



**Exploring the Experiences of Social Work Practitioners and Supervisors on the  
Implementation of Social Work Supervision in the Department of Social  
Development: A Case Study of King Cetshwayo District Municipality.**

**Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi**

(219073275)

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Supervisor

Mbongeni S. Sithole (PhD)

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## Declaration

I, **Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi** declare that the work in this dissertation titled, “*Exploring the Experiences of Social Work Practitioners and Supervisors on the Implementation of Social Work Supervision in the Department of Social Development: A Case Study of King Cetshwayo District Municipality*” is the result of my work. All the sources and other resources cited from others are well-acknowledged and indicated through a complete reference and acknowledgment.

**Student number** : 219073275

**Initials and Surname** : S.N Gumbi

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## **ABSTRACT**

Supervision has been a subject of study for many decades and has been at the centre of social work practice as it exerts its unique significance in the profession. As social work practitioners and supervisors are the key role-players in the process of supervision, it was necessary to understand their experiences. The main aim of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors in the Department of Social Development at King Cetshwayo District, so as to determine how these experiences have impact on the service provision. The objectives of the study were to explore the nature of supervision that exists; examine the context within which supervision takes place; explore how social work practitioners and supervisors experience supervision, and examine the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors to understand how supervision is executed. The study was qualitative that utilized the interpretive paradigm as the philosophical worldview. The study utilized an exploratory-descriptive research design to explore and describe the aspects of the research topic to gain a deeper and in-depth understanding of the researched topic. The purposive sampling was utilized to intentionally sample participants that fit the prearranged criteria. A maximum of seventeen participants was sampled, where thirteen participants were social workers and four participants were social work supervisors. Both telephonic and face-to-face interviews were used, as data collection method. The participants were sampled from three different service offices under King Cetshwayo District. The research findings revealed that most participants in the Department of Social Development at King Cetshwayo District have unpleasant experiences on how supervision was being implemented. Participants stated factors such as, amongst others, insufficient time, high workloads, and disorganized working environment as negatively impacting the implementation of supervision in their service offices. The main conclusion drawn from the findings was that almost all service offices were unable to appropriately implement supervision in a manner that strikes a balance on different functions of supervision appropriately. The recommendations were divided into those that related to the study as a whole and those that suggested for future studies.

**Key Words:** Experiences, Social Worker, Supervision, Supervisor

## **ACRONYMS**

DSD	: Department of Social Development
EPMDS	: Employee Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
IDP	: Integrated Development Plan
KPA	: Key Performance Area
SACSSP	: South African Council for Social Service Professions
SWP	: Social Work Practitioner
SWS	: Social Work Supervisor
UKZN	: University of KwaZulu-Natal

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### 1.1. Background and Rationale of the Study

Social work practitioners and supervisors have different views on supervision due to their different experiences and exposure. A glance at the history of social work practice worldwide depicts supervision to have been at the heart of the practice, with the evolution of practice exerting a direct influence on supervision (Pecora, Cherin, Bruce & de Jesus Arguello, 2010). Pecora *et al.*, (2010) further mention that social work supervision has drawn on the practice traditions that emerged when the profession of social work began. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) point out that the literature to social work supervision was scarce before 1920 as supervision was not viewed as an area of interest. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) also assert that, even though the concept of supervision existed by then, it appears that it was mainly applied in the context of and with the purpose of assessing and evaluating the programs in institutions, as opposed to the supervision of individuals. This might have been that the practice of supervision became infused with other additional duties.

Social work supervision in the South African context is marked by uniquely South African history, which ranges from the colonial and apartheid to a democratic era. Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) argue that during the apartheid era in South Africa, social workers were supervised according to their races, as a result supervision was differently applied across different races. Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) further note that it became a common practice that the newly graduated white social workers were allocated the supervisory roles, based on their race. This practice could be viewed as having resulted to the exploitation of social workers from other racial backgrounds and the deprivation of their professional growth, which subsequently increased their workloads and stress levels.

Nicholas, Rautenbach, and Maistry (2010) note that the adoption of the White Paper for Social Development (1996) led to the reconstruction and transformation of social welfare in South Africa. The year 1994, was characterized by legislative transformation and marked the end of apartheid and the introduction of the democratic era. This became a turning point for social work practice and supervision practice. The

enactment of the *White Paper for Social Welfare* (Department of Social Development, 1997), was one of the main changes in social services, and social work in particular. Maupye (2016) states that in 2003 the Department of Social Development in South Africa declared social work as a scarce skill. This led to the formation of the document titled the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy* that led to the recruitment of social workers across the country. Maupye (2016) adds that at that time the Department of Social Development did not view supervision as a significant practice.

After some years of trying to deal with the matters concerning supervision within the social work profession, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and the Department of Social Development (DSD), 2012 developed a national framework titled, '*Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa*' in 2012. This framework was also referred to as a Supervision Framework. Accordingly, the Supervision Framework, advances its main aim to provide a framework for effective supervision of social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers, learner social auxiliary workers, social work specialists, and private practitioners (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). The framework seeks to ensure that the country has competent professional social work practices that serve the best interests of service users in South Africa, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). The researcher argues that the formulation of this supervision framework was an acknowledgment by DSD, SACSSP, and the sector at large. The DSD and SACSSP also acknowledge that South Africa has a problem in areas such as effective and quality supervision in the social work profession.

There is a wide consensus on the importance of supervision in literature. Scholars on the social work supervision like Wannacott (2012) emphasise the importance supervision in social work practice. Harkness and Kadushin (2014) mention that supervision has always been an important part of the profession of social work. Considering the extent of literature that concurred on the value of supervision in social work practice, it became apparent that conducting a study that seek to explore the implementation of supervision was inevitable. Although the importance of supervision has been emphasized a great deal, there are limited cases on how social work practitioners and supervisors experience supervision, at the practice level. Wannacott (2012) states the focus of supervision should be on improving its quality of supervision

as this could have important and widely applicable effects. Wannacott (2012) adds that this could be cost-effective in ensuring that the organization is turned around.

This study aimed at exploring how social workers and supervisors experienced the implementation of supervision within their organization. It also aimed at exploring how the social workers' and supervisors' experiences on supervision impacted positively or negatively on their practice in delivering quality, effective and efficient services to their service users. It also explored how supervision impacted their performance towards their organizational and professional mandate.

Supervision, in this study, was guided by Wannacott (2012:23) definition of supervision which says that it is a "process by which one worker is given a responsibility by the organization to work with other worker(s) to meet certain organization, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users."

The rationale of the study arose from the professed need that the social work profession requires social workers to be engaged in the ongoing enhancement of their professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills to realize the required ability to provide effective services. Wonnacott (2012) argues that good social work involves the ability to maintain and grow relationships, make good decisions and judgments, and manage the emotional levels of work. This author also notes that this is a challenging task. It would however bear fruits if social work practitioners are encouraged to deeply reflect on their day-to-day practice and develop their skills and knowledge continuously, (Wonnacott, 2012).

During the fieldwork practical, the researcher observed a lack of supervision in the organization. This negatively impacted on social workers' conduct towards their profession, organization, and clients. The lack of supervision could be attributed to differential experiences of social work supervision within the organization, more particularly the way supervision was implemented. The researcher decided to undertake a study on the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors in DSD at King Cetshwayo District Municipality. The study aims to contribute to the uniform implementation of the supervision practice. Therefore, this study aimed to explore and understand how social work practitioners and supervisors experienced supervision within their organization. This was done to determine how those experiences impacted the way they work within the organization. Considering that

supervision is, by nature, an interactive and context-dependent phenomenon (Sithole, 2019), the views of both social work practitioners and supervisors within a specific context were viewed as crucial in this endeavor. It was through the divergent views of key actors in supervision were understood. This was done in a corroborated manner within a specific context, namely service offices at King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

## **1.2. Location of the Study**

The study was located and conducted in KwaZulu-Natal at the DSD, at King Cetshwayo District Municipality. This district is in the north-east of KwaZulu-Natal province. The respective district is also composed of five municipalities such as the City of uMhlathuze, uMfolozi, Nkandla, Mthonjaneni, and uMlalazi. It is also a home of five (5) DSD service offices that serve the people residing in the respective district.

The main reason the researcher chose this locality was that this district was reportedly servicing communities that are situated in both, rural and urban settings, which depict the traditional and state dualism. The coexistence of traditional and state dualism is referred to as polity dualism. Holzinger, Kern and Kromrey (2016) assert that polity dualism depicts the coexistence of two political and lawful frameworks within the same individuals: the state and traditional administration. The co-existence of dual administration, state arm (Municipal) and Traditional Authorities pose its own dynamics in how social services are provided in the society. This area provides an appropriate example of the dual nature of the South Africa's administration.

Holzinger, *et al.* (2016) state that the results from the coexistence and interaction of government and traditional establishments join in unexpected ways in three spheres: majority rule government, conflict, and advancement. The importance of traditional societies, regardless of the state could be democratic or autocratic; developed or underdeveloped will all influence the fundamental processes. On this basis, the service offices under this district are likely to face challenges that are fundamentally different from those which are faced by their counterparts. There is a notion that social work practitioners and supervisors servicing these settings are likely to provide a combination of unique views.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

The way social work practitioners and supervisors experienced and understood supervision was crucial in providing insight into their knowledge about supervision at an individualized level and how it is being undertaken within the organization. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) echo this view in their exploration of the role of supervision and its significance. Supervision helps the workers to grow and develop professionally and maximizes their knowledge and skills to the point where they can perform autonomously. The process of supervision enables the supervisees to deliver effective, efficient, and quality services to their clients consistent with the organization's mandate and professional practice, (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). Based on this view, social work practitioners and supervisors, they became the target population, for this study. They were specifically chosen because they were key role-players and ultimate beneficiaries of supervision. Social work practitioners are the cadres who interface directly with the clients and consequently should be afforded an attention to ensure that their practice is still relevant in line with their organization's goals and professional standards. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the involvement of supervisors is essential to empower social work practitioners to deliver effective, efficient, and quality services.

The social work practice in general at the DSD, is described as in constant evolution. As a result, the experiences of key role-players must be from time-to-time explored. Phungwayo (2012) supports this view by stating that the DSD is the custodian of social services that purport to empower the vulnerable groups in South Africa. It is therefore paramount for the organization to be accorded attention so that effective and efficient services may be provided. This means that for the DSD to remain relevant in its mandate in delivering effective and efficient services, it needs to pay attention to quality supervision to social workers who are the first-line force to ensuring that services are delivered to the service users. This will enable social workers to be effective in delivering services to individuals, families, groups, and communities. In addition, this could enable practitioners to actively advocate for policy that seeks to empower their clients. This view is in line with Makoka (2016) who argues that the process of effective supervision assists supervisees to grow professionally and to utilize their skills and knowledge in service delivery.

Understanding the implementation of supervision from the social work practitioners' experiences was key, considering that they are not just the direct recipients of supervision, but key role players in supervision. Wannacott (2012) regards social work supervision beneficial to clients, although the recipients of supervision are frontline social workers. Therefore, understanding the social work practitioners' experiences was crucial in the sense that their experiences on the role of supervision shaped their attitudes and conduct towards delivering services.

#### **1.4. Aim and Objectives**

##### **1.4.1. Aim**

This study aimed to explore and describe the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the DSD, so as determine how these experiences affected service provision.

##### **1.4.2. Objectives of the Study**

- 1.4.2.1.** To explore and describe the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the Department of Social Development.
- 1.4.2.2.** To examine the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization.
- 1.4.2.3.** To explore the nature of supervision that exists within the identified organization.
- 1.4.2.4.** To examine how social workers and supervision understand the execution of supervision in the identified organization.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

##### **1.5.1. Main Question**

- 1.5.1.1.** What are the experiences of social workers and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the Department of Social Development?

##### **1.5.2. Sub Questions**

- 1.5.2.1.** What is the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization?

**1.5.2.2.** What is the nature of supervision applicable in the identified organization?

**1.5.2.3.** How do social work practitioners and supervisors experience supervision in the identified organization?

**1.5.2.4.** How is social work supervision executed in the identified organization?

## **1.6. Theoretical Framework**

The proposed study was underpinned by the role theory. According to Tuner (2006) the role theory focuses on how social behavior is organized at both, collective and individual levels. Tuner (2006) adds that the individual's behavior in an organization or social context is planned and enforced through the roles. Bess and Dee (2012) state that the role theory studies roles by critically evaluating and exploring the effects of these roles on the members of the organization and the organization. Biddle (2013) states the role theory is more concerned with configuring how people behave within their roles, identities, and social contexts, including social positions. Biddle (2013) adds that the central concern of the theory are patterns of human conduct within roles, expectations, identities, social positions, context, social structure as well as individual responses. Biddle (2013) further points out that role theory has several fundamental propositions that underpin it. Below are the prepositions that underpin the role theory as suggested by Biddle (2013):

- (i) Role theorists outline that certain conducts are patterned and are characteristics of people within certain roles.
- (ii) Roles are related to a group of people who share a similar goal and identity who then form social positions.
- (iii) People are aware of their roles and in most cases, their roles are then administrated by their awareness through expectations.
- (iv) People should be educated about roles and in doing so they find enjoyment or unhappiness in fulfilling their roles thereof.

This theory was relevant for this study because it focuses on supervision, the roles involved, that is, the role of a supervisor and supervisee. This theory provides an understanding of the roles of social work practitioners within supervision. It also elaborates on how the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors impact their roles as cadres for ensuring quality service to service users. The use of this theory

was necessary because supervision is, primarily, aimed at ensuring that the key role-players of supervision within the organization can fulfill their roles for the betterment of service users and the organization. This theory was also useful for this study because it helped the researcher to examine how individuals perform their roles as informed by their experiences of supervision in their organization.

### **1.7. Preliminary Literature Review**

This section presented preliminary literature on social work supervision. The section briefly described the significance of supervision in the social work practice with specific reference to the DSD. The principles and functions of supervision were briefly discussed to provide insight into the importance of supervision within the social work practice.

According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014), history depicts supervision as a fundamental part of social work practice. Beddoe and Maidment (2015) concur and state that supervision is at the center of social work practice and that it is on that basis that it needs in-depth investigation and scholarly attention. This is essential in contributing towards the generation and expansion of current knowledge available about supervision. Beddoe and Maidment (2015) assert that supervision does not only provide a context for learning different activities but that it also serves as a platform for the improving knowledge, advancement of skills, and quality assurance which helps in assessing challenges likely to be encountered in everyday practice. This means that supervision is the main channel through which both social workers and supervisors engage in a critically reflective manner. Beverley and Worsley (2010) explore the phenomenon of supervision and describe the principles of supervision that are fundamental when dealing with supervision practice. Beverley and Worsley (2010) put forward the following three principles: (1) supervision should ensure that the needs of clients and agency are being met and the social work practitioners have to be accountable to both; (2) supervision should assess and evaluate the practitioners' work-related needs and their ability to practice within their organization; and lastly, (3), supervision informs the practitioners' practice. These principles are important and that if applied they can ensure that the process of supervision produces desired outcomes. This is likely to exert a positive impact on how social workers and supervisors perform their roles within the organization.

Gasker (2019) argues that social work supervision is not the same as supervision in a corporate setting, considering that it is not merely preoccupied with the purpose of monitoring productivity. Key in social work supervision, is the notion that it strives to incorporate the three main functions and interface among them, namely administrative, educational, and supportive functions (Gasker, 2019). Kadushin and Harkness (2014), state that the educational function ensures that the ability of the worker to perform his or her tasks more effectively and efficiently is improved. These authors point out that this is firstly realized by enabling the worker to grow and develop professionally and help the worker to do his or her job more effectively and capitalize on clinical knowledge and skills to the extent where the worker can work independently. Secondly, the administrative function aims to ensure that the worker is within a working space that allows him or her to perform the work more effectively (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). Lastly, the authors assert that supportive function is described as ensuring that the worker maintains the love and passion for what he or she is doing.

The presented preliminary literature provided sufficient ground for the researcher to contextualize the phenomenon of supervision and to explain the study based on its aim. The sought to explore and describe the experiences of practitioners and supervisors in the DSD at King-Cetshwayo District. The researcher was, therefore, guided by literature to arrive at the findings of the study, including drawing conclusions and recommendations that emerged.

## **1.8. Research Methodology**

Bhattacharyya (2013) points out that a research methodology is a scientific and systematic way to solve research problems. According to Creswell (2013), research methods include the procedures in which data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. As a result, this section presents the methods used to collect data and how it was analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions.

### **1.8.1. Research Paradigm**

Creswell (2013) views a research paradigm as a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study. This study was qualitative in nature. It used an interpretive paradigm. According to Rubin

and Babbie (2010), an interpretive paradigm is a research paradigm that seeks to gain an empathic understanding of how people feel, gain in-depth feelings and meanings of their reasons for their behaviors, and also pursuing to understand people's everyday experiences. In this type of paradigm, the researcher aimed to gain a subjective in-depth understanding of the lives of people (Rubin and Babbie 2010).

