervision session. The individual and group supervision are models of supervision which is mostly used.

Supervisee participants said

*“She use individual supervision” supervisor participant said “I use individual, group and peer supervision although they do not do peer supervision when encouraged to do so”*

\* Service delivery

International and local authors such as Brashers (1995), Kadushin (1992) and Botha (2002) highlighted that firstly the need for Social Work supervision is that it is used as a means to control and develop the quality of social welfare services to communities. Secondly, it increases accountability within social welfare organizations. Thirdly, Social Work supervision equips new and inexperienced Social Workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective social welfare services to the clients system (Cloete, 2012).

In agreement with this supervisee participant mentioned that

*“They are helpful and make me grow” “supervision sessions help me to do my work better and creates independency” they are helpful because we are dealing with complicated cases”*

One local author Engelbrecht (2014) argued that less is known about how supervision affects the level of practice and, importantly, service user outcomes.

As the aim of the study to evaluate how supervision affects job performance to address what the above researcher has mentioned.

Supervision of Social Workers has an impact on service delivery and these has been agreed by Mbau, (2005) that Social Work supervision has to do with monitoring the work performance of Social Workers with the aim of improving and motivating them to render effective and efficient services to meet the agency or organizational client's needs. He further highlighted that this implies a professional relationship between the supervisor and supervisees.

*"...she also communicate with us" "she is the best and knows her supervision" "she guides me and able to identify loopholes which needs to be attended to...she is also able to apply all the functions of supervision"*

Supervisor participant mentioned that

*"Functions of supervision are supportive, educational and administrative. Supportive is when I offer support to employees which is minimal not personal, educate supervisees on policies and also to help them in administrations such as monthly reports, quarterly assessments and etc."*

It has been recognised that those supervisees who receive good supervision responded positively on the impact of supervision on their job performance, but it was also found out that negative supervision resulted in negative views from the participants about its impact on job performance.

Supervisee participants expressed views most supervisors do not know their duties hence they supervise based on the number of years of experience as Social Worker not because of the qualifications and competencies.

This serves as a barrier towards the job performance of some supervisee participants, who empower themselves in order to perform without the assistance of their supervisors. The supervisory style of being authoritative or dictatorship has been mentioned by supervisee participants as having a negative bearing on their job performance.



This is supported by the local researcher Mbau, (2005) that lack of supervision has negative impact on the Social Workers. Those Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

Supervisee participant said

*"I just do the work for the sake of reporting"*

There was some aspect which was very concerned with which is that supervisee participants did not want to consult with government Social Workers when they had problems. They preferred either a psychologist or counsellor.

Here are the views of supervisee participants

*"I can consult to private Social Worker, but not government Social Worker". "Ah! Government Social Worker's service is ineffective and they too are not motivated"*

It is inevitable that poor service delivery is caused by negative supervision or lack of supervision, resources and remuneration. The clients who are from the communities suffer as a result of organizational structure which is not managed properly and the goal of supervision is hindered. If Social Workers who render services to the community do not want to consult with their colleagues who render the same service therefore there is something which is not right. Although our communities are expected to get the services which Social Workers do not want to receive opting for other professionals. The issue of service delivery is critical. There need for extensive research is needed in this issue.

\* Job satisfaction

Smith (2005) is of a view that Social Workers would leave the child welfare if the agency does not take good care of pay and promotional opportunities and greater perceptions of job alternatives, higher level of perceived supervisor support and greater perceptions of work-life balance. This simply means that it could be agreed with Engelbrecht (2014) that a good supervision motivates and assists Social Workers in building purposeful relationships, making professional judgements, and providing a constructive overview of their work.

The issue of intention to leave the Department has been highlighted by the participants who felt that they are remunerated unfairly, had high case loads, lack of supervision and lack of resources to execute their duties. All this led them to lose the drive or passion for practicing as Social Workers.