According to Carey (2012), interpretive approaches seek to discover meaning and also attempt to unearth the way people understand and also interpret their experiences in the social world. Carey adds that in this instance, a researcher attempts to gauge, reach, and understand the perceptions, thoughts, emotional reactions, and attitudes held by the participants. The researcher utilized this paradigm to gain an empathetic understanding of how social workers perceived and felt about supervision within their organization. The researcher used this paradigm to discover practitioners' experiences, opinions, and emotional responses through the research questions and to satisfy the research objectives.

### **1.8.2. Research Design**

Sahu and Singh (2014) describe the research design as a researcher's choice about his research components and the development of certain components of the design. Gray (2014) adds that research design is a tactical plan for a proposed research study that sets out the characteristics and broad structures of the research. As the study was qualitative, it used an exploratory-descriptive research design. The researcher used this research design to explore and describe the aspect of the research topic to gain an in-depth understanding of the proposed topic. Kumar (2010) states that the exploratory research is used when a study is undertaken to discover where little is known about a subject or investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular research study. Likewise, Sahu and Singh (2015) state that one of the most fundamental purposes of descriptive research is to provide a clear description of the situation as it currently exists.

### **1.8.3. Study Population**

Omari (2011) defines the population as the totality of any group of units that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The study population involves a large group of people or institutions that has one or more

characteristics in common on which a study focuses, (Omari 2011). The study population for this project consisted of social workers and social work supervisors employed on a full-time basis in service offices of the DSD under King Cetshwayo District Municipality. The researcher selected specifically social workers and social work supervisors. The study did not include student social workers, social auxiliary workers, or social work volunteers. The two categories were chosen on the notion that they are the key role-players in supervision. On one hand, social workers were the direct beneficiaries of supervision who empower clients to receive the best services from the organization. On the other hand, supervisors were the ones entrusted with the responsibility of implementing supervision to social workers.

#### **1.8.4. Sampling Procedure**

Gray (2014) defines a sample as a set of objects, occurrence on individuals selected from a parent population for a research study. Sampling may be defined as the selection of a subset population for inclusion in the study (Daniel, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the non-probability type of sampling in the form of purposive sampling. Kumar (2010) states that purposive sampling is possibly concerned with the choice of a sample explicitly because of particularly interesting features of each element. The researcher utilized purposive sampling, where the researcher sampled a minimum of fifteen (15) to twenty (20) participants. A maximum of thirteen (13) social workers and a maximum of four (4) social work supervisors. f This category of participants was selected because of their suitability to provide in-depth and rich information on the research study. The proposed sample was identified as follows:

- a. Esikhaleni DSD Service office-5 Social workers and 2 supervisors
- b. Richards Bay DSD Service office-5 Social Workers and 2 supervisors
- c. Lower Mfolozi DSD Service office-5 Social Workers and 1 supervisor

#### **The following criteria was used in selecting participants:**

- (i) The participant should be registered with the SACSSP as a social worker;
- (ii) The participant should be working directly with clients;

- (iii) Participants must have a minimum of three years (3) of experience at DSD;
- (iv) The participants who are social workers should be under supervision;
- (v) The participant should be a social worker employed by the DSD in one of the offices under the King Cetshwayo District Municipality;
- (vi) Supervisors should have a minimum of two years' experience in supervising social workers.

### **1.8.5. Data Collection Instruments**

This section discusses the method and the procedure used to collect data. The researcher used interviews as the data collection instrument. Babbie (2011) defines an interview as a data collection tool in which the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee or participant. The interviews were semi-structured in nature to allow the researcher to be flexible in asking questions to gain as much information as possible. The researcher used face-to-face interviews to interviews. The researcher also used telephonic interviews where participants felt that it was appropriate and safe due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomaževič, and Umek, (2020) assert that, in early 2020, the COVID-19 widespread stunned the world, almost bringing it to an exceptional halt leaving students with difficulties to continue pursue their studies at all levels. It was on this basis that the interviews were conducted both physically and telephonically. The researcher used telephonic interviews as a means of obtaining data from the participants. Gray (2014) mentions that telephonic interviews are advantageous because the researcher may obtain data more quickly at low costs. For the researcher to gather as much information as possible to the participants, the interview sessions took about 50 to 60 minutes per interviewing session.

In as much as the sample of the study was well versed in English, the researcher decided to allow participants who wished to use IsiZulu during the interview. This was functional in creating a conducive and flexible environment for the participants. For instance, the participants may easily express those feelings and thoughts that could not be easily translated in either of the two languages without losing their exact meanings. The researcher interviewed two (2) participants through the telephone and fifteen (15) participants face to face. During the telephonic and face-to-face interview, the researcher utilized the audio recorder tape to record the conversations for

maximum capture of salient points of discussion. The researcher asked for permission to record before interviews. In tandem with that, the principle of confidentiality was maintained.

### **1.9. Data Analysis**

After the collection of data, the researcher commenced with the analysis of data. The researcher used thematic data analysis to analyze data. Liamputtong (2011) states that thematic data analysis is referred to as a process for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data and it is perceived as the foundational method for qualitative analysis. The researcher analyzed data following the five steps proposed by Terre Blanche, Durkheim, and Painter (2006). The first step is the immersion and familiarization of data. The researcher immersed himself in the study and familiarized himself with the collected data. The second step is coding, which is the key process in analyzing qualitative data through the process of classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data (Babbie, 2011). The third step was inducing themes, where the researcher labeled categories by emerging themes and in keeping with the aims and the fourth step was elaboration, the researcher engaged with the data that has not been captured by the original coding system. The final step was the Interpretation and checking of data, where the researcher interpreted the data against the literature review and theoretical framework (Terre Blanche, *et al.* 2006).

### **1.10. Ethical Considerations**

The researcher considered amongst others, the following ethical aspects, that are crucial to be observe in a qualitative research study.

#### **1.10.1. Informed Consent**

According to Wiles (2013), informed consent involves informing the research participants with the necessary and comprehensive information about what participating in the research study will involve and giving them the right to choose whether not to participate or to participate in a study. The researcher explained the nature and the purpose of the study to participants and then offered them an opportunity to willingly decide on whether to be involved in the study or not.

### **1.10.2. Confidentiality**

Muratovski (2016) postulates that confidentiality is when the researcher knows the names and any other personal information of the participants but cannot and will not disclose this information to others. The researcher guaranteed confidentiality by assuring participants that all the information they shared would not be disclosed publicly but only used for the purpose of the study.

### **1.10.3. Voluntary Participation**

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011) state that participation should always be voluntary and that no one should be forced into participating in a research study. The researcher upheld this ethical principle by ensuring that the participants were well informed about the nature of the research study and have fair opportunity to decide to participate in a study or not.

### **1.10.4. Debriefing Participants**

According to Muratovski (2016) the main purpose of the debriefing session is to minimize the impacts of participating in the study and remedy any possible misconceptions that the participants might have because of the study. After the research was completed, the researcher debriefed participants to assess whether they were any problems caused by the research to correct those problems.

## **1.11. Trustworthiness**

According to Sensing (2011), trustworthiness implies that the research findings can be trusted and that the study is worthy attention. Sensing adds that trustworthiness is the umbrella term for issues of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The researcher focused on the study's trustworthiness by considering these issues:

### **1.11.1. Credibility**

Babbie and Mouton (2001) assert that credibility refers to how confident the researcher is in the truth of the research study's findings. The researcher ensured credibility through member checks, frequent briefing sessions between the researcher and supervisor. Through member checks, the researcher asked participants to review both the data collected during the interview and the researcher's interpretation of that interview data to correct errors of facts.

### **1.11.2. Transferability**

According to Kumar (2014) transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. This research study can be transferred to Non-Profit Organizations where Social Workers offer similar services offered by DSD and have a similar supervision style as DSD.

### **1.11.3. Dependability**

Dependability is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same things twice, (Kumar, 2014). The researcher made known the steps within which findings were concluded so that if the supervisor was interested to observe whether the research findings were the same.

### **1.11.4. Confirmability**

Kumar (2014) suggests that confirmability refers to the degree to which results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. To fulfill this research principle the researcher allowed the supervisor or any interested party in the research to confirm the result findings.

## **1.12. Limitations of the Study.**

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011) all proposed research projects have limitations and none is perfectly designed. These authors add that the demonstration of the study's limitation demonstrates that the researcher understands the reality that the researcher will make no overwhelming claims about generalizability or conclusiveness about what he has learned. Therefore, even though this research study was intended to produce findings that were to be helpful through the exploration of the research topic, aim, and research questions, the researcher also recognized that it was likely to have its limitations.

The possible limitations anticipated by the researcher were:

- The research study location was likely to limit the researcher because it only involved few DSD service offices that were under King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

- The sample size for the study was relatively small because it consisted of only a maximum of 17 participants (social workers=13 and supervisors= 4). The researcher sampled a maximum of 5 social workers and 2 supervisors per DSD service office under King Cetshwayo District Municipality, which also limited the amount of information gathered for the study.
- The participants might have withheld certain information because of certain insecurities they felt or experienced within their organization. The researcher assured participants of the purpose of the study as well the ethical principles to be observed, mainly confidentiality.

### **1.13. Chapter Outlay**

The research report is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Provides the overall overview of the entire study. It also alludes to how the research was to be conducted
- Chapter 2: Provides the review of literature that discusses supervision in details
- Chapter 3: Provides the details on data collection and how data was collected on participants.
- Chapter 4: Provides the discussion on the analysis and finding of data arising from the research.
- Chapter 5: Provides the summary, conclusions, and recommendations from the analyzed and interpreted data.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1. Introduction**

Practitioners' experiences on the implementation of social work supervision can be better understood through consulting a wide range of literature that deals with social work supervision that is effective, efficient, and of the best quality. Ling-Pan (2016) states that the literature review helps the researcher to be critical in summarising and examining the available literature on a specific selected topic. Ling-Pan (2016) points out that the researcher evaluates all the available evidence, and evaluates the theories that are relevant. The researcher also notes the gaps that exist in literature and then paints a picture of the current state of existing research in a particular selected topic, (Ling-Pan, 2016). The researcher took note of all the literature that was available and had been researched before and then find the basis within which to locate the study.

Makoka (2016) argues the fundamental goals of the literature review are to institute credibility and depict the researcher's understanding with the knowledge body; demonstrate track of existing research on the topic and demonstrate how the undertaken research links to it. The literature review allows the researcher to learn from others, which ultimately helps in the stimulation of new ideas, (Makoka, 2016). Carey (2010) adds literature review does not only accomplish the main tasks such as allowing the researcher to be able to define clearly research objectives and reveal what other researchers have discovered previously but it also assists the researcher to understand better the topic being studied and research problem. As a result, the researcher utilized the literature review to gain a better insight into the problem being researched. The literature reviewed stimulated new ideas that revealed the gaps that exist in the literature.

Makoka (2016) states that the literature review helps the researcher to broaden his prospects and assists in ensuring that the researcher does not redo work that has been researched already by other researchers. The researcher used the literature review to get information on the work of other researchers on his research topic. This was done to ensure that the researcher did not duplicate their work but learn from their findings to enhance the study being undertaken.

In this chapter, the researcher focused on social work supervision. The researcher began by describing supervision practice in the DSD at King Cetshwayo District because it was where the study was located. This description of the location of the

study was important because it explained the reasons why the study was undertaken under the respective district specifically. The researcher also discussed and described the concept of social work supervision and its role within the DSD.

## **2.2 Supervision Practice in King Cetshwayo District.**

The DSD at King Cetshwayo district is largely serving the people that reside mostly in rural areas that are the beneficiaries of the services offered by the department. According to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of 2017/18-2021/22 of King Cetshwayo District Municipality (2017), the district had a total population of about 917 135 people that particular year and this number may have increased substantially over the years. The IDP further mentions that out of that previously stated number of the general population about 162 381 households are in the rural areas and represent 80% of the population and leaving about 40 595 households that are in the urban areas that only represent 20% of the general population. This ascertains that the DSD in this respective district experience unique needs of clients when compared to their other DSD counterparts that are located in urban areas.

social workers who provide services to clients who reside in a locality are engaged in a continuous effective reflective practice to remain relevant while providing efficient and sustainable services. According to Hughes (2010), supervision is a crucial part of the reflective practice and an integral part of the social work profession. Hughes also states that supervision has, over time, given social workers the opportunity to reflect on their practice and managed them the needed forum to reflect, assess, examine, create inventive solutions. For social workers to be able to reflect on their practice, they should have good and competent supervisors who help their supervisees through a supervisor-supervisee relationship to do their jobs efficiently and offer services that are in the best interest of their clients.

According to Hawkins and Shohet (2012), great supervision centers a few of its considerations on the elements of the supervisees. The authors point out that this must continuously emerge out of work-related issues and be tied with the benefit of understanding and being able to oversee the work better. This kind of supervision empowers social work practitioners to be able to be effective in delivering services to their clients and fulfil the organisational mandate. The DSD Annual Performance Report of (2016) outlines the mission of the DSD, which is to transmute society by

building cognizant and able citizens through the arrangement of comprehensive, coordinated, and feasible social advancement services. For social workers employed in this district to be able to carry out their mandate by fulfilling the organisational vision, they require effective, efficient, and quality supervision within the department through their supervisors.

Officer (2011) stresses that supervision must be the tool and a resource that will empower and support supervisees to build effective proficient relationships, engage in good practice, and be able to reach for themselves professional judgment and discretion in decision making. Officer (2011) also argues that for supervision to be effective it needs to put together a performance management approach with an empowering, dynamic, and enabling supervisory relationship. The DSD at King Cetshwayo District is not excluded from offering services to its people even though the district is largely rural and has to function within traditional norms and practices of the respective communities. The department must use supervision to empower social workers to be able to build professional relationships with their clients so that they will be able to use professional judgments to provide sustainable and quality services to service users (Officer, 2011).

Makoka (2016) points out that the process of social work supervision is the outcome of numerous processes where the supervisor and social worker attempt to find answers to address issues relating to proficient improvement, the standard of training, moral behavior, equity, and service delivery. Officer (2011) adds that supervision must improve the quality of practice, support the development of integrated working, and ensure continuing professional development. Supervision ought to contribute to the advancement of a learning culture by advancing an approach that improves the certainty and competence of managers in supervision skills, (Officer, 2011). Phungwayo (2012) mentions that the DSD offers services through three broad programs namely, Social Security, Social Welfare, and Community Development. Phungwayo (2012) adds that these fundamental programs of the department are offered by social workers to people who are in need and these services are viewed as important in assisting the department of social development to deal effectively with many kinds of social problems that exist in the society.

Lastly, it is evident that supervision becomes the only place where social workers in the King-Cetshwayo District can solve the problems they experience. The problems arise from the complexities of working in cultural and traditional communities when trying to deliver services to their clients as part of fulfilling their professional, and organization mandate. Therefore, the need to effectively implement and execute supervision in this District cannot be over emphasized. This is the reason why the researcher undertook this study to understand the implementation of supervision

### **2.2.1. Defining Supervision**

The term supervision has been the subject of study for many decades, especially in the profession of social work, and has received several definitions. Therefore, the concept of supervision has a plethora of definitions. However, Howe and Gray (2012) assert that supervision is an exceptionally vital portion of the profession of social work because social workers utilize supervision to survey their practice and decision making; arrange their leaning and advancement; work through the significant emotional and personal demands that their job demands on them.

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) define supervision as a mutual endeavor through which the supervisee with the assistance of the supervisor attend to themselves as an important part of the formation and maintaining of worker-client relationship, their client's needs, and the wider universal context so that they maintain the quality of their work, develop themselves and be agents of change. It is within this context that social workers should draw many benefits from supervision that helps them be the best in their field, organization, and interventions.

Moreover, Howe and Gray (2012) believe that supervision is primarily the means through which an organization's supervisor empowers staff either collectively and individually and also that the standards of practice are well maintained. Supervision aims to ensure that the supervisees are productive and effective as they carry out their job responsibilities, (Howe & Gray, 2012). Having said that, supervision in the DSD at King Cetshwayo can play a significant role, if well undertaken, to help social workers deal effectively with their unique set of challenges posed by their location. Effective supervision could assist the organization to carry out its mandate efficiently while ensuring that its employees are well capacitated in their personal, professional, and organizational functioning.