Supervisee participant said:

*“I have lost my drive for Social Work. I have lost the reason for being a Social Worker and also my seniors are just tired”*

This proves that the Social Workers' are dissatisfied by their job and this is caused by what the local researcher concluded with which was that the ultimate issue in supervision, despite the introduction of South African supervision framework remains the unmanageable workloads and counterproductive working conditions of supervisor and supervisee, (Engelbrecht, 2013), and compensation related insufficiencies has been identified in terms of the occupational categories of Social Work, (DSD, 2006).

Job satisfaction will be discussed below in two categories as it emerged from the participants' views.

#### \* Remuneration

In the South African welfare sector, money is not in abundance, with the result that pay increase and bonuses are not always available for the manager (supervisor) to reward employees. Nevertheless, the manager could use praise, recognition of achievement and other motivational techniques to reward employees, (Engelbrecht, 2014). The recruitment and retention strategy DSD, (2006) define employee benefits as elements of remuneration given in addition to various forms of cash payments. They are not necessarily restricted to remuneration and may comprise pension, medical aid, car allowance, homeowner allowance, loans etc.

The above definitions of remuneration only direct to the incentives that an employee gets which motivates that person to perform well and have job satisfaction. Supervisee and supervisors participants were not concerned about incentives. Their major concern was the basic salary which they earned and had to in turn utilize it to buy resources to execute their work.

Angered supervisee participants expressed their views that:

*“They do not pay us fairly. I need level 9. The workload is bigger than the salary” “entry level should be level 8 due to the fact that workload is more than compensation”*

Supervisor participants said:

*“Remunerations start with the qualification. We need to be paid for the qualification that we received and when adding the workload that we found ourselves doing it’s a lot. We are not paid well”.*

The need to reassess the current workload and qualification of Social Workers’ needs to be reviewed and proper intervention be made. The recognition of other qualification (s) which a Social Worker obtained beside the degree needs to be recognized and have an effect on the notch of that Social Worker. This will keep Social Workers in the profession and Department beside the incentives that they are getting. It is unfortunate that supervisors do not have control over the remuneration of Social Workers, but this aspect serves as the barrier towards good supervision.

\* Passion for the profession

Social Work Profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationship, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, Social Worker intervenes at the point where people interact with their environment. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to Social Work, the government integrated service model for social service delivery (DSD, 2006b). In order for Social Workers to render this service to the vulnerable, marginalized, destitute, dysfunctional families and those who are socially excluded they need to have passion to serve. They need to use all the cardinal values and principle of Social Work. Furthermore they need to use *“batho pele”* principle.

When these Social Workers find themselves in an organization which creates a working environment where structural supervision issues such as scarce resources, unmanageable workloads, unfair remuneration and counter-productive working

conditions of supervisors and supervisees are not prioritize they end up losing passion for the profession.

In support of this supervisee participants said that:

*“I want to leave because of salary and lack of specialization” “I think of leaving the Department every day. The job is not interesting. You are expected to do work within a short period of time”*

The circumstance which the Social Workers find themselves in, have negative influence on how they view the profession. Instead of marketing the profession and helping the Department’s recruitment and retention strategy to reach its objective of promoting positive image of Social Work as a career choice, they do the opposite. When asked what would the participant say to a person who wants to become a Social Worker.

The Supervisee participants bluntly declared that:

*“Do not do it. Don’t even try. You will get old in your early ages”. “Ah! Just do it” “I will ask the person are you stranded to which extend. I will not recommend anyone to study Social Work”. “Mhh!! I will them to think properly. They shouldn’t do Social Work”.*

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The supervision of Social Workers in the Department of Social Development is playing notes and making no music, because there are necessarily legislations and frameworks on supervision which are in place, but the goal of this critical important position is not reached. The critical aspects that hinder this significant role are the scarce resources, lack of trained supervisors, unmanageable workloads, unfair remuneration and counter-productive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees. A proper supervision depends on this critical aspects as which the Department of Social Development has to deal with them as an act of emergency for betterment of effective and efficient service delivery. The next chapter aims at presenting the summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

# CHAPTER 4

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings drawn from the study on evaluation of Social Work supervision on job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District: implications for practice, conclusion and recommendations. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006) argue that, after interpreting the findings it is useful too summary the aims of the research compare them with the findings and draw conclusion on how much and in which manner the goal has been achieved. This chapter will further present the re-statement of the problem aim of the study and objectives of the study.

### 4.2 Restatement of the research problem

The research problem of this study stems from the practical observation by the researcher during his third and fourth levels of practical placement. The placement was in one of the Department of Social Development offices in the Polokwane Sub-District, viz., the Capricorn District in Limpopo Province. The researcher observed that there was absenteeism of Social Workers from work, Social Workers arrived late at work and even discouraged the researcher about the profession.

Whenever the researcher tried to project his future plans about the profession, they always turned him down complaining about more workload, low salaries and some had intentions to leave service owing to lack of resources such as cars, stationery and office accommodation. DSD (2006) supports this observation thereby indicating that there was a perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity and quality of services rendered by Social Workers. This is explained by the high case loads, emotional and other trauma experienced by Social Workers in service delivery, high stress levels due to management and societal demands as well as lack of resources to deliver on their mandate. Social Work professionals are being utilised

in non-professional tasks, which in itself deprives them of professional growth and increases their workload and concomitantly their stress levels. This has been attributed largely to lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors, who themselves also lack capacity to conduct professional supervision.

The researcher also observed that some supervisors were appointed straight from district levels where their primary functions were solely coordination of programs with no supervisory experience or expertise. Du Plooy (2011) supports this observation that supervisors were not specifically trained for the roles as supervisors, and did not receive in-service training for their appointed supervisory tasks. Botha, as cited in Du Plooy (2011), concur with the researcher's sentiments that supervisors should be selected to be supervisors on account of their knowledge, skills and experience of direct Social Work service delivery. She further indicated supervisors need additional knowledge and skills in their task. Training in supervision should be clear and specific. Mbau (2005) argues that lack of supervision has a negative impact on the Social Workers and that Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

Mboniswa, (2007) supports the above researchers by indicating that lack of well-trained supervisors impact on how supervision is conducted, resulting in Social Workers doing their jobs without proper supervision, which impact on quality of service delivery. Dimo, (2012) has argued that there is lack of supervision in field work practice because the supervisors do not update their theoretical knowledge base. In support of this, Du Plooy (2011) further indicates that inadequate supervision might have a negative impact on staff retention and on the motivation of staff. However, not enough study and research are being undertaken with regard to impact of supervision on the service delivery (Du Plooy, 2011). The researcher is interested in exploring how lack of supervision has an impact on Social Workers' job performance in the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Sub-District.

### **4.3 Re-statement of the aim and objectives of the study**

#### *4.3.1 Aim of the study*

The aim of the study was to evaluate how Social Work Supervision affects job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. This aim was achieved.

#### *4.3.2 The objectives of the study*

The objectives of the study were:

- To explore how supervision is rendered in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District.

This objective was achieved. The supervision which is rendered in the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Sub-District is conducted by supervisors who did not receive training during their academic years and after being qualified Social Workers; supervisors conduct this critical role because of their years of experience as Social Workers; The supervision method that is mostly used is individual and group; the function that is used is educational; There is no adherence to the supervision contracts that the supervisee and supervisor have signed; there are supervisors who are effective with good supervisory skill and they are those who are ineffective and without good supervisory skills and supervision is rendered under scarce resources such as telecommunications, manpower and stationery, (Refer to Chapter 3, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5).

This is supported by Engelbrecht (2014) that the supervision framework's envisaged aim to "strike a balance" between the supervision functions of support, education and administration is hardly attainable within the prevailing neoliberal discourse, when the improvement of structural supervision issues such as scarce resources, unmanageable workloads and counter-productive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees is not prioritised as a prerequisite for the establishment of the supervision framework.