For this study, the definition of supervision was guided by Wonnacott's (2012:23) definition of supervision in which it is described as a "process by which one worker is given a responsibility by the organization to work with other worker(s) to meet certain organizational, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users." This definition points out that a supervisor is the employee of an organization appointed and entrusted to supervise a certain portion of the workforce in an organization. This is done to ensure that the organizational, personal, and professional objectives are realized. This definition also points that the primary and main objective of the process of supervision is for the supervisees to be at their best so that they can deliver services to their clients efficiently and effectively.

### **2.2.2. Purpose of Supervision**

The process of supervision exists for a particular specific purpose and plays a significant role in the profession of social work. Hughes (2010) explains that the purpose of supervision is to enhance the social workers' professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes to achieve competency in providing quality care. Hughes (2010) adds that supervision also aids in proficient growth and advancement and makes improvements in results. The overarching objective of supervision is to encourage advanced best for clients by keeping up existing great practices and persistently endeavoring to progress them, (Hughes, 2010). This assertion by Hughes implies that supervision exists so that the supervisees can be the best at what they do and be able to render services that are of the best quality. This also points to the rationale of this study as it aimed to explore how social workers and supervisors understand and experience supervision. The participants' experiences helped to unearth the good practices of supervision that were currently in place that needs to be kept and improved. Their experiences also highlighted those practices that needed to be done away with that have form part of the bad supervision culture in their respective organization.

The work of social workers and supervisors requires them to adapt to certain environments that their organization are based and at the same time required to be productive in terms of the work they do in that environment. For the social workers to have this adaptive ability to any environment they might be working in, they need supervisors who will prepare them by employing the educative and supportive function

of supervision on them. Godden (2012) agrees that the work of the social worker can be demanding because it takes place in a complex adaptive environment where the role of professional judgment is significant (Godden, 2012). This stresses out the needs of the social work supervision that is continuous and can be adapted to their constantly changing environment and be productive when they provide services to clients.

### **2.2.3. Functions of Supervision**

Poulin and Matis (2016) state that social work supervision can be thought of in terms of three primary domains: support, administration, and education. Larkin (2018) states that while both field instructors and agency supervision engage in the principal cluster functions of supervision (administrative, educational, and supportive) but their effective implementation is even more difficult. One of the objectives is to explore the nature of supervision that exists within the identified organization (Larkin, 2018). In this objective, the researcher aimed to discover whether the application of the functional approaches to supervision at the King Cetshwayo District are equally and well-executed as they are all significant to the supervisory purpose.

#### **2.2.3.1. Administrative function**

Administrative function is one of the core functions of social work supervision and administration is one of the most important responsibilities for social work professionals. According to the *Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions* the administrative function of supervision has its primary focus on effective, correct, and appropriate executions of organizational procedures and policies, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Howe and Gray (2012) add that the administrative function is the qualitative or normative function of supervision. This function is often viewed as the managerial function of supervision, where the supervisor is concerned with certain standards and quality of work, because of the line management responsibility and accountability (Howe and Gray, 2012). According to *the Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions*, the primary goal of the administrative function is to ensure observance of procedure and policy (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Thus, the work of a supervisor is to ensure that the policies of the organizations are implemented.

Silence (2017) acknowledges that the administrative function has its focus on the formation of good work standards that are sustainable and in compliance with sound

practice, organizational, and professional policies. Runcan (2013) points out that the goal of administration supervision, is to create an instrumental context for good organization activity. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) argue that the administrative function of supervision provides the quality control function in work with people.

The administrative function of supervision is important in terms of educational and supportive functions, respectively. It is in the administrative function that supervisors and social workers work in adherence to organizational policy and procedures. This is where social workers and supervisors concerns themselves with delivering best quality services to their clients while keeping good clients records. Therefore, supervision cannot be fully functional when the administrative function is not well executed but in a balanced manner with other functions.

#### **2.2.3.2. Supportive function**

The supportive function of supervision is different from other kinds of supervision because this is where the supervisees are provided with emotional support, (Silence, 2017). Silence adds that this support is necessary for ensuring that social workers are in a good state of work and are able to do their work effectively as expected. Runcan (2013) points out that in the supportive role of supervision, the supervisor aims to provide support to a supervisee to deal with work-related stress and advancing professional performance. Thus, the focus in this function is to ensure that after social workers have done their work and faced some challenges that emotionally disturbed them, and then they are restored to the normal state that will enable them to carry on with their work much effectively (Runcan, 2013). Howe and Gray (2012) also second the previously mentioned view by stating that the supportive function is the restorative or resource function.

According to *the Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions*, the primary purpose of the supportive function is on worker morale and job satisfaction (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Its main objective is to improve how a job is executed; improve morale and the quality of work (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Hawkins and Shohet (2012) state that this type of function involves working together with the supervisee to unpack personal and emotional impacts associated with working of professionals in a highly distressing and complex situation. Social work is a demanding profession and requires sufficient support from an organization through a competent supervisor. Social

workers at King Cetshwayo District may find it difficult to offer quality help to their clients because of the social functioning in their district that is culturally and traditionally influenced. In this case, social workers would require the supportive function of supervision. The *Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions*, further states that in the supportive function of supervision is where an empowering environment is made by the supervisor to the supervisee to enhance desired outcomes (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). The framework also mentions that the supportive function is typically seen more particularly as an asset to assist the supervisor and supervisee to bargain with the job-related pressures and stressors, which may in case unattended impede the work to the hindrance of benefit conveyance, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Hawkins and Shohet (2012) argue that the supportive function must be understood as a way of reacting to social workers who are locked in individual work with clients who are influenced by trouble, torment, and fragmentation of the clients. This requires time to become mindful of how these influences affected them and to bargain with any reactions. The social work profession may become very stressful to its practitioners if they are not well supported within their organization. The lack of fundamental support could impact negatively on social workers in terms of implementing their duties effectively and personally as individuals.

Mathonsi (2016) views the supportive function of supervision as maintenance supervision. Mathonsi (2016) adds that supervisors in social work supervision are not seen as authority figures but rather people who understand the needs of their subordinates by listening, leading, and motivating them. Supervisors provide psychological and interpersonal support to enable the worker to mobilize his emotional energy for effective job performances, (Mathonsi, 2016). For one to become a supervisor, in the DSD one must be a social worker with a certain minimum required experience. The department stipulates that the supervisor should be a social worker who is competent and well informed about supervision (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). This would mean continuous training for capacity building to ensure that supervisors are in a proper state to offer supportive supervision in the organization (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

### **2.2.3.3. Educative function**

The educational function of supervision deals with ensuring professional development. This is done by allowing the supervisee to upgrade their professional knowledge and skills to ensure that they are relevant in their working environment. The *Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions* states that the primary aim of the educational function of supervision is to help the supervisees improve their skills, knowledge, and attitude so that they will be able to acquire excellence when executing their professional duties. The framework also mentions that this function of supervision maintains individualized focus since it is focused on the educational needs within the context of the workload allocated to a supervisee (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

Hawkins, and Shohet (2012) categorize the educational function as the developmental function. These authors add that the developmental function is about developing the skills, and capacities of the supervisees. Through the educational function, the supervisee is enabled to develop new competencies that will ensure that in pursuing their allocated work they will be enabled to gain new abilities and strategies to execute their work (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012). The *Supervision Framework of Social Service Professions* mentions that supervisees in the educational function are empowered to be able to intervene in different situations, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) proposes the benefit of supervisees to be engaged in the educational supervision as follows:

- Supervisees gain a better understanding of their clients;
- Supervisees become more aware of their reactions and responses to the clients;
- Supervisees gain more understanding about the dynamics of the interactions between supervisees as workers and their clients;
- To look at how they intervened and the sequences of their interventions.

For social workers in the King Cetshwayo District to be very effective in their interventions they need to be engaged in the educational function of supervision. This is where social workers could gain better insight through the acquisition of theoretical knowledge that is intended to help them understand their environments and function better. Without the continuous development of supervisees educationally, it would be difficult to acquire necessary skills to assist clients. Through the educational function

of supervision, the supervisor educates the supervisees from experience in specific cases. The supervisor also uses different approaches to assist the supervisees to understand how they should approach and intervene in certain hard cases.

#### **2.2.4. Objectives of Supervision**

Kadushin and Harkness (2014) state that social work supervision objectives are both short and long. These authors add that the short-range objectives of the educational supervision are simply to promote worker's capabilities to do/her work more efficiently; assist in growing workers professionally and assist the workers to make the best use of his/her clinical skills and knowledge. The short-term objectives are not the end goal of supervision themselves, but are rather, the means for achieving the long-range objectives of supervision.

According to Wonnacott (2012) supervision's objectives ensure that the decisions made are of best quality; enable and improve management, and organizational accountability. Wonnacott (2012) adds that they address and identify problems that are associated with managing workload and caseloads, and lastly, help identify and achieve personal learning, career, and development opportunities.

If supervision does not fulfill these objectives, it means that there is a lack in the implementation and execution of supervision and the supervisees are not well capacitated to deal with the work environment (Wonnacott, 2013). The absence of competent supervisors could lead to failures in addressing problems and achieving intended goals of the organization.

#### **2.2.5. Role of Supervision**

As supervision forms an important aspect of the social work profession, it, therefore, a profession with its important roles that social work supervisors and supervisees need to understand so that the outcomes of supervision will be effective. According to Hughes (2010) supervision plays a predominant role in good social practice as it does not give benefit on how services are delivered in the organisation but also in building effective personal relationships. Silence (2014) states that supervision has a variety of roles in an organization such as to monitor, evaluate and improve the employee's performance; give specific feedback to employees; facilitate communication and mutual understanding; discuss difficulties and sources of conflict; help employees

manage conflict. The researcher understands that these important roles cannot happen without a competent and well-resourced supervisor. Nickson, Carter, and Francis, (2019) affirm that supervision is a highly valued and vital activity in the profession that needs both the supervisors and supervisees to take charge of their roles with the process of supervision. Supervision cannot happen without a supervisor being at the forefront in the process of supervision ensuring that supervision takes place in the organization (Nickson, *et al.*, 2019).

#### **2.2.5.1. Role of a Supervisor in Supervision**

Supervision cannot exist without the supervisor and as a result, a supervisor in supervision has an important role to play. According to Marc, Makai-Dimeny, and Osvat (2014), the roles of a supervisor are to be a trainer, mentor, consultant and assessor. This means that the supervisor must be well capacitated and skilled to be able to maneuver across these different roles to the benefit of the supervisee, client, and organization (Marc, *et al.*, 2014). As a trainer, the supervisor assists the supervisees to apply academic knowledge and integrate other relevant information (Marc, *et al.*, 2014). These authors add that as a mentor, the supervisor supports and assists the supervisees in ensuring that they are well adapted to their work environment; as a consultant, the supervisor solves challenging problems and develops a reflective practice and as an assessor, the supervisor provides appropriate feedback to the supervisees, (Marc, *et al.*, 2014).

Runcan (2013) states that supervision applies to any other human relationship, an exchange founded on a kind of professional communication specific to a supervisor-supervisee relationship. It involves both the supervisors to transfer their communication action at confronting and analyzing them and concomitant perception of the supervisee's actions (Runcan, 2013). Hughes (2010) states that a great open supervisory relationship between a supervisor and supervisee will often lead in most cases to profitable sessions and genuine insightful feedback. Trust, openness, attitude, positivity, and honesty are qualities that a core in a good and productive supervisory relationship (Runcan, 2013).

Runcan (2013) states that the qualities of a supervisor in their relationship with a supervisee are extremely important for effective supervision. Runcan (2013) further argues that this relationship is deeply rooted in both the education of the supervisor,

their communication and relationship skills (with words as the main working tools), and the supervisor's personality traits.

According to Marc, *et al.*, (2014), the supervisory relationship between the supervisor and supervisee remains at the core of the supervisory process and effective supervision and this depends to an extraordinary degree on the supervisor. The supervisory process alludes to advancing and continuous arrangement of more or less intentioned organized discrete occasions by which a supervisor and supervisee finish their work (Marc, *et al.*, 2014). This means that the supervisory process is what the supervisor and supervisee do as they work together over time (Marc, *et al.*, 2014)

#### **2.2.5.2. Role of a Supervisee in Supervision**

The success of the supervisory process does not only depend on the supervisor but also on the supervisee and the organization within which the supervisor and the supervisee operate. Wonnacott (2012) regards good supervision as not only the responsibility of the supervisors but that it is a joint venture between the supervisor, supervisee, and their organization, with all having a role to play in making the best possible use of supervision. Therefore, to ensure effective supervision outcomes social workers must understand their roles with regards to supervision to ensure the success of the supervisory process (Wonnacott, 2012). Kadushin and Harkness (2014) agree with Wonnacott (2012) by stating that a supervisory relationship is established through the authority delegated to the supervisor by the agency and through the supervisee's reciprocal acceptance of the supervisor's legitimate entitlement to authority.

According to the Supervision Framework for Social Service Profession, (SACSSP and DSD, 2012), the supervisee has the responsibility to ensure that they attend agreed supervisions; keep abreast with new developments in the professional field; plan and prepare for the supervision session. These roles are crucial as they guarantee the success of the supervisory process (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Nickson, *et al.*, (2020) point out a certain concern that threatens the supervisory process when they mention that in many organizations, supervision is not given high priority and may be cancelled at short notice when other work pressures and crises are attended to. Nickson, *et al.*,

(2020) note that gaps in available supervision have contributed to worker burnout and difficulties in the recruitment and retention of social workers, particularly noted in rural areas, (Nickson, *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, social workers in the supervisory process cannot be over-emphasised.

#### **2.2.6. Factors Influencing the Outcomes of Supervision**

Wonnacott (2012) regards supervision as essential in social work practice for its very contribution in improving the supervision outcomes and subsequently service delivery. Makoka (2016) acknowledges that supervision happens inside a proficient relationship between a supervisory relationship, with an extreme objective of encouraging basic reflection upon the activity, people, forms, and setting of the practice of social work. Supervision could be influenced by several factors that could yield good supervisory outcomes if well considered (Mukoka, 2016). There are six factors that describe and link what should happen in supervision to ensure that what happens in practice is of the best quality, (Wannacott, 2012). These factors include role clarity, role security, emotional competence and empathy, accurate observation and assessment, partnership and power, and planning (Wonnacott, 2012).

##### **2.2.6.1. Role clarity**

Role clarity is about the extent to which a supervisee understands their job description which ultimately allows the supervisee to perform their duties with absolute clarity. Suan and Nasuridin (2013) state that role clarity refers to the extent to which an employee receives and understands the information required to perform his/her job. Stone and Harbin (2016) add that for a social work supervisee to be effective and develop professionally, the supervisee needs to be clear about their role. This implies that the supervisor must be clear of their roles first and then assist their supervisees to clarify their role in the time of role confusion or ambiguities (Stone and Harbin, 2016).

Wannocott (2012) supports the above-stated view by mentioning that role clarity involves the supervisor precisely understanding their roles and having them assisting their supervisees in clarifying their roles concerning their work with the clients. The ability of the supervisee and supervisor to clarify their roles will influence positive and

quality supervision outcomes (Wonnacott, 2012). For the supervisee to come into a reasonable function of their roles, a supervisor may be required to perform an educational function of supervision.

#### **2.2.6.2. Role security**

According to Wonnacott (2012), supervision should provide a safe environment in which the supervisee will be able to resolve and explore anxieties and confusion. This leads to expanded certainty in practice and inspires a state where clients can be more likely to develop confidence because of the competence of the supervisee, (Wonnacott 2012). Wonnacott (2012) adds that the role security can be achieved after the supervisee and the supervisor have achieved role clarity. Role security ensures that the supervisee is confident within their roles and can best perform to their roles. Role security could be best achieved through a supervisor ensuring that the supportive function of supervision is continually carried out to ensure that all work-related anxieties and stresses are appropriately dealt with to help the supervisee build confidence and feel secure in their role as a social worker (Wonnacott, 2012).

#### **2.2.6.3. Emotional Competence and Empathy**

Stone and Harbin (2018) state that emotional competence and empathy draw attention to the emotions at play for both parties within the supervisory relationship. This talks to the ability of the supervisor and the supervisee to be aware of their emotions within the supervisory process to achieve the best supervision outcomes. Wonnacott (2012) points out that this where the supervisor-supervisee relationship empowers an investigation of feelings, predispositions, and mistakes and models the significance of attunement to the feeling within the social work task. In this instance, the supervisor and supervisee have a common understanding and may reach where trust is built within the supervisory relationship (Wonnacott, 2012). This trust is necessary because it will help stimulate growth on the part of the supervisee.

#### **2.2.6.4. Accurate Observation and Assessment**

Wonnacott (2012) points out that accurate observation and assessment is where the environment or atmosphere in supervision permits a precise evaluation of the supervisee's competence and inspires a joint approach towards problem-solving that can be deciphered into the style of the work with the clients. The supervisor in this role

acts as a superior authority and an assessor that looks closely at how a supervisee can carry out their roles (Wonnacott, 2012). The supervisor also assesses the level of competence of a social worker and finds ways of how a social worker can be assisted where there are gaps and shortfalls in practice (Wonnacott, 2012). This includes the quality of work and the ability of the supervisee to align her practice with professional and organizational ethics and policies. The administrative function of supervision comes in helpful at this level.

#### **2.2.6.5. Partnership and Power**

Stone and Harbin (2018) state that partnership and power are meant to achieve appropriate and purposeful power relationships in supervision which is the very foundation of good practice. Wonnacott (2012) adds that partnership and power are not one or the other collusive nor correctional but empowers the supervisee to utilize his authority suitably with clients. In a social work practice, the social worker is expected to work with clients in an ethical manner governed by the principles of respect, ubuntu, and others. Partnership and power allow the supervisee to be aware of their powers when dealing with clients and can utilize them in a manner that is helpful and empowering to clients (Wonnacott, 2012). This creates a healthy and professional partnership between the client and a social worker and also a partnership between clients with the organization as a whole.

#### **2.2.6.6. Planning**

Wonnacott (2012) perceives planning as effective within supervision and enables the supervisees to utilize supervision as a blueprint and role model to create a clear plan that would benefit their clients. The supervisees undertake the administrative role to ensure that their intervention with clients is well planned are in line with organizational policies. The supervisor also plans together with the supervisee on how they will go about growing the supervisory relationship to assist the supervisee deal with the ever-changing environment of social work practice (Wonnacott, 2012).

#### **2.2.7. Supervision Types**

There are different types of supervision in social work, these include individual supervision, group supervision, and peer supervision. This section discussed three

types of supervision in the context of how they can be best utilized at the DSD at King Cetshwayo District.

#### **2.2.7.1. Individual Supervision**

Individual supervision is one of the most important types of supervision where the supervisor is engaged in a supervisory process with a single employee of the organization. Wonnacott (2012) states that supervision can take many forms, such as the one-on-one session, where the supervisor and the supervisee meet for supervision purposes. Brueggemann (2014) describes individual supervision as one that is administered at the individual level which is often used for consulting and providing clear direction and includes teaching skills. According to the Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions, individual supervision promotes the personal development of the supervisee, as it is intense (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). It also mentions that the supervisor's role includes the educational, administrative, and supportive functions, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

Individual supervision is valuable because it gives a supervisee time alone with the supervisor to engage on different matters that affect the supervisee. In that process, the supervisor notes the problems of a supervisee and deal with them in such a way that the supervisee is empowered in levels that the supervisor saw necessary for empowerment.

#### **2.2.7.2. Group Supervision**

The second type of supervision is group supervision where the supervisor engages in a supervisory process with the group of employees. Kadushin and Harkness (2014), define group supervision as the supervision method that uses a group setting to fulfill the duties of supervision. The *Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions* presents group supervision as a method often facilitated by the supervisor as the group leader and frequently used as a supplement, but not to substitute individual supervision (SACSSP & DSD, 2012)

In group supervision, the supervisor is responsible to provide the support, administrative and educational responsibilities for individual supervisee in the group that is being combined to fulfill their professional responsibilities (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). The *Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions* outlines

that in this method of supervision the social work supervisees get the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences within the group situation. It also states that this method becomes more effective in the context of educational supervision, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Kadushin and Harkness (2014) state that the primary ultimate objective of group supervision is to be more effective and efficient in the delivery of services to agency clients.

The main advantage of group supervision is that it saves time. Many supervisors may be attempted to neglect individual supervision because of that advantage. That should not be the case because all these methods of supervision are crucial to a supervisee and should reap the benefit of having to receive them all consistently.

#### **2.2.7.3. Peer supervision**

According to Silence (2017), peer supervision is the one where workers of the same level engage in the supervisory process to meet certain goals. In this type of supervision there is no leader, but all members viewed as equal, (Silence, 2017). This is where the workers get an opportunity to reflect on their practice and share challenges they encounter during their cause of work. They get an opportunity to share their work-related issues and receive possible solutions from their co-workers (Silence, 2017).

The *Supervision Framework for Social Service Professions*, mentions that the peer function of supervision does not rely on a designated supervisor; all members participate equally (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Therefore, this type of supervision does not depend on the supervisor for administrative, supportive, and educational needs of workers but depends on the co-workers that form the peer supervision process. It suffices to indicate that this kind of supervision is very rare in the identified organization (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

### **2.3. Overview of Existing Related Research**

The researcher acknowledges that this study was not a ground-breaking study, and there were several related kinds of research studies that were conducted on supervision especially within the DSD in South Africa. In 2016 there was a study conducted by Mathonsi in the Limpopo province on the '*Evaluation of Social Work Supervision on Job Performance in the Department of Social Development*'. The

researcher evaluated how supervision in social work can affect job performance in the Department of Social Development at Polokwane Sub-District.

Another study was conducted in the Gauteng province in the Johannesburg region by Mokoka in 2016. The study was on '*The Experiences of Social Work Supervisees concerning Supervision within the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region*'. Mokoka (2016) explored and described social workers' experiences with regards to social work supervision. Mokoka (2016) used the findings of the research to formulate recommendations that seek to improve supervision within the region to improve service delivery. This study was in the Gauteng province and possibly serviced people in suburbs and townships and cannot be generalized to the population such as the King Cetshwayo District living in rural areas.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

Social work supervision plays a predominant and significant part in the profession. This chapter discussed supervision in greater detail. It also defined supervision and provided a detailed description of the location of the research. In addition, it presented the functions, roles, and types of supervision, and gave a brief overview of other existing research that had been done by other researchers on supervision in the DSD. The next chapter will focus on the process of data collection and provide a detailed discussion of how the researcher went about collecting data from the participants at the DSD at King Cetshwayo District.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented literature on supervision and it was broadly discussed through citing international and local scholars on the subject. This chapter presents the methodology that was used to collect the data for the study. The chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research paradigm, sampling techniques, research design, data collection instruments, and the process of data analysis and interpretation techniques that were adhered to. This chapter, further discuss the issues of research reliability and validity; and ethical considerations that were observed during fieldwork. Lastly, the chapter provide a detailed discussion of the limitations of the study and conclusion of the chapter.

#### **3.2. Research Methodology**

This section briefly describes the research methodology that the researcher utilized when data was collected. According to Mills and Birks (2014) methodology is a specific social clinical discourse (a manner of appearing, questioning, and speaking) that resides in a center ground between discussions of techniques and discussions of issues in the philosophy of social science. The research methodology reveals how the researcher perceived the study that was undertaken and how data was collected from the participants. The research methodology includes the research paradigm, research approach, and research design. Below is the detailed discussion on the research paradigm, approach, and design that were used by the researcher when data was collected at the King Cetshwayo District at the Department of Social Development.

##### **3.2.1. Research Paradigm**

Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) describe a paradigm as a model that researchers use to make understandings and observations that shape both what we see and how we understand it. In this study, the interpretivism paradigm was found to be relevant. Adekunle, Alharahsheh, and Pius (2020) state that interpretivism is focused greatly on extensive variables and factors associated with a context, considers humans as different from physical phenomena as they invent similarly depth in meanings with the belief that people cannot be explored similarly to bodily phenomena. The interpretivism

considers variations inclusive of cultures, occasions, in addition to instances main to the development of various social realities (Adekunle, *et al.*, 2020).

This interpretivism paradigm was essential during the data collection process. It allowed the researcher to understand the context within which the social workers and social work supervisors were functioning. It enabled the researcher to dig deeper into the minds of the participants and figure out how they perceive, interpret, and analyze their environment, feelings, and experiences without being misunderstood by the researcher.

### **3.2.2. Research Approach**

Creswell (2013) defines qualitative research as an approach for investigating and comprehending the meaning of people's or group's credit to social or human issue. The research process includes developing questions and procedures, data ordinarily collected within the participants' setting, information investigated inductively building from particulars to common topics, and the researcher making elucidations of the meaning of the information, (Creswell, 2013). Lapan, Quartaroli, and Riemer (2012) state that qualitative research is an approach that enables researchers to explore in detail social and organizational characteristics and individual behaviors and meanings. The researcher used a qualitative research method to gain an in-depth understanding of the collected data.

Leavy (2013) states that researchers utilize this method to investigate, explore and learn about social marvel; to unload the implications of individuals' credit to activities, circumstances, and occasions, to construct a profundity of understanding around few measurements of social life. The standards underpinning qualitative research incorporate the significance of people's subjective encounters and meaning-making forms and securing a depth of understanding, (Leavy 2013). For this research, the researcher utilized qualitative research methods because it allowed the researcher to investigate and understand the phenomenon under study.

Klente (2016) explains that an interpretivist assumes knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretations; hence, there is no objective knowledge, which can be independent of thinking, reasoning human beings. The interpretive researchers accept that the meaning of human activity is inborn in that the activity which the researcher has pursue is to find meaning, (Klente 2016). The researcher utilized this type of paradigm to

discover meanings on how social workers and supervisors experience the implementation of supervision in their organization, particularly at King Cetshwayo District, DSD.

### **3.2.3. Research Design**

Gray (2013) characterizes the research design as the main strategy for collection, estimation, and examination of data. A research design depicts the reason for the study and the sorts of probes being addressed, the methods to be utilized for collecting information, the methods of choosing samples, and how the information is intended to be analyzed (Gray 2013). Babbie and Mouton (2017) describe research design as a detailed plan or blueprint that stipulates how the researcher had gone about when the study was conducted. As the research was conducted in the qualitative form, the researcher used the exploratory-descriptive research design. The researcher utilized this type of research design to explore and describe the fundamental aspects of the research to fully gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic under study.

According to Rubin and Babbie (2014), qualitative exploratory research allows the researcher to conduct in-depth, unstructured and probing interviews that assist the researcher to unearth critical and deep information from the participants. Likewise, Sahu and Singh (2015) mention that one of the most fundamental purposes of descriptive research is to provide a clear description of the state of affairs as it currently exists. The researcher felt that an exploratory-descriptive research design was suitable for this study. The design provided thick descriptions of social work practitioner's experiences on the implementation of social work supervision in the Department of Social Development at King Cetshwayo District and provide a clear description of the state of supervision that exist thereof.

### **3.2.4. Sampling**

For the research to bear desired outcomes and have its research questions answered, there has to be a sample for the study that was selected through the process called sampling. Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2013) define sampling as the process of selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion into a study. Thompson (2012) adds that sampling consists of selecting some part of a population to observe so that one may estimate something about the whole population. When sampling is well undertaken it can yield certain advantages for the researcher such as

saving money, time, and effort but still be able to deliver credible and valid results (Thompson, 2012). This is because in sampling the researcher only selects the subset of the population for the inclusion of the study (Daniels, 2012).

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the research participants for the study. Kumar (2014) states that purposive sampling is possibly concerned with the choice of a sample explicitly because of particularly interesting features of each element. The researcher intentionally sampled participants that were suitable for the participation of the study by following sampling the criteria put together by the researcher. Guest, *et al* (2013) argues that the most intuitive way to think of purposive sampling is that you choose study participants based on the purpose you want your informants to serve, and you go out and find some. Guest, *et al* (2013) add that the rationale and control of purposive sampling lie in choosing information-rich cases for the ponder in the study, and these information-rich cases are those cases from which one can learn an incredible bargain in the issues of central significance to the main goal of the study.

Donnelly and Arora (2012) point out that, in purposive sampling, the researcher samples with a purpose related to the kind of participants you are looking for. These authors further states that with a purposive sample you are likely to get opinions of your target population, but you are also likely to overrepresented subgroups in your population that are more readily accessible. Therefore, the use of the purposive sampling in the study was advantageous because it allowed the researcher to save time, resources, and energy while managing to ensure that the information discovered during data collection was rich and did representative of the experiences of the entire intended sample. This was because the researcher had a choice to decide which participant could participate in the study based on a well-set criterion that the researcher had developed.

#### **3.2.4.1. Selection of Participants**

In this study, specific inclusion criteria were established for the selection of participants. The study focused on the DSD with specific reference to King Cetshwayo District. The purposive sampling was guided by this set of criteria developed by the researcher:

**The following criteria was used in selecting participants:**

- a. The participant should be registered with the South African Council of Social Service Profession (SACSSP) as a social worker;
- b. The participant should be working directly with clients;
- c. Participants must have a minimum of two years (2) of experience at DSD within the respective District;
- d. The participant should be under the supervision or be a supervisor.
- e. The participant should be a social worker or supervisor employed by the Department of Social Development in one of the selected offices under the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

**3.2.4.2. Sampling Process**

The study was conducted at the DSD at King Cetshwayo District Municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher adhered to qualitative research methods and utilized purposive sampling to deliberately sample a minimum of fifteen (15) to a maximum of twenty (20) participants. The researcher requested the gatekeeper letter from the KwaZulu-Natal Head of Department in the Department of Social Development in April 2019. The researcher managed to secure the gatekeeper letter from the Department of Social Development in August 2020, (see APPENDIX 1). This gatekeeper letter gave the researcher access to conduct the study in the identified department and district. Following the receipt of the gatekeeper letter the researcher then received a response from the UKZN Research Ethics Committee in August 2020 (see APPENDIX 2). This was the full ethics approval letter that the University issues for the research projects that complied with all academic research ethical codes and laws. This led to a researcher moving with speed to start a recruitment process at the identified District of the DSD. After acquiring these letters, the researcher communicated the letters with the King Cetshwayo DSD, District Director who then gave a green light for the researcher to enter the identified service offices for actual research purposes. The Director gave verbal permission to the researcher to do data collection as he had seen the letter from the KwaZulu-Natal Head of Department. The researcher went on to meet with service office Managers to introduce himself and then began the recruitment process with their help.

Since the department had been recovering from the strict lockdown measures of Covid-19, like the entire country, there was so much business to be taken care of, so it was difficult for the researcher to begin the initial recruitment process because supervisors and social workers worked in shifts according to their different internal organizational arrangements. The researcher had to rely much on supervisors for the selection of social workers who fit the sampling criteria. The real test was getting social workers, to agree to participate in the study since most feared that they had negative things to say about the department because they had bad supervision experiences.

It is an undeniable fact that supervision is understood as an important practice in social work, especially with regards to rendering the services to clients. Therefore, the research participants for this study consisted of social workers and supervisors. Social workers were selected to be part of the sample because they are considered to be the main and direct recipients of supervision that should enable them to be effective when dealing with their clients. Supervisors were also selected to be part of the sample because they are the ones entrusted with administering supervision within the organization to ensure that social workers perform, and the organizational vision is realized.

In recruiting social workers per organization under the district, the researcher used the help of the Service Office Managers and Supervisors to help identify social workers who fit the criteria for inclusion in the research study. After carefully identifying the social workers who met the criteria for participation in the study, the researcher deliberately visited their offices to recruit them. The researcher had to put emphasis on the principle of confidentiality and explained clearly the purpose of the study. The participants were provided with the consent form (see APPENDIX 3) before the actual interview session but the researcher realized that most social workers did not sign nor read the consent form and that called for the researcher to briefly summarize the consent form at the actual meeting. Initially, the researcher aimed to interview fifteen (15) social workers and five (5) supervisors but the researcher managed to interview thirteen (13) social workers and four (4) supervisors.

### **3.2.5. Methods of Data Collection**

The researcher used in-depth semi-structured interviews to collect data. According to Guest, *et al.* (2013), in-depth semi-structured interviews permits the researcher to

receive detailed responses to their questions from "experts" on the matter at hand. Guest, *et al.* (2013) state that in general, the researcher uses in-depth interviews because he is seeking depth and is attempting to gain understanding concerning some elements that pertain to human experiences that are beyond general facts. The researcher selected in-depth semi-structured interviews as the sole method for data collection because it allowed the researcher to go deeper and get more insight into the topic under investigation. This benefit of semi-structured interviews directly helped the researcher to solicit information that was rich from the participants.

This type of data collection method also allowed the researcher to be flexible in asking questions and have the freedom to follow up on the responses given by participants to ensure that their responses are clear and that they answer the research questions. Ravitch and Carl (2016), explain that when utilizing the semi-structured interviews, the researcher must employ the interview instrument to organize and direct the interview but can moreover incorporate, custom-fitted follow-up questions within and across interviews. Ravitch and Carl (2016) state that the interview instrument incorporates questions to be inquired to all participants. These authors add that the order of questions and wording of questions and sub-questions take after a special and customized conversational way with each participant. The researcher prepared the interview guide (see APPENDIX 4) that guided the interviewing process but also allowed the researcher to ask more questions that emanated from the participant's answers. The questions were open-ended to allow participants to answer freely.