- To investigate the impact of supervision on Social Workers' job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District.

This objective was reached. Supervision sessions which are conducted by effective supervisors who have good supervisory skills have a positive impact on the job performance of Social Workers, as compare to ineffective supervisors without good supervisory skills; none adherence to structured supervision under poor working conditions without resources with high caseloads and unfair remuneration leads to burnout, and consequently contributing towards Social Workers having the intention to leave the Department of Social Development. This also results in Social Workers losing passion for their profession which ultimately affect the job performance negatively, (Refer to Chapter 3, 3.6).

Engelbrecht (2014) argues that a good supervision motivates and assists Social Workers in building purposeful relationships, making professional judgements, and providing a constructive overview of their work. Where else Mbau, (2005) argues that lack of supervision has negative impact on the Social Workers. Those Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

A robust literature identifies difficulties in the social services workplace and these negative conditions, resulted in burnout becoming a significant concern in the social services (Graham & Shier, 2011). This confirms the views of Smith (2005) that Social Workers would leave the child welfare if the agency does not take good care of pay and promotional opportunities and greater perceptions of job alternatives, higher level of perceived supervisor support and greater perceptions of work-life balance.

- To make recommendation from the findings to the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Sub-District regarding how supervision can be improved to enhance service delivery.



#### 4.5 Summary of the major findings

The following are the findings of this study:

- Supervision is rendered to Social Workers under the working conditions which are not conducive and characterised by lack of resources such as office accommodation, telecommunications, transport, stationery and electronic devices affect. It is argued that the ultimate issue in supervision, despite the introduction of South African supervision framework remains the unmanageable workloads and counterproductive working conditions of supervisor and supervisee, (Engelbrecht, 2013), and compensation related insufficiencies has been identified in terms of the occupational categories of Social Work, (DSD, 2006)
- Social Workers experience occupational stress due to high workload, lack of manpower, lack of resources and lack of supportive supervision. Marè (2012) highlights occupational stress as a very real problem in the Social Work profession, especially in South Africa, with its high caseload, lack of manpower, change and poverty.
- Supervisors who render supervision do not have recent and up-to-date theoretical knowledge base as they seem to have forgotten what received during their academic training and also have not received supervision training after being qualified as Social Workers. Engelbrecht (2013) emphasises that the undergraduate Social Workers are trained at academic institutions to render quality Social Work intervention; supervisors of those graduates should in turn also receive appropriate academic training to conduct quality supervision.
- Some supervisee regard supervisors as effective and with good supervisory skills who help them to perform their duties compared to other supervisees. Munson (2002) argues that there is nothing magical, mystical, or arcane about good supervision and effective supervision's foundation lies in the five basic propositions namely; Structure, regular, consistent, case oriented and

evaluate. Mboniswa (2007) added Preparation. Mbau, (2005) mentions that lack of supervision has negative impact on the Social Worker. Those Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

- Burnout among Social Work supervisees is caused mainly by abusive supervision, scarce resources, unmanageable workloads, unfair remuneration and counter-productive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees and unstructured supervision. According to Skidmore (1995) burnout among Social Workers in practice is on the increase. A robust literature identifies difficulties in the social services workplace. Related to these negative conditions, burnout has become a significant concern in the social services, (Graham & Shier, 2011). Kim (2011) explains that burnout is characterized as a state in which members of helping professions feel overextended and depleted of emotional and physical resources (i.e., emotional exhaustion).
- Supervisors and supervisee mostly are familiar with educational function together with the models of supervisions which are individual and group. Dawson cited in Kadushin and Harkness (2002) explicitly state the functions of supervision in traditional terms, as administrative (the promotion and maintenance of good standards of work, coordination of practice with policies of administration, the assurance of an efficient and smooth-working office); Educational (“the educational development of each individual worker on the staff in a manner calculated to evoke her fully realize her possibilities of usefulness”); and supportive (the maintenance of harmonious working relationships, the cultivation of esprit de corps). Engelbrecht (2014) argues that these functions of supervision do not work separately but, they overlap or are interrelated with each other.
- Supervisees experience the dual pressure of having to comply with the competing requirements and expectations of work and family life. According to the study of Marè (2012) respondents felt that the main cause for their stress were mostly work-related, whether it was work itself, circumstances at work,

personal goals that were not being reached professionally, financial factors- due to salaries perceived not to be enough, and professional relationships at work, that contribute to their stress levels.