Gubruim, Holstein, Marvasti, and McKinney (2012) outlined that once the participant has given consent to participate in the research project, the researcher must begin to ask questions and record answers. After the participants had agreed to participate in the study the researcher offered his gratitude for agreeing to participate in the research study. Participants were initially asked a general question that attempted to allow them to identify themselves such as who they are and how long they have been in the department. This was for participants to start by covering familiar territories and for the researcher to collect valuable information about the participants at the same time (Denscombe, 2010). This made the participants feel comfortable and free and, in some way, created a safe environment for the participants to participate.

The researcher emphasized to the participants that their participation was voluntary and explained that they participate as individuals and not as representatives of their organisation and service office. This was done because most social workers felt like they had to defend and speak well of the department which could have hindered the sharing of their own experiences. As the participants were assured of the principle of anonymity, they felt comfortable sharing their own experiences. Before they got this assurance, many social workers believed that they could be exposed and be targeted by the department to be victimized for their views on the subject being investigated.

The DSD had just returned to operations like the rest of the country after the hard lockdown due to Covid-19. There were a lot of activities that were taking place and social workers, supervisors, and office managers were very much occupied with internal office work and other responsibilities. This made it to be hard to recruit and secure interview appointments with participants. Most participants were very busy and, in many instances, could not honor the appointments which then delayed the researcher to finish and cover all participants. The researcher initially intended to interview 15 social workers and 5 supervisors but ended up getting 13 social workers and 4 social work supervisors. The researcher discovered that the participants were already sharing the same information and saw no need to solicit more information from the participants by the way of getting more interviews. Each interview took lasted between 28 to 55 minutes.

### **3.2.6. Data Analysis**

When data has been collected, it then needs to be analyzed to fulfill the research objectives and to answer the research questions. Richard, Grinnell and Anrua (2008) argue that the core purpose of analyzing data in qualitative research is mainly to sift, sort, and organize the huge contents of raw data that has been acquired by the researcher during the collection of data in such a way that the themes and interpretations that result from the process address the original problem statement that the researcher identified previously.

As part of data analysis, the researcher embarked on the process of transcribing the data and to formulate a plan on how data should be analyzed and interpreted. Richard, *et al.* (2008) state that in data analysis the researcher has to follow two steps which

are to prepare data in a transcript form and then develop a preliminary plan that the researcher uses in proceeding with data analysis.

The initial stage of data analysis that the researcher h embarked on was to transcribe all the data. Richard, *et al.* (2008) identify a transcript is the written record of your interviews and any other written material that you have gathered. This written record of the researcher's interview consists of more than mere words spoken by each person during the interview, such as the comments that reflect non-verbal interactions such as pauses, laughs, and crying.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher used thematic data analysis to analyze the collected data. Liamputtong (2011) describes thematic data analysis as a process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic data analysis is perceived as the foundational method for qualitative analysis, (Liamputtong 2011). Themes do represent and re-contextualize the data to which they relate, but this can be of value in creating new readings and renderings of that data. The researcher followed the five steps of thematic content analysis described by Terre Blanche, Durkheim and Painter (2006), namely: Familiarization and immersion, inducing themes, coding, elaboration, and interpretation, and checking.

#### **3.2.6.1. Familiarization and immersion**

This is the first step of analyzing the data that has been collected from the research participants. Bloor and Wood (2017) state that in the initial stage, the researcher organizes information for familiarization with the information through an arrangement of rereading to get a common sense of their meaning. They moreover specify that data immersion is ordinarily carried out on a small segment of the complete information set. The researcher at this level reread the transcripts fully to understand the collected data. This immersing that the researcher did create the general sense that helped when the coding phase was supposed to be done.

#### **3.2.6.2. Coding**

Mayer (2011) defines coding as the systematic way of key terms analysis, categorizing, and data interpretation. Mayer adds that the coding process entails the marking of different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or

more of your themes. In this section, the researcher used different highlighters to mark different sections of data that were relevant enough to answer the research questions.

#### **3.2.6.3. Inducing themes**

According to Guest, *et al.* (2012), the theme is the subject or phrase that points out what the segment of data is about and its meaning. The authors argue that themes as theoretical frameworks build and interface not as expressions found in content but expressions found in pictures and objects. The researcher labeled the categories of data by developing themes and in keeping with the aims and research questions of the study.

#### **3.2.6.4. Elaboration**

Mayer (2011) states that the themes and coding processes allow for text to be reconstructed in the new order, thereby providing new perspectives and views on the groupings, issues, and sub-issues appearing in the text. Elaboration allows themes to be explored in more depth (Mayer, 2011). This procedure allowed the researcher to repetitively read the transcripts, therefore, at this stage, the researcher engaged with the data that had not been captured by the original coding system (Mayer, 2011).

#### **3.2.6.5. Interpretation and Checking**

Mayer (2011) regards the interpretations as leading to a thick description of the data by explaining, elaborating, rearranging, and reflecting on them. Interpretation and checking allowed the researcher to personally make reflections on his role both as the researcher who had been collecting data and as well as the data interpreter on the study dealing with the *“Practitioners’ Experiences on the Implementation of Social Work Supervision in the Department of Social Development”*. This personal reflection helped the researcher to guard against any biases or any unethical conduct that might be reflected in the research and ensure that the researcher desists from such unethical conduct. The researcher interpreted the data against the literature review and the theoretical framework.

### **3.3. Data Trustworthiness**

This section discussed the forms of data trustworthiness such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity.

### **3.3.1. Credibility**

Efrom and Ravid (2019) state that credibility is concerned with the study's accuracy and integrity. Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora (2012) add that credibility also involves the researcher's ability to ensure that the qualitative research findings are believable from the standpoint of research participants. All the participants in the study agreed to be audio recorded. This allowed the researcher to capture data that could have been missed in the note taking procedure. The researcher transcribed data word by word without having to translate it into another language. All participants preferred to answer in isiZulu and mixed it with English a little. The researcher first transcribed the interviews done in isiZulu and then transcribed them into English paying attention not to lose the initial original version.

### **3.3.2. Transferability**

According to Efrom and Ravid (2019), transferability focuses on whether the study findings may be applied to other similar settings. Trochim, *et al.* (2012) mention that transferability is defined as the point to which the qualitative research findings can be transferred or generalized to other contexts. Trochim, *et al.* (2012) state that the researcher can enhance transferability by doing a comprehensive and in-depth job of appropriately describing the context of the research and assumptions that were central to the research.

The researcher used a detailed description of the information in the write-up of the research findings to show that the research findings can be applied to other contexts. The researcher provided the readers with a full and purposive account of the context, participants, and research design to make the readers make their own decision about transferability. The researcher realized when conducting the interviews that most concerns and experiences of social workers and supervisors are similar and result mainly from how the department is structured and functions currently. This allowed the research to be transferable to other service offices and districts of the Department of Social Development.

### **3.3.3. Dependability**

According to Trochim, *et al* (2012), dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which the research occurs. These authors further state that the researcher is responsible for providing a detailed

description of the changes that happen in the setting and the effects of these changes on the conclusions. In most cases, the researcher faced the problem of time. Most participants came to an interview session in a hurry to get back to work because of work-related duties. The researcher had to be very specific and focused on ensuring that the interview session is not too long but yields the best results even in a short time.

According to Efrom and Ravid (2019), dependability assesses whether the procedures used during the inquiry are appropriate for the study's question(s) and were adequately implemented. As every interview session had been different in its way the researcher had to keep a reflective journal where the researcher wrote on how he felt about interviews and other aspects that related to the research especially the data collection process. This helped the researcher to assess his impact on the research and where to improve with the purpose of ensuring that the research interview sessions were productive.

#### **3.3.4. Conformability**

According to Efrom and Ravid (2019), conformability considers the extent to which the study's findings represent the data accurately rather than reflecting the researcher's bias. Trochim, *et al.* (2012) states that confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. To ensure that the researcher ensures conformability, the researcher audio recorded the interviews so that they could be transcribed on a verbatim basis. This helped the researcher in the transcribing process not to distort and misrepresent the participants' feelings, opinions, and responses. This also helped in ensuring that the findings were not biased.

### **3.4. Ethical Considerations**

As the researcher was involved in the data collection process, the following ethical principles were observed to guide the process:

#### **3.4.1. Gatekeeper**

Kara (2018) regards the gatekeeper as someone who has the power to put the researcher in contact with potential participants. One ethical approach that minimizes this is to involve gatekeepers in designing research, which may increase their sense of ownership and so lead to them being supportive, (Kara 2018). The researcher wrote to the Department of Social Development in April 2018 to the Head of Department

requesting permission to conduct the study. The HOD approved the request in August 2020 (see APPENDIX 1). The researcher then submitted the gatekeeper letter from the Department of Social Development to the UKZN Research Ethics Committee in August 2020 (see APPENDIX 2). The researcher received full approval from the UKZN Research Ethics Committee in September 2020.

After receiving these letters from these respective institutions, the researcher approached the District Director of King Cetshwayo District to inform the District about the study approval that must take place under the district. The Director gave verbal permission that the researcher may commence with collecting data. This allowed the researcher to go to the selected office for the recruitment of participants.

### **3.4.2. Voluntary participation**

De Vos *et al.*, (2011) explain that participation should always be voluntary and that no one should be forced into participating in a research study. After the researcher had recruited the participants who fit the set criteria, the researcher had to inform the participants that their participation in the research was voluntary. The researcher also explained to participants that their participation was free and had no forms of rewards for participation. The participants agreed to participate with a clear mindset that they were participating voluntarily without any form of compensation. Participants had a right to withdraw from being part of the research at any time.

The researcher included this ethical principle on the consent form that was given to participants so that it was also in writing that their participation was voluntary. It was noticed by the researcher that this created an environment with no high expectations from participants and made them free to share whatever information they wanted to share with the researcher. It made them feel in control of the process and know that the researcher depended on them for the researcher to finish his study.

### **3.4.4. Confidentiality**

McLaughlin (2014) argues that confidentiality guarantees that the provenance of comments in a research report cannot be connected to a specific individual or participant. The author also mentions that this incorporates both coordinate attributions, where comments are connected to a particular participant's name or title and attribution where the collection of characteristics may make it conceivable to

recognize a participant. Muratovski (2016) postulates that confidentiality is when the researcher knows the names and any other personal information of the participants but cannot and will not disclose this information to others. Social workers and supervisors understand the principle of confidentiality because in their line of duty it is demanded when they are dealing with their clients. This made the researcher extra careful when dealing with social work professionals on this principle.

During the first introductory meeting with service office managers of each office, the researcher requested office space so that there can be a safe in private place for each interview. This was requested because the Department of Social Development is in shortage of offices and, in most cases, social workers share offices. Conducting an interview where other social workers were present could have defeated the purpose of the research and limited how responses were given. In some offices, the researcher was afforded special office space to conduct interviews while in other offices the researcher had to ask for the supervisor to help secure space for each interview session. This caused problems because sometimes other social workers entered the office while the interview was in progress. In such cases, the researcher paused the interview and only continued when it was safe. The researcher guaranteed confidentiality by assuring participants that every information they shared was not be disclosed publicly but only be used for professional purposes.

#### **3.4.5. Informed consent**

According to Wiles (2013), informed consent includes informing the research participants with the necessary and comprehensive information about what participating in the research study will involve and also giving them the right to choose whether not to participate or to participate in a study. The researcher explained the nature and the purpose of the study to participants and then offered them an opportunity to willingly decide whether to be involved in the study or not.

The consent form (see APPENDIX 3) was prepared by the researcher for all participants to read carefully and then sign when they agree with it. The researcher handed the consent forms to all participants for their perusal and they were expected to bring them back on the day of the interview. The researcher noticed that all participants did not read nor sign the consent form until the day of the interview. This called for the researcher to summarize the consent form to the participants and then

allow them the space to decide whether to participate or not. Participants agreed to participate in the study and they were allowed to sign the consent form and provide necessary details. The reason for failing to go through the consent form had to do with pressure from work. Participants' time was consumed with meeting deadlines hence they forgot to honor the arrangement they made with the researcher.

#### **3.4.6. No Harm to Participants**

According to Bryman (2012), harm can entail several facets such as harm on the participants' improvement, harm to self-confidence, and stress. According to Babbie and Rubin (2015), this includes not only physical harm or serious forms of psychological harm, but also harm associated with revealing information that may embarrass them, make them feel uncomfortable, or endanger their jobs or interpersonal relationships. The study explored the social worker's and supervisor's experiences on the implementation of supervision in their respective organizations where they work. It did not involve any harmful full experiments or types of questions that could pose harm, stress, loss of self-esteem, or even embarrass them.

The researcher observed that the participants were comfortable during interview sessions and even mentioned that the topic being researched was important for them. They used the opportunity to answer questions and express their deepest concerns and problems they faced that they could not tell the authorities. The research provided the participants who participated with an opportunity to debrief. This gave the researcher satisfaction that the research is doing a lot good than bad to participants. The researcher noticed that after interview questions were over some participants felt like they could say more which necessitated an opportunity for further data collection within the scope of the research study. Some participants used the opportunity to voice personal and work-related concerns and also to provide recommendations on how to help restructure and effectively enforce supervision.

#### **3.4.7. Deceiving Participants**

According to Bryman (2012), deception happens when the researcher portrays their work as something other than what it is. Rubin and Babbie (2015) also state that deceiving participants involves having to answer if the research participants will be deceived in any way. To adhere to this ethical principle, the researcher presented the correct details of the research proposal and explained the research title, objectives,

and the aim of the research. This assisted participants to understand the nature of the research and what the research hopes to achieve so that their participation would be based on the truth, not on any form of deception.

#### **3.4.8. Debriefing Participants**

Muratovski (2016) points out that the main purpose of the debriefing session is to minimize the impacts of participating in the study and remedy any possible misconceptions that the participants might have because of the study. After the research was completed the researcher debriefed the participants to ensure that there was no damage done by the research on participants. The researcher was pleased to know that the participants were all happy with the research process. Participants reported that the research gave them the space to share their concerns that they could not share within the department or with colleagues because of their fears.

#### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has explained and described the research methods that were used as the means of collecting qualitative research data for this study. The researcher conducted a descriptive-exploratory research study. As part of the sample, thirteen (13) social workers were interviewed and four (4) social work supervisors were also interviewed on their experiences on supervision. The sampled participants were interviewed using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Ethical considerations were also discussed as well as explaining how the study was conducted when the data was collected. The next chapter presents and evaluates the findings of the research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1. Introduction

the previous chapter discussed the research methodology that was used to collect data from the participants. In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings from the collected data. The researcher followed the six steps that were pioneered and proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six steps include data familiarisation, forming codes, inducing themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and, producing a report. To analyze the data, the researcher used thematic data analysis, based on its relevance and compatibility with the qualitative study. As Braun and Clarke (2006) assert, the thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. According to Liamputtong (2011), thematic data analysis is a process for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data.

The first step was for the researcher to transcribe all the audiotaped interviews so that there could be verbatim written responses. This allowed the researcher to familiarize himself with the data by reading it several times. As the researcher was engaged in this process, he was also highlighting important segments of data that answered the research questions. Then the researcher arranged the important data into categories which were then grouped into themes for elaboration and interpretation. The researcher in this chapter attempts to answer these research questions:

- i. What are the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the Department of Social Development?*
- ii. What is the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization?*
- iii. What is the nature of supervision applicable in the identified organization?*
- iv. How social work practitioners understand the execution of supervision in the identified organization?*

## 4.2. Profiling of the participants

This section provides a profile of the participants. This is important because each response relates to specific service office of the DSD under King Cetshwayo District execute supervision and how participants in this district experience supervision. The researcher has hidden the true identities of the names of the participant and used codes to adhere to the principle of confidentiality which is very important in qualitative research. The researcher sampled both social workers and supervisors. The codes SWS and SWP are used to represent the social work practitioners and social work supervisors respectively. There were thirteen (13) social workers and four (4) social work supervisors who participated in the study. These participants work at the King Cetshwayo District in the Department of Social Development. The tables below show social workers and supervisors that participated in the study, respectively.

**Table 4.1.1. Social Work Practitioners and Supervisors that participated in the study**

<b>Participant Name</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Service Office</b>	<b>Date</b>
SWP 1	11 years	Lower Mfolozi	05/11/2020
SWP 2	11 years	Lower Mfolozi	05/11/2020
SWP 3	11 years	Lower Mfolozi	05/11/2020
SWP 4	9 years	Lower Mfolozi	06/11/2020
SWP 5	5 years	Lower Mfolozi	06/11/2020
SWP 6	10 years	Richards Bay	11/11/2020
SWP 7	3 years	Richards Bay	11/11/2020
SWP 8	10 years	Richards Bay	11/11/2020

SWP 9	11 years	Richards Bay	11/11/2020
SWP 10	8 years	Richards Bay	11/11/2020
SWP 11	10 years	Ongoye	12/11/2020
SWP 12	8 years	Ongoye	13/11/2020
SWP 13	12 years	Ongoye	17/11/2020
SWS 1	26 years	Richards Bay	10/11/2020
SWS 2	10 years	Lower Mfolozi	10/11/2020
SWS 3	10 years	Ongoye	12/11/2020
SWS 4	14 years	Richards Bay	18/11/2020

#### 4.3. Overview of the Themes, Sub-Themes, and Categories

In this section, the researcher gives an overview of all themes, sub-themes, and categories that arose from the collected data as it was being scrutinized. After this brief overview, the themes, sub-themes, and categories were discussed in detail with the actual extracts from the interviews with the participants.