- Supervision sessions which are conducted with supervisees unstructured but they are reported to be assisting them in rendering the services to clients. Supervisees experience burnout because of of the organizational climate such as lack of good supervision, unfair remuneration, inadequate resources and lack of manpower and consequently have an intention to leave the Department of Social Development and Social Work profession. Mbau (2005) also argues that lack of supervision has negative impact on the Social Worker. Those Social Workers who do not receive supervision are normally unable to render quality, effective and efficient welfare services.

#### **4.6 Conclusions**

Based on the above findings, the study can conclude that:

- The lack of adequate resources hinders supervision of Social Workers and also service delivery
- The Incompetent supervisors are those who are without good supervisory skills and who use authoritarian leadership skills
- Supervisors have not received supervision training and academic training on supervision before being appointed as supervisors. They supervise because of the years of experience no because of the qualifications and competencies
- Burnout and job turnover are caused by organizational climate which is not supportive but have stressors to the supervisees and supervisors.
- The three functions of supervisions are not used as a whole but are singled out and educational being the only one which is mostly used. Furthermore two models of supervision which are individual and educational are used.
- Supervisees are unable to cope with work which ends up interfering with their family life.
- Supervision sessions are unstructured and the supervision contract is not adhered to.

## 4.7 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that:

- Supervisors who render supervision should receive supervision training that will enable them to conduct professional supervision. They should also be able to integrate supervision theory into practice.
- The Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District should ensure that the issues of abusive supervision, scarce resources, lack of manpower, unmanageable workloads, unfair remuneration and counter-productive working conditions of supervisors and supervisees and unstructured supervision are attended to as an act of emergency. Further ensure that these Social Workers receive employee assistance programmes at their local offices.
- Transversal coordinators should monitor and capacitate supervisors to ensure that they utilize all the three functions of supervision and other models of supervision during their supervision sessions with supervisees. Further ensure that supervisors and supervisees adhere to the supervision contracts.
- The Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District should ensure that the working conditions of Social Workers are improved by providing adequate resources such as office accommodation, telecommunications, transport, stationery and electronic devices affect.

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## **APPENDIX: A -INFORMED CONSENT**

University of Limpopo

Manthosi Frans Lesetja

Department of Social Work: Cell number: 071 3222 040 (Email address: [lesetsafrans@gmail.com](mailto:lesetsafrans@gmail.com))

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

#### **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

Greetings!! My name is Manthosi Frans Lesetja. I am currently enrolled with the University of Limpopo to study Masters in Social Work in the Department of Social Work. You are invited to participate in the face to face interview that will assist in collecting information from you.

#### **PURPOSE**

It is to evaluate Social Work supervision in the Department of Social Development Polokwane Sub-District.

#### **PROCEDURE**

As a participant you will be enrolled in the study and you are requested to participate in the face to face interview which will take not more than 45 minutes of your time. You are free to ask where you do not understand for clarity.

#### **RISK**

The face to face interview is not intended to harm you any how whether physically or psychologically. Any feeling of discomfort you are welcomed to ask the researcher with no force.

#### **COSTS AND FINANCIAL RISKS**

There are no financial costs directly or indirectly associated with participation in this study.

#### **BENEFITS**

There is no guarantee that you will benefit directly from the study.