Table 4.2 shows the themes, sub-themes, and categories that emerged as data was being analyzed.

##### Table 4.3.1 Themes and sub-themes

#### **Theme 1: Experiences of Social workers and Supervisors on Supervision**

Sub-theme 1.1: Supervision as a demanding role at implementation level

Sub-theme 1.2: Preoccupation with the heavy workload

Sub-theme 1.3: Centralizing administrative function over educational and supportive components

<b>Theme 2: Context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization</b>
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Sub-theme 2.1: Lack of human and capital resources
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Sub-theme 2.2: Lack of proper organisation of work
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Sub-theme 2.3: Attitudes of practitioners towards supervision
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<b>Theme 3: Nature of supervision applicable to each organization</b>
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Sub-theme 3.1: Inconsistent methods of supervision applied in the organisation
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Sub-theme 3.2: Support given to supervisors
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Sub-theme 3.3: Competence of supervisors
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<b>Theme 4: Understanding of participants on how supervision should be administered.</b>
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Sub-theme 4.1: Ideal supervision
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#### **4.3.1. Theme 1: Experiences of Social workers and Supervisors on Supervision.**

The effectiveness and purpose of supervision cannot not be fully examined without critically engaging on the social workers' and supervisors' experiences. Hafford-Letchfield and Englebrecht (2019) state that social work supervision is considered to be the core feature in the development of social work professional identity and practice and provides an important vehicle in which its outcomes are mediated and supported. Therefore, good quality supervision has been cited as a pivot upon which the integrity and excellence of the practice can be maintained. This is true for a well-functioning organization where employees can carry out their roles in a fair, just, and conducive environment. Having said that, the researcher needed to conduct a study that seeks to explore the experiences of both social workers and supervisors on supervision. The reason to embark on this study was that most studies focus on either one of the two categories or seldom both.

Furthermore, in developmental state, supervision should be aligned with the developmental approach to social welfare, as it would allow the vision and the mission of the countries purposed social development goals to be attained. Ncube (2019) points out that supervision in social work provides a blueprint on how to provide quality

welfare services, making the profession of social work a key role player in the implementation of the White Paper for Social Welfare. It is within this context that the experiences of both social workers and supervisors are significant in understanding how they experience the implementation and execution of supervision in their organisation. This would allow the researcher and any other party that may draw benefit from the research to see whether the execution of supervision in the concerned district is aligned to the realization of the developmental state agenda of social welfare or not.

As the data was being collected, it became clear that almost all social workers and supervisors who participated in the study had unpleasant experiences concerning supervision. These experiences were largely connected to the way DSD operates. DSD does not give them time for proper supervision to take place or give their Supervision Framework space if being implemented in their organizations.

#### **4.3.1.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Supervision as a Demanding Role at Implementation Level**

In a district that experiences the effects of polity dualism, supervision may not be an easy task to perform. The *Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession* (2012) acknowledges that in South Africa supervision can take place in many different contexts and employments (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). It appears that little is being done in practice to follow through with the Supervision Framework to ensure that though supervision may be applied across different context but is being unified to overcome supervision inconsistencies across the sector. Bak (2004) states that this is because the role of social work in the implementation of developmental social welfare as prescribed in the White Paper for Social Welfare 1997 is ambiguous. This ambiguity arises from the fact that very few scholars had investigated the role of social work within the confines of a developmental state and how supervision could be used to ensure that social development goals are fulfilled.

Social workers and supervisors were asked to share their experiences on supervision that they currently experience in their respective service offices. They firstly described it as a demanding process that turns out to be unpleasant for them.

These are the accounts of the experiences of participants with regards to supervision:

*If you are serious about implementing supervision, you must consider the ratio... we have a supervision framework that says the ratio should be 1:15 or 1:13 depending, but only to find that that ratio on the framework is too high to practice practically on supervision... you cannot provide effective supervision... at least they must say maybe 1:5 or 1:6... so it ends up not implementable practically. **SWS 3***

*Mhhhh my supervision experience is draining... it's draining... even for supervisors when I look at them it is draining. They are always stressed and so it is not a kind job that you'll see someone excited about it... sometimes you see them assigning work that should be done by them to us as supervisees, which means even the supervisors are overloaded in terms of work. Because they are overloaded with work, they tend to target certain social workers to do some work for them that falls within their duties. **SWP 3.***

*Eeey, when I started working, my experience of supervision was actually better. I do not know whether it is the exhaustion of the supervisors that makes them not to be much helpful to their supervisees, but at first, my experience was good but now it is difficult. It is alternating because at the beginning when I started working my experience was good but now it is very bad. **SWP 6.***

These accounts of supervision experiences from participants may look slightly different and may lead one to hardly draw a common conclusion as far as they are concerned. Reaching a common conclusion on these accounts is not impossible because these accounts reveal that participants in the DSD, at King Cetshwayo District face similar challenges in supervision. The accounts from participants reveal that they acknowledge that while supervision exists, to a certain degree, some situations make their experiences unfavourable towards it.

Supervision in the DSD should strengthen the efforts to achieve the goals of the developmental state without compromising the actual role players in the supervision process. There is a Supervision Framework that seeks to unify and bring a basic understanding of what supervision and how it should be implemented across the entire

organisation which was highly appreciated. In practice, there are enormous challenges posed by the department on both supervisors and social workers that make it very difficult to administer supervision in adherence to the supervision framework.

#### **4.3.1.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Preoccupation with the heavy workload**

When participants were asked to share about how they experience supervision in their organization, common among their shared experiences was their frustration emanating from the heavy workload. The expectation to address the heavy workload tended to contribute to their negative experiences of supervision. They reported that they were frustrated and had unending workload. This was a negative factor that impacted on their experiences with supervision. Parker mentions that high workload is manageable if support levels were high as good supervision helps social workers to improve their self-efficacy, confidence, resilience, retention and stress levels.

In the study, I noticed that when participants were commenting on the issue of the heavy workload, they pointed to issues of lack of planning which was a serious concern and cause for most social workers to have a negative attitude about their work. Participants also highlighted serious concerns about the quality of their work. According to Tsui (2009) social work is considered a high-risk profession in terms of stress and burnout because of the high level of demands from various stakeholders but low degree of support.

Below are the experiential accounts of two supervisors interviewed:

*I think having to deal with all of the programs as a supervisor is problematic because there's no way that you can effectively deal with everything equally and still be accountable for all of them at the end of the day. This is what creates a challenge because you cannot fully acquaint yourself with the rules of supervision equally across all of these programs. If we were placed according to a particular program, maybe each supervisor would have been allocated for specific services. For instance, there would be a supervisor for children and families, another supervisor for restorative services. By so doing, we could make the role of supervision to be fully effective rather than more effective. As*

*the thing stands, there is too much work that makes supervision difficult. SWS 2.*

*Eeeehmmm supervision should be structured as we are supposed to do it according to the supervision framework that guides us. Maybe it should be conducted once a month for social workers with a lot of work experience but for other social workers who are new in the field maybe twice a month or weekly, However, because of the high workload and the number of social workers allocated, you end up failing. The work becomes too much in such a way that you won't even schedule supervision sessions appropriately. There must be structured supervision sessions with an agenda that you have carefully planned as a supervisor and do everything according to the framework but the pressure we get from this too much work makes us unable to rely on structured supervision... you'll end up supervising a social worker as he/she comes with a case that gives him/her problems. SWS 1*

These accounts from supervisors reveal the pressure under which the social workers operate every day in their organization. Both of these participants who are supervisors demonstrate an understanding of their roles and expectations. According to the role theory, different role players in a supervisory relationship must be able to define their roles with the organization. Parker (2020) suggests that role theory concerns itself with the extent to which people understand their roles in an organization and how the organization ensures employees do not have conflicting roles. Due to the circumstances that these supervisors find themselves operating under, they are forced to neglect some of their important functions.

This research was of great importance because, with it, both social workers and supervisors were able to share their own experiences on how the high level of pressure arising from the heavy workload negatively affects them. The participants who are social workers also had lots of frustrations arising from the notion that lots of work they have is hard to manage. Most participants mentioned that the type of work that they normally find themselves busy with is mostly unplanned and requires them to have

their weekly and monthly plans disturbed. In most cases, the work that comes from the top management is needed as a matter of urgency.

There was one participant who had the least experience of all the social workers that participated in the study. This participant had three (3) years of experience in the field and was supposed to be under close supervision. This participant had this to say on the matter concerning having too much work to do with little or no supervision:

*Just like myself, I'm still new in the field but my supervisor does not have time. I've never had an opportunity to explain to her when I have problems with certain cases... what helps me is that I just approach senior social workers like my office mate because she has many years in the field and this office... whenever I go to my supervisor I'll find her very busy and would sometimes tell me to go to any social worker to ask for assistance... she will just push me to other social workers... I do not get it from her... here, there is no time for supervision... whenever you have a personal problem you must take leave and deal with it... there is no time. SWP 7*

This response reveals the negative effects that the heavy workload poses on both social workers and supervisors. This negative impact directly influences supervision, because it limits time for any formal supervision. This challenge could be viewed as relating to the assertion made by SWS 1 when she said:

*...but the pressure we get from this too much work makes be unable to rely on structured supervision... you'll end up supervising a social worker as he/she comes with a case that gives him/her problems.*

Therefore, it is evident that this factor plays a major role on how supervision is implemented in the DSD at King Cetshwayo District. From these assertions, one could see that when supervision becomes hard to implement as the participants mention, it would be very difficult for the department in this district to achieve the social welfare objectives and goals.

More experienced social workers that participated in the study revealed that, in as much as supervision is not fully functional, it does exist in their organization. They mentioned that even though they experience the heavy workload on their part and the parts of their supervisors, they have come to understand that this situation could not be blamed only on the leadership in their service offices. This notion of having social work practitioners also taking responsibility concurs with the assertion by Sithole (2019), who argues that supervision in social service organizations is also characterized by the reciprocal process. This could also be interpreted as indicative of the view that most of the experienced social workers at King Cetshwayo District had reached this fundamental professional maturity that allows them to be loyal in their duty despite the challenges they face. These are the accounts of experienced social work participants when responding to their experience in supervision:

*Okay, it differs from supervisor to supervisor... but as far as supervision expectations are concerned, it does not happen the way it is supposed to happen but we understand the reasons. Let me say, I understand the reason that there is no sufficient time due to the workload. SWP 7*

*Supervision ends up being not implemented the way we are expecting it to be implemented, however, I end up understanding even though I'm not sure whether that it's okay or not. I think it is because I am a social worker who has been in the field for some years. I can see how the department functions and the pressure there is, and everything. Supervision ends up not implemented accordingly because of too much workload. I can also say that even our supervisors end up having a lot of work to do - they end up failing to organize themselves. I will be very honest here; they fail to organize themselves because when a supervisor is still supervising her supervisees there would be something else that requires her attention urgently. I'm sure that they also have a correct understanding of what is supervision and how it should be conducted, but due to the situation in the department and the way the department functions they end up failing to do supervision accordingly. SWP 3*

#### 4.3.1.3. Sub-theme 1.3: Centralizing Administrative Function over Educational and Supportive Components

Most participants treat their supervisors as their peers with just more experience and a higher position than them. This is because the role of a supervisor in their practice has not been properly role played to produce effective outcomes, especially, on the supportive and educational function of supervision that are very important for social workers. Parker (2020) mentions that it becomes a concern when the purpose of supervision increasingly gets concerned with management oversight and surveillance rather than focusing much on providing supportive and educative functions of supervision. In the same vein, a study conducted by Engelbrecht (2012) six years ago, found that South African supervisors mainly view supervision's primary goal as to develop their supervisees into independent and autonomous practitioners.

From the other segments of data that have been analyzed before, it became evident that all the functions of supervision in the DSD at King Cetshwayo District are hardly implemented. This was due to many factors that influence how supervisors and social workers operate in their agencies. These factors resulted in supervisors neglecting their supervisees and social workers having to find other ways of ensuring that they can do their work without the need for supervision. Most participants revealed that in the absence of effective supervision, they resort to executing their duties without looking for any support from the supervisor. These are some of the accounts from the participants:

*Actually, ever since I arrived in the department, I have never received good supervision... There was never a time where I got the support that I was looking for from the supervisor. I have learned to be my own supervisor... I only consult my supervisor when there's something that really needs her signature but normally, I just work without her... if there's something I do not understand I ask other social workers. SWP 1*

*Supervision has never been something that made any positive effect or brings any positivism to me because, like I'm saying, it has never been a good thing or much helpful to me because I work independently. I'm a hard worker and I'm*

*committed. If you could ask me about my experience with supervision that is taking place, I'm actually puzzled and twisted because I supervise myself in my own way. As you're asking me how has it been, I'll say it has not been a good experience for me because you have to do things in your way and it is not nice- it is not good and it is not helping.* **SWP 8**

Social workers have opted not to rely on supervision for various reasons. This does not only affect them but also the quality of their work, clients, organization, and interpersonal relationships within a working environment. Tsui (2009) states that social work supervision has been recognised as a core fundamental factor in sensing job satisfaction levels of social workers and the delivery of efficient and quality services to clients though it has not received much attention as other components of supervision. The study reveals that the absence of supervision is detrimental to execution of social workers job as well as their wellbeing. This is also detrimental to their profession, clients, and organisation. The DSD has to intervene to strengthen the need for supervision within the department and make conditions favourable for its effective execution.

It was evident that supervision has not been receiving much attention in the organization. This has negatively impacted on the quality of work that is being done. Therefore, there must be a way to make direct attempts to improve the implementation of supervision with much assistance from the National, Provincial, and District offices. The department needs to create a conducive environment favourable enough for the implementation of supervision. This will help social workers, supervisors, clients, and the department in ensuring that they all meet their goals.

In conclusion, the realization gathered from the above responses is that the way supervision is implemented currently does not aim to fulfill the social developmental goals as supervision is not a well-taken process to those who are role players in it and to clients who must benefit from it. Ncube (2019) points out that social work supervision has mostly been isolated from the developmental approach which the *White Paper for Social Welfare* advocates for and this has caused problems in the delivery of services to clients. These participants' experiences reveal that there is still much that needs to

be done to ensure that supervision is administered in a way that fits the vision and mission of the White Paper on Social Welfare.

#### **4.3.2. Theme 2: Context Within Which Supervision Takes Place in the Identified Organization.**

The main purpose of having this theme as part of the study was to ensure that the researcher understands the context within which social workers and supervisors operate and how supervision is executed within that context. It is apparent that the DSD is an organization governed by its policies and legislations. This organisation has the mission of transforming the South African society through the provision of comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable social development services, (DSD, 2019/2020 Annual Performance Plan). Therefore, supervision in this organisation should be implemented in such a way that the mission of the organisation is fulfilled by helping employees to carry out their roles effectively.

This organization has done much in trying to make the concept of supervision understood and implemented effectively. The *Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession* (2012) developed both by the DSD and South African Council of Social Service Professions served as a milestone in ensuring that there is at least a basic understanding of the concept and execution of supervision in this organization. Though the organisation's efforts are duly acknowledged and recognised, there is still a lot that must be done to ensure that supervision that enhances the social developmental perspectives goals.

Hughes and Wearing (2013) believe that social work supervision is not significant for professional endeavors only but also for organizational development and change. This is the reason why it was important for the researcher to examine the context within which supervision takes place. The presence of good supervision in the organization benefits all involved. This view was confirmed by Sithole's (2019) study which found that the managerial and professional formations of supervision are not only viewed as coexisting and interplaying within the organization but that also informed the organizational context in which supervision is taking place.

Glicken (2011) points out that bad supervision often happens when the management in organizations impose excessive changes and require supervisors to ensure that

changes do happen. This is often unfavourable and disadvantageous to the organization and its workforce (Glicken, 2011). Therefore, the excessive changes that the management might pose in the organization become the context for the work environment within which the employees' function. This context is necessary to be examined because, to a certain extent, it directly impacts the attitudes of social work practitioners inside the organization. It also has some effects on how the organization operates. The sub-themes below will extend this theme and provide more enlightenment as participants shared their understanding and experiences within the context where supervision takes place in their respective service offices.