## **COMPENSATION**

You will not receive any compensation for participation in this study.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every attempt will be made by the researcher to keep all information gathered in this study strictly confidential, except as may be required by court order or by law. You are not expected to provide your name, surname, persal number, council registration number and identity number to ensure confidentiality. If any publication results from this research you will be identified either by name, surname or identity.

## **DISCLAIMER/WITHDRAWAL**

You agree that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time without prejudicing your standing within The University of Limpopo Social Work Department.

## **PARTICIPANT RIGHTS**

If you have any questions pertaining to your participation in this study, you may contact the principal investigator **MANTHOSI FRANS LESETJA** by telephoning **071 3222 040**.

## **CONCLUSION**

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the consent form and that you agree to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX: B**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SOCIAL WORKER S**

Title of the study: **Evaluation of Social Work Supervision on Job Performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District: Implications for Practice**

1. How many years/months of experience do you have as a Social Worker?.....

2. What do you understand by supervision?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What in your views is /are objective/s of the supervision?

.....  
.....

4. How do supervision sessions help you on your work?

.....  
.....

5. Do you regard your supervisor as an effective supervisor? Motivate your answer?

.....  
.....

6. Do you think your supervisor has good supervisory skills? Elaborate on your answer.....

.....

7. The models of supervision are individual supervision, group supervision formal supervision and informal supervision and indirect supervision; which one of them are you familiar with?

.....

8. Functions of supervision are administrative, educational and supportive. Which one is mostly used in your supervision session?

.....

9. One problem in Social Work supervision is that few supervisors have received specific or adequate training for this important position.

What is your opinion?.....  
.....

10. Are you remunerated fairly? If not, how will you like to be remunerated?  
.....

11. Do you have resources to execute your work? If no, which resource do you lack?  
.....  
.....

12. How do you understand work related stress?  
.....

13. Have you experienced stress at work? When?  
.....  
.....

14. What could be the cause of stress in your agency?  
.....  
.....

15. Are you able to manage your case load? If not what serves to be a problem?  
.....  
.....

16. In your own words what is burnout?  
.....

17. Have you ever experienced burnout?  
.....

If yes, what was the cause?  
.....  
.....

18. What do you understand by turnover?  
.....

19. Have you ever thought of leaving the department? If so what was the reason?  
.....  
.....

20. Do you experience dual pressure of having to comply with the competing requirements and expectations of work and family life? .....

How?.....  
 .....

21. Have you ever got absent from work without informing the supervisor?  
 .....

22. Have you ever left work before knock off time?  
 .....

23. The Department requires workers to report to work at 07:30. Have you ever arrived after this mentioned time? .....

If yes, what was the reason?.....  
 .....

24. How would you say to a person who wants to become a Social Worker?  
 .....

25. Would you consult to the Social Worker if you had personal problems?.....  
 If not, what could be the reason?.....  
 .....

26. How does supervision affect your job performance?  
 .....

27. Did you sign supervision contract? If Yes, are you following what you have contracted on?.....

28. Are the supervision sessions helping you to provide services to the clients?  
 Motivate your answer  
 .....

29. How can supervision be improved in your agency?  
 .....

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



**APPENDIX: C**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CLUSTER SUPERVISORS**

Title of the study: **Evaluation of Social Work Supervision on Job Performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District: Implications for Practice**

1. How many years/months of experience do you have as a cluster supervisor of Social Workers?.....
2. Did you receive training of Social Work supervision during your academic studies?..... if yes, specify the duration of the training.....
3. Did you receive training about Social Work supervision during your appointment as the cluster supervisor?.....

If yes, what kind of training?.....

4. What do you understand by supervision?

.....  
.....

5. Give any objective/s of the supervision

.....

6. Do you have supervision contract with your supervisees?

.....

7. What are functions of supervision?

.....

8. How frequently do you meet with your supervisees?

.....

9. Would you regard yourself as effective supervisor? Motivate your answer.

.....

.....

10. Which of the supervision methods do you apply in your sessions? Explain the reason for choosing such method/s

.....