#### **4.3.2.1. Sub-Theme 2.1: Lack of Human and Capital Resources**

Participants reported that the lack of human and capital resources within the DSD was the major challenge that exerted a negative impact on the implementation of supervision. They described the context or the environment within which supervision is currently executed as an environment characterized by the lack of resources both capital and human.

Rosa, Sankaran, and Rajeev (2015) state that the shortage of staff normally affects the supervisors and managers daily because they struggle to meet the performance standards. As evident in the DSD at King Cetshwayo District, participants consistently mentioned that the organisation is characterized by a shortage of staff – involving both supervisors and social workers. This shortage in human resources has a direct impact on time management and distribution of tasks. Shortage of staff results in the exploitation of time set aside for supervision in trying to meet performance standards.

A social work supervisor described the challenges encountered in the organization:

*Mhhhhh resources are a great impact and serious internal factor. By resources, I mean human and capital resources. It is human resources in the sense that we are short-staffed in the admin section, as well as with supervisors and social workers in this office. Internally we are short-staffed and we cannot keep control of files because files need to be sent to the registry for records. So, filing needs to be done properly but it is not done properly in this office. So internally I would say it is both capital and human resources... (silence) Oooh it can be that social*

*workers are sharing offices so it now defeats the whole purpose of confidentiality when social workers are dealing with particular clients. Even if the client is just coming in to elaborate a short story, you'll find that they will elaborate and there's another social worker because they are sharing office space. And that time, depending on whatever matter they are working on they will attend the matter in the presence of other colleagues. Even though as an office we have set the policy that states that there are consultation rooms downstairs that need to be utilized when the social worker interfaces with clients.* **SWS 2**

According to the *Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa* (2012) developed by the DSD and SACSSP, a supervisor is required to supervise not more than ten supervisees if he/she is not committed to other responsibilities and if that is not her/his only performance area. The framework also states that for the supervisor who has other performance areas to fulfil, then the ratio should be 1:6. It was clear that the workload of supervisors at King Cetshwayo District did not only involved supervision. In addition to the supervision of social workers, these supervisors were also required to accomplish and fulfill other tasks that sometimes took them out of the office, for days.

It was also clear that supervisors have lots of supervisees to supervise however, the norms and standards from the supervision framework were not adhered to. This caused inconveniences as far as the process of supervision is concerned. If the DSD has a will to overcome the challenges that concern supervision, they will have to attempt to adhere to the framework that was constructed in good faith. The researcher fully agreed with the supervisors of the King Cetshwayo District, DSD. The human and capital resources do pose a threat to the process of supervision, and, as a result, the full implementation of supervision becomes difficult. There has to be a proper plan that the DSD puts in place in ensuring that the supervisors under these circumstances are being supported so that they can ensure that they can provide efficient and quality supervision to their supervisees.

It was not only the supervisors who raised concerns over human and capital resources. The social workers were concerned about the lack of staff concerning social work supervisors. Social work supervisors remain the insufficient staff in the King Cetshwayo District and do not match the large but insufficient number of social workers working in this district. Social workers expressed concerns that this small number of supervisors makes it difficult for them to acquire and receive supervision. This has led to social work burnout and immature independence of social workers. These are the accounts of social workers on the matter of social supervision:

*The greatest challenge we have in this department is that we do not have enough supervisors... how could two supervisors help thirty-two social workers?... it is impossible!... we need supervisors and the department must employ them or else build another layer for mentors... mentors must be very experienced social workers inside the office... I've never been with a supervisor alone because every time there would be other social workers looking for help... sometimes we would be four/five, all in one office trying to get assistance..." SWP 1*

*I personally think that if the department can employ more supervisors in such a way that they are enough, there won't be a problem... the current supervisors are competent and do the work very well even under lots of challenges, it is just that they are very much overwhelmed. If there were more supervisors, I do not think there would be more problems because they would be available every time. But currently, they end up struggling to practice supervision and they will just attend you whenever you consult... as social workers we do not have the opportunity to attend planned sessions... they are very few and we are too many as social workers. SWP 4*

*There should be more supervisors employed... there would be a division of social workers within an office where say, for instance, one supervisor to six or seven social workers. Like we are 32 here and we need maybe 3 supervisors. At least there will be quality work. So, the key element is that we need more supervisors.... And then adhere to the norm that says one supervisor against 6/7 social workers. Not 32 social workers against one person. SWP 8*

Social workers seem to understand supervision well. They knew how supervision should be and how it must assist them. They also understood and appreciated the problems that prevented them from receiving quality supervision. On these accounts, it was apparent that the main fundamental factor that social workers consider as impactful to supervision is the insufficient number of supervisors in their offices. The King Cetshwayo District has almost two supervisors per office and at least approximately more than fifteen social workers per office.

According to Bissel (2012), most social workers consider supervision as the most fundamental relationship that may exist in the workplace. This is because a good supervisory relationship has advantages for social workers in their professional, personal, and organizational development. Carrol and Tholstrup (2001) point out that supervision contributes enormously and fundamentally towards the understanding of the organization and leads to the process of team and organizational development. Carrol and Tholstrup also mention that this important contribution towards the development of quality organizations and their services is accomplished through the continuous application of functions of supervision such as individual, peer, and group supervision.

The study revealed that it is important for the DSD to critically develop strategies or come with solutions that will ensure that there are deliberate ways to overcome the problem of the insufficient number of supervisors within the district. Notwithstanding the challenges the Department is facing at all its hierarchical levels, the district must find ways of mobilizing the capital resources that would assist the social workers and supervisors at the service office level to work much more efficiently.

#### **4.3.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Lack of Proper Organization of Work**

As the aim of the study was to examine the context or environment within which supervision takes place, many participants described their context or environment as largely defined by disorganized work delegated by the top management. Most participants described this disorganized work delegated to them as unplanned. This work came as a directive hence it had to be executed urgently. Participants also described it as urgent in nature and required them to drop everything to attend to it. Bissel (2012) states that when supervision is inappropriately implemented it becomes

characterized by massive dumping of workloads and stress, a conspiratorial atmosphere, competition with other departments, and career disorientation. When supervision is implemented in this manner it creates problems for both social workers and supervisors and defeats the entire idea and purpose of purposeful planning.

All social workers are required by policy to submit their weekly plans to supervisors. These weekly plans provided details of how social workers were going to undertake their work daily. In most cases, their planning did not involve working with their clients. When these plans are deliberately disturbed the whole system of assisting vulnerable clients and communities gets affected and disturbed. Most participants including supervisors raised concerns about their inability to plan and have the freedom to follow their work plans. The participants reported that the effects of such work force them to neglect and disregard their weekly plans so that they could comply with the directives and complying with the new imposed urgency.

There are the accounts of the participant that were social workers on this theme:

*Another thing there's a lot of work plus improper planning by the national or provincial department. Now, here you cannot have a weekly plan... there's poor planning... they want something right now and they will tell us to leave everything that we are doing because we have this urgent work to complete... so the internal factor is poor planning and a lot of workloads... (silence) **SWP 8***

*Mhhhhh okay, (breathing aloud) maybe it is how our work in this department is disorganized!... the work is very disorganized because you'll just be called to a meeting that would take the entire day with a lot of unplanned work that is needed on an urgent basis... we have made appointments with people and planned that on this particular day I meet with these clients... and now when this urgent work comes, it messes up your entire plan because you have to stop everything and focus on that work... so that is why supervisors will not have time for their supervisees because even them they push us to submit so that they can report... so they do not have time because of this disorganized department we are in... the work here is very disorganized. **SWP 7***

*(Lowering the voice)....it is this thing of being disorganized within the department... (Laughing)... it this tendency of being disorganized in such a way that the due dates don not give sufficient time for one to work... every time something needs to be done and it needed to be completed so quickly... so supervisors do not have time to organize themselves and their work because even the ratio I do not think it is well balanced... SWS 5*

*(Laughing) it's being disorganized...(laughing)... it's being disorganized... those are things impacting supervision not to happen the way it is supposed to happen... it's being disorganized... most of the times in this department everything that is needed or that comes have a "Now"...it forces the supervisor to drop everything she doing that she has planned and attend to this "Now"... we make weekly plans for ourselves...we plan what we will do this week and for all weeks... but only to find that in most cases we are supposed to leave everything and attend to this "now"... likewise the supervisee is also told to attend this "Now"... (exhaling hard)... so at the end of the day the work you were supposed to do has not been done and that is the work that fits in your job description... then now you will find that you have not met deadlines, having files that lapsed and you'll be required to explain again why that happened and be seen as an incompetent social worker... eish where we are it is disorganized. SWP 3*

The participants' responses suggested that when it comes to the execution of their work in the department, they had no control because most of the time they got directives on what they must do. Grant and Kinman (2014) states that employees who feel more in control of their work and time are less stressed, healthier, more satisfied with their work, and have a better work-life balance. It was evident that participants feel less in control of their work and time simply because they were dissatisfied with the kind of work that normally comes and interrupts their working schedules.

The experiences the participants revealed that their ability to set and prioritise goals was taken away from them by the uncertainties of their working environment. The result of this is that most social workers are not satisfied with their working environment and that negatively interferes with their working morale. Therefore, it is necessary for the DSD at King Cetshwayo to review this working arrangement so that there could be

jobs satisfaction that creates high working morale and a better work-life balance for both social workers and supervisors.

Social work supervisors provided the following accounts with regards to this theme:

*If I could say, the environment that I work in is unquestionably demanding, one, in a sense that you would plan your daily activities as they are and you'd come in the office probably having scheduled the supervision sessions with your supervisees, and then you would come with the hope to work according to your plan but be told that no, you need to go and attend this... or there would be a call from district office telling that you need to coordinate this quickly and then you need to drop what you have planned to do and attend what needs to be done which now defeats the whole purpose of planning. So, this is the type of environment that we are working in as supervisors. Eeeh however, and there are not enough hours in a day to fit in everything that needs to be done. SWS*

**2**

*Mmmmm people normally think being a supervisor is easy in this department... (Silence)... It is not... you hardly supervise because every time you'll be expected to attend meetings and neglect your supervisees... sometimes you go out of office or days... in most cases, you'll get those directives from the district or provinces requiring us to do unplanned work urgently and report it back... like it is crazy in here... you cannot have a plan and encourage your supervisees to plan because you are always the one disturbing them... we ask social workers to submit weekly plans because they need them but they mean nothing actually... so this environment is like that. SWS*

In this study, it was noted that it is not only social work practitioners who experienced a lack of proper organized work plan but also supervisors experienced the same issue. The above accounts of social work supervisors revealed the pressures and problems they experienced every day had a potential to impact the quality and standards of their work. This is supported by Apgar (2018) who states that the setting in which social work is practiced incorporates a significant impact on both the quality and standards of proficient activities. In this regard, it was concerning to note key social work practitioners like supervisors entrusted with implementing and upholding supervision had these kinds of responses regarding their environment. Supervisors must be

assisted in ensuring that the environment within which they operate is conducive for the implementation and execution of supervision. It is an indisputable fact that supervisors are key role players in the process of supervision and without them, there can be no supervision.

From the responses of both social workers and supervisors, it is clear that the King Cetshwayo District is faced with enormous challenges at the service office level. These challenges contribute to the high levels of dysfunctionality within the department. As a result, the department finds it difficult to deliver sustainable, efficient, and quality services to service users that are the core mandate of a developmental state.

#### **4.3.2.3. Sub-Theme 2.3: Attitudes of Practitioners Towards Supervision**

The attitudes of both social workers and supervisors played a significant role in how they administered and/or received supervision. The attitudes of social workers and supervisors on supervision are directly linked with the environment they work in. If the environment is conducive and allows them to work effectively with satisfaction, their attitudes around the matters of supervision would likely be positive because the process bears intended outcomes. The participant's attitudes were also linked to the nature of a supervisory relationship there is in a supervisor-supervisee relationship. Ncube (2019) points out that in a well-functioning social welfare agency, both the supervisor and supervisee have sufficient knowledge and understanding about their agency's mandate. When supervisors and social workers have the necessary knowledge and understanding of their agency's mandate, it means that they also understand their roles within the organisation. The organisation should provide sufficient time for its employees to execute their roles to fulfill the organisational mandate.

The participants described supervision as either “functional”, “dysfunctional”, “partially functional”, and some could not say anything because they believed supervision did not exist. Most social workers believed that they did not need supervision because it only wastes their time and they gained nothing from it. This study revealed that supervision was the most undesirable process for most social workers. Below are the accounts of social workers attitude towards supervision:

*(Laughing) Sometimes supervision is functional and in other cases, it is not functional. SWP 10*

*It is partially functional... (laughing)... partially functional... I cannot say it is dysfunctional as if I do not have a supervisor that I consult to when I need her.*

**SWP 3**

*(Frowning) Eeeeeey supervision is not fully functional... (silence) It needs to be improved. SWP 8*

*No, for me supervision is dysfunctional...(Laughing). SWP 9*

*Mmmh hhh no I believe supervision is very dysfunctional. SWP 7*

*I never received supervision in this department... (laughing)... so I cannot honestly say supervision is functional or not. SWP 5*

In a developmental state, there has to be a concern when the developmental social welfare system's custodians such as social workers believe that supervision in their organisation is not fully functional or worse dysfunctional. Francis, La Rosa, Sankaran, and Rajeev (2015) believe that the main goal of supervision should be ensuring that service users receive the best services in the organisation. The King Cetshwayo District is a district that is mostly rural and has many people who use or rely on services from the DSD. Therefore, supervision should empower those who receive it so that they can be fully effective in providing quality and sustainable services to their clients.

Most social workers believed that supervision did exist at the DSD at King Cetshwayo District. However, the study found that it is just that it is not a fully functional process. The study also found that there were those social workers who believed that supervision was a dysfunctional process. A small percentage believed that supervision did not exist at all and they have never received it. All these responses were a cause of concern because supervision is the key tool in ensuring accountability, support, learning, professional development, and service development.

Langan-Fox and Cooper (2011) point out that the role of the supervisor and managers in their organization is to ensure that they create a conducive working environment that reduces work-related stresses. This could be possible in an environment with limited internal problems that are easily managed and dealt with. From the responses

given by supervisors it very clear that the DSD at King Cetshwayo District had competent and well-experienced supervisors. These supervisors understood their roles and responsibilities very well. From their responses, the researcher realized that supervisors were not proud to be in a position where they could not fulfill their duties to their supervisees. These were their responses on their supervision:

*Oooh my Gosh... (Laughing).... You know, I'll say it's a functional process... I'll say supervision is a functional process within the department because who will be helping to grow in their profession without supervisors? You cannot just function in an organization without supervision. You need to have somebody that is going to guide you whether it's administrative, educational, or support... but it's functional... it is functional... it is functional... Even though it is not properly implemented. SWS 2*

*Ehhhh...if it was done according to the supervision framework supervision is functional but practically it does not happen very well so it is safe to say it is not adequately functional... practically there is no time to implement it. SWS 1*

*For me it is dysfunctional... the supervision framework is clear and we know our responsibilities as supervisors... but because we are always rushing everything does not happen as it must happen. SWS 3*

*Supervision in this department can be said as not perfect... as a supervisor, I cannot say it is fully functional when I fail to honor structured sessions with my supervisees... so it becomes a tiring process that is not functional because of our working conditions. SWS 4*

The responses were diverse concerning social workers' perceptions of supervision. The study found that participants had similar perceptions. This suggests that supervision still needs to be improved in their offices or district, specifically. Participants had a fair understanding of the framework. They reported that if

supervision was implemented according to the framework, it would be more functional than it currently is.

According to Apgar (2018) for clients' needs to be effectively met, social workers and supervisors, should be working in an environment that largely supports ethical practice and is committed to standards and good quality services. Apgar further argues that for this to be achieved employers must understand social work practice and provide supervision, workload management, and continuing professional development consistent with best practices. This will assist in ensuring that the attitudes and morale of supervisors are kept at a high level and allow e them to deliver in adherence to the supervision framework developed by the Department of Social Development and South African Council for Social Service Professions.

#### **4.3.3. Theme 3: Nature of Supervision Applicable in the Organization**

In practice, supervision takes place in various forms in organizations. This is because each organization is unique and experiences challenges that make it different from the other. Therefore, there would be a unique undertaking of supervision in response to specific challenges experienced by each service office under the organisation called the Department of Social Development. The *Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa, (2012)* points out that supervision can be conducted in many forms with different emphasis placed on key functions administrative, supportive, and educational function. The time spent proportionately on these functions is likely to reflect the organization's mission, vision, and human resources practices, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

As the researcher took note of the experiences of social workers and supervisors with regards to supervision, it was then necessary to attempt to understand the nature or form of supervision that exists in each service office at King Cetshwayo District, Department of Social Development. What was evident from the responses given by social workers was that they viewed supervision as a matter of consultation and nothing more.

#### **4.3.3.1. Sub-Theme 3.1: Inconsistent Methods of Supervision Applied in the Organization**

The Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa, (2012) outlines three supervision methods that could be utilized in social work organizations such as individual supervision, group supervision, and peer supervision. Each supervision method bears its importance and should be practiced fully. The researcher noted that most participants did not recall all the methods of supervision and presented conflicting answers about which method that is predominant in their service office. This was mainly because most social workers had many years in practice and had in some way forgotten the theoretical part when it comes to supervision. Most identified consultations with their supervisors as one of the predominant methods that exist in their service offices.

When social workers were asked about the type of supervision that was predominant in their service offices their responses varied according to their specific or relevant service offices. Therefore, in this section, there can be no generalization but responses are service-office-specific. The inconsistent methods of supervision applied in a single service office could be viewed as a matter of concern since it is likely to impact the execution of supervision in the entire organisation.

The responses of the participant will be categorized according to their service offices.

##### **i. Service Office 1**

*No, it is only consultations here... there's no one-on-one or group supervision...(smiling). We tried to do it but it was difficult to do those things in this service office. We do plan things but end up not happening because of internal factors... it is consultations only that are present here. SWP 9*

*I do not know... (silence)...I do not know... what did others say?... I can say it is consultative even though I do not know when does it happen... even the supervisor is overworked and mostly away from attending meetings. SWP 8*

*We should be having supervision sessions... What ends up happening is that when we are being called to meetings, we end up sharing cases because we*

*do not have time with supervisors. After all, they are over-committed... so I do not know how I could categorize it whether it is peer supervision or what... what is normal is consultations where you come with a case to a supervisor needing some help or clarity. SWP 4*

In this service office, it is evident from the responses of participants that there was no single form of supervision that took place according to the Supervision Framework. This puts social workers in a position where they cannot be the recipients of supervision in its entirety. As one of the participants indicated, they end up discussing cases on the platform that was designed for a meeting then that becomes unethical practice. The social workers reported that it is not the will of the supervisors to intentionally neglect their roles but the pressures that they found themselves working under. This is the service office that had a single supervisor for a long time who was responsible to supervise at least 30 social workers.

## **ii. Service Office 2**

*Mhhhh most of the time group supervision dominates because I believe it works for a supervisor since it saves time and that she can share the information with her supervisees all at once... we end up sharing a lot of things... most of the time it is group... one on ones are very rare but we can say it if we are if we want to look good to someone but it is not there... I've not had more the five one-on-one sessions. SWP 3*

*Its consultations normally... you just go to the supervisor because you've got a case that troubles you and needs assistance... (pause)... it is consultations that are predominant... when my supervisor was appointed, she tried to supervision correctly but ended up failing to keep up because of work... sometimes group supervision happens. SWP 5*

In this service office, it was observed that there were certain efforts put in place to ensure that social workers are supervised. Though these efforts may not be sufficient, supervisors found ways to ensure that social workers received some support. The researcher also realized that in this service office, participants frequently mentioned

that they received group supervision but mostly they do consultations which is not a method of supervision according to the supervision framework.

**iii. Service Office 3**

*It is one on one... yes, it's one on one because ever since I worked here, I've never seen group supervision happening. Sometimes it becomes scheduled and other times it is consultations. SWP 11*

*There is a one on one and there's group supervision... we do one on one every time we feel the need to see the supervisor but it is rarely prearranged... Mhhhh for the group supervision it is not usually mostly implemented... this last year I do not remember being called to supervision with my other colleagues. SWP 12*

In this service office social workers, like in other service offices, tended to confuse one-on-one supervision and consultations. The researcher noticed that they did consultation but these were prearranged one-on-one sessions with the supervisors. The group and peer supervision were reportedly not the methods that are used in this service office.

In conclusion, the study found that in all service offices of the Department of Social Development at King Cetshwayo District, there was lack of the proper and consistent implementation of supervision across the district. All the offices did not fully implement nor attempt to implement all the three supervision methods outlined in the *Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa* developed by the DSD and SACSSP, (2012). This had a negative impact on how social welfare services is delivered to clients but most importantly, the impact on social workers who should be assisted by the supervisor on process. The study revealed that the inability for the DSD to provide supervision accountability structure created the inconsistencies in service offices to execute supervision in a unified way. This also created the conflicting of roles within the services as it was left to their discretion on how they execute supervision. Therefore, it is important for the DSD to create a unified way within which supervision could be accounted for.

#### 4.3.3.2. Sub-theme 3.2: Support Given to Supervisors

In this theme, supervisors were asked whether they believe they were given enough support by the DSD to execute supervision to their supervisees. Supervision is not a simple task and most of the time very challenging to supervisors. According to Wannacott (2012) the supervisor's role is very challenging as supervisors ought to see themselves and be perceived by others, as a pioneer of practice with a key role in advancing the most excellent conceivable results for the clients of social work administrations, supervisors require strength to do their work, and tools to assist them in their day to day work.

Social work supervisors were aware that the work that they were expected to do was challenging and not easy. In as much as they faced challenging times, they persevered to work under hard conditions. These social work supervisors were competent, passionate, and well experienced and required more support to help them be able to fulfill their roles. The study revealed that this support was fundamental in giving supervisors a fair chance to execute their responsibilities to ensure that their supervisees are well capacitated.

When supervisors were asked whether they thought the support they received from the department was sufficient for them to fulfill their duties, they stated that it is not sufficient. Other supervisors mentioned that the DSD was trying to address their needs but they were concerned about the slow pace of filling vacancies. Other supervisors were frustrated with the department for not lending enough support with their challenges. The following were the supervisors' accounts:

*Mostly we do get support from the provincial and district offices... but the support we get... eeeehmmm... I'll say it is insufficient... it's incomplete because as a supervisor... well I know people at a district office and the functionality is different. After all, at a district level, you have coordinators that are dealing with certain programs but when you come to the service office-level it is not the same as the way they operate at the district level.... At the service you have one supervisor who's responsible to ensure that all of these programs are implemented, reports are typed and returned to the district office. The support we get is in terms of capacity building from the district office... we do get that and if you do not understand something you can consult coordinators*

*at the district office. We also do get support from the office manager... she is there if you do not understand anything... I also have a supervisor... but the model needs to change at the service office level to be aligned with what is happening at the district level. SWS 2*

*No, they are not supported... usually supervisors are being taken for granted as if they are very low, the only well-recognized person is a manager... so we feel that way because everything that requires the office to function is being put upon us and it ends up looking like it them who are managers whereas our salaries are very different... so everything needed for the office to operate the supervisor is the engine because even the supervisees are supposed to be assisted by the supervisor... in everything, it has to be a supervisor... so we do not have the support that we need. SWS 3.*

*Eeeey the support we get is that we get pieces of training... but it takes a long time to fix the issue of staffing within the department but off late they are trying to fix the problem of vacant posts... they try to ensure that in each office at least there are two supervisors. SWS 1.*

In all the responses that supervisors had given, it was evident that all supervisors regardless of whether they acknowledged the efforts that the department is trying to inject to support them, but they seemed to agree with a certain sense of frustration that they need more help. This advanced help required from the Department would I enable social work supervisors to be more effective and efficient trustees of supervision. One of the supervisors mentioned that they also needed debriefing sessions because their work was overwhelming. She said sometimes they were victims of burnouts and end up affected with balancing family-work life. The supervisor stated it as follows:

*We also need serious support because sometimes we end up with this burnout... I may not have one... but you end up being a victim of burnout if you're not careful as supervisor... then now you'll be affected even at home*

*because we also have children and we leave the office very late because of work.... maybe if the department should organize an active forum and meetings for supervisors where we will share experiences as supervisors every month or quarterly... in a place where we will relax and give us wellness personnel to assists us to deal with our problems.... This job ends up affecting our families with all the stress and burnout it carries... When we are not well the office is affected as much as our families are affected too. SWS 4*

This is a sad account given by a social work supervisor concerned about their wellbeing and emotional burdens that the supervision role comes with. Supervisors were expected to be the support system for their supervisees but when they go through these emotionally frustrating states themselves, it became impossible for them to provide the supportive function. Therefore, it is within these grounds that the researcher believes that there must be mechanisms in place to help support supervisors beyond trainings. In order for supervisors to carry the administrative, supportive and educational functions of supervision the emphasis must be on helping supervisors in all ways feel supported and emotionally taken care of.

#### **4.3.3.3. Sub-theme 3.3: Competence of Supervisors**

As supervisors are seen as key role players in supervision and that they are supervising social workers with different work experiences, it was necessary to check the views of the supervisee about the competence of their supervisors. This was important because the researcher aimed at discovering whether the problems that the supervisees experienced in supervision were also caused by the lack of competence in their supervisors.

The social workers were asked to give their opinions on whether their supervisors were well prepared for their supervisory role in their respective service offices. The participants responded as follows:

*I can only speak for them... they are not prepared because of the workload that they carry... my supervisor always has tablets medication that assists her to block pain and cope with daily stresses... right now she's on sick leave not*

*because she easily gets sick but it is the workload and stress that their work has... so they are being made to work with high workloads and so they are not fully prepared. SWP 7*

*Yah they are prepared... they are prepared even though they are short-staffed...you prepare yourself as I told you how there are things here. In a day there are a lot of people who come in... sometimes we leave here at 22:00/23:00... The schedule of the day that you prepared, like a weekly plan that we submit every Friday, but you completely and dismally failed to follow through it... so I cannot say they are not prepared because they are supervisors. How come a supervisor cannot be prepared? They are prepared but because of work overload and this short notice kind of work that comes unplanned all the time. SWP 8*

*(Smiling) mhhhh..., I think that because they did interviews and got their posts fairly that means they are prepared to undertake supervisory functions and were ready to do the job... maybe they were distracted when they were doing the actual job but maybe if they could be taken out of this department and be put on other organizations that are organized I think they can do it well. Maybe what makes them look like they are not prepared it's because this department is very disorganized... which makes them look like they are incompetent supervisors. SWP 3.*

From the responses granted by the social workers, one could extract that the debate of participants is not that their supervisors were incompetent. They did not blame the inability of supervisors to adequately fulfil their roles on supervision mainly on the incompetence of supervisors. All participants mentioned that the internal departmental factors made supervisors to look as if they were unprepared or incompetent to be supervisors to their supervisees. If the internal departmental factors that impact

negatively on supervision may be resolved, supervisors may be effective in undertaking their duties.

#### **4.3.4. Theme 4: Understanding of Participants on How Supervision Should be Administered**

The context of the practice of social workers and supervisors is non-routine, unpredictable, non-standard, imperceptible in nature, and highly individualized which then requires and demands supervision, (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). For more knowledge to be gained in the subject of supervision, more research needs to be constantly done to keep up with the unpredictable and non-routine nature of social work practice. This puts social workers and supervisors mainly at the centre of the need for the advancement of the knowledge base on supervision because they are the ones in the field and constantly having first-hand experience on the challenges they encounter in the field.

The *Recruitment and Retention Strategy of the Department of Social Development* (2006) points out that South Africa has a problem of poor-quality supervisors who are unable to conduct supervision at a professional level which creates a lack of structured supervision. From the time this strategy was formulated to this point the department has made significant progress in ensuring that supervisors at least do receive training and get the necessary support in as much as supervisors themselves believe to be insufficient. Supervisors also perpetuate the social development agenda through the reinforcement of supervision for social workers to be effective when dealing with their clients. However, it becomes impossible if they do not understand the social development theories and perspectives.

Ncube (2019) states that supervisors ought to be able to observe the application of suitable theories to meet the objectives and vision of their organisation. Ncube (2019) also mentions that an understating of the different theories and viewpoints is significant for deciding social work intervention techniques within the social development perspective. The author concludes by stating that lack of understanding the social development practice demonstrates that the application of this concept of social work supervision will be difficult.

In this theme, social workers and supervisors were asked to give their opinions on how they believed supervision must be undertaken in their organization. This was to pave a way for the researcher to understand how the participants think their negative experiences can be dealt with. The researcher noticed that participants did not comment much on whether they should be any changes on the '*Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa*'. Most participants believed that the supervision guidance by the framework is best and can be implemented appropriately. Participants believed that supervision could be implemented in their department by strictly following the '*Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa*' and by fixing internal all the external factors they raised.

#### **4.3.4.1. Sub-theme 3.1: Ideal Supervision**

When social workers were asked about how they thought supervision should be implemented within the department, they provided solutions to their perceived problems. Most social workers believed that for supervision to be ideal and fully functional factors such as time and shortage of supervisors must be addressed so that working will be easy. Social workers responses were as follows:

*Mhhhhh (laughing)... as a social worker in this organization, there's a time where you wish everything could be started afresh.... I think we should start from scratch and follow the framework... supervisors must be given good workshops that would enable them to know what is it that they are supposed to do... I think supervisors must be compelled by policy to report every month or quarterly on the supervision sessions they conducted... that would strengthen the framework and ensure that it is properly followed... there must be something they report to their superiors on their core function. **SWP 3***

*We need more supervisors and they need to have a supervision norm... they need somebody to monitor all our caseloads... they must employ more social work supervisors so that we can be able to do work efficiently and have quality outcomes without us having to stress... so we need more staff of supervisors to be employed... where there is time and more staff there is quality. **SWP 8.***

*The main problem in this department is this lot of work that comes from the management and disrupts everything... if they can fix that it can be good... if they can train these supervisors and give them time and space to do their work it could be much better. SWP 13.*

From the responses of the social workers above, it is apparent that most of them believed that supervision may be executed best if the internal factors like shortages of staff of supervisors and social workers were resolved. Hughes and Wearing (2013) state that ideal supervision would create a safe environment for people to discover their learning edge, build competence, and utilize the energy generated by excitement and challenges in practice. At the time of the study, it seemed the DSD invested little in ensuring that a safe environment is created for supervision to be effectively so that it could build competence and solve practice related challenges. The department must seek ways to ensure that challenges such as high caseloads are effectively dealt with. Therefore, the ability of the DSD to help eliminate the concerns that the social workers raised. This would directly ensure that there is ideal supervision that would ensure that there is a safe environment for practitioners to build competence.

When supervisors were asked to give their opinions about how supervision must be implemented in their services offices. Most of their responses touched on their personal experiences on supervision that prevented them to effectively supervise their supervisees. These were their responses:

*I think maybe, considering the history of this office and everything I have stated about this office... I'd say when we look at the issue of fraud, as a supervisor I need to have more systems in place to ensure that these are valid cases that are being brought by supervisees... I should have valid IT systems that are in place... If I could have valid IT systems that are in place that could validate that no this child was not born by this person, but this child's parents are now deceased... when it comes to how I render my supervision at this office, it would be benefiting as well if I could have surprise supervision session... today I'm coming to sit-in and just listen to the interviewing session you know that would be good. I do not know if it will be properly achievable or not but to employ that on supervision, just to check if are these cases authentic... to check whether the work they bring is legitimate or not... unfortunately, that is the background*

*I was employed from in this office, not that I do not trust social workers but there is that connotation that does not end in this office of having cases that are fraudulent by the clients and that is how they present them to social workers. So, I think if supervision can be like that in this office could be awesome would be awesome. SWS 2*

*I think supervision can be functional in my service office if I am always available... be it in the office or outside of the office but there must not be a time when my supervisees cannot find me...it is very difficult when your supervisees need you but have to tell them that "I do not have time", "I do not have time"... even to me it is painful if I say those words every time...I just wish that I could be available for them...when I'm available I could give them the support they need all the time. SWS 3*

*I think if we could have more time to do one-on-ones because social workers work different areas and they have different cases ... it will create that professionalism that is needed... it will also give the supervisee a chance to speak things that they would not say when there are with their peers... I think as a supervisor if we had time, we could even address more things from our supervisees. SWS 1*

*Mhhhh supervision as I said before is demanding currently... I think if supervisors can be supported much by the district to deal with emotional and administrative issues it can be much easier... no supervisor wants*

*to be unavailable for her supervisees but we cannot be available when our work is scattered all over. SWS 4*

Most supervisors who responded directly or indirectly touched on the matter of time in supervision. Supervisors reported that time is a major contributing factor in making supervision difficult to implement. Time is the most important factor in the supervisory process and insufficient time allocated for supervision is the root cause of almost all

the problems the supervisee will face. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014) time is a necessary prerequisite to fulfill any of the required tasks of supervision. It is therefore the department's duty to ensure that supervisors and supervisees are given all resources necessary to execute supervision. At this point supervisors carry out too much administrative work that ends up disadvantaging them from performing their core functions. There must be deliberate efforts by the DSD to review the work structure of supervisors or employ more supervisors to assist in ensuring that there is a reasonable distribution