11. According to your observation do you see your supervisees as having lot of caseload? Justify your observation

.....

12. Have you noticed any absenteeism amongst your supervisees? If yes, which measures did you take against such person?

.....

13. Burnout is on increase amongst Social Workers. What is your view?

.....

.....

14. Work resources are essential for the Social Worker to provide service delivery to their clients. Does your supervisees have the necessarily resources to execute their work? If not which resources do they lack?

.....

.....

15. Do you see your supervisees being good role models in Social Worker profession? Explain

.....

.....

16. In terms of workload of Social Workers that you share with your supervisees do you see them being remunerated fairly? Substantiate

.....

.....

17. What do you understand by turnover?

.....

18. Since you became cluster supervisor have you ever had a Social Worker under your supervision leaving the Department or had an intention to leave?

.....

19. In your own opinion do you think your supervision improves the job performance of the supervisee? Motivate your answer

.....

.....

20. How are you intending to improve supervision in your agency?

.....

.....

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**APPENDIX: D**

**APPLICATION LETTER TO DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT  
FETAKGOMO SUB-DISTRICT**

Mphanama one stop centre

Private bag x12

Apel

0739

06-10-2015

To:

The Department of Social Development

Limpopo Provincial Department

18<sup>th</sup> College Street

Polokwane

0700

Dear Sir/ Madam

**RE: APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

I am a social worker, working at Sekhukhune District Fetakgomo Sub-District Mphanama one stop centre. I am currently registered with the University of Limpopo doing masters in Social Work. I am undertaking a research project for the fulfilment of this degree.

The aim of this research project is to evaluate how social work supervision affects job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District. This aim will be reached through exploring how supervision is rendered Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District, investigate the impact of supervision on Social Worker's job performance and making the recommendations to the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District regarding how supervision can be improved to enhance service delivery.

It is therefore kindly requested that you be kind to take part in this project it will consist of semi-structured interviews which will be done with Social Workers and cluster supervisors. The interview will be kept confidential and no identifying details will be used in this research report. It is important to take part in this project in order to make difference in how supervision should be render and its impact on service delivery. The semi structured face to face interview will take 45 minutes of your time.

The research will be available on request and you are assured that the copy of the report reaches your office.

I will make contact with your office to arrange a date and time to participate in the semi structured face to face interview. Should you have any queries or comment regarding this research, you are more than welcome to contact me telephonically at 071 3222 040/ 062 038 7157 or e-mail me at [lesetsafrans@gmail.com](mailto:lesetsafrans@gmail.com).

Kind regards

Manthosi Frans Lesetja

.....

(Social Worker/Researcher)

## APPENDIX: E

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



**University of Limpopo**  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 2212, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:noko.monene@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 02 September 2015

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/108/2015: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** Evaluation of social work supervision on job performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District: Implications for practice

**Researcher:** Mr FL Mathonsi

**Supervisor:** Prof JC Makhubele

**Co-Supervisor:** N/A

**Department:** Social Work

**School:** Social Science

**Degree:** Masters in Social Work

  
**PROF TAB MASHEGO**  
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

- Note:**
- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
  - ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.  
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

*Finding solutions for Africa*

**APPENDIX: F**

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

CONFIDENTIAL



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**OFFICE OF THE PREMIER**

**LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 07<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 2015/05 PG

**PROJECT**

**Title:** Evaluation of Social Work Supervision on Job Performance in the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Sub-District: Implications for Practice.

**Researcher:** Mr Mathonsi F.L

**Department:** Department of Social Development

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J Singh'.

Prof J Singh

Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number **REC-111513-038**.

**Note:**

Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior to data collection.

**PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES**

Mowaneng Building, 40 Hans Van Rensburg Street, POLOKWANE, 0699, Private Bag X9483, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: (015) 287 6000, (015) 287 6999, Fax: (015) 295 3840 Website: <http://www.limpopo.gov.za>

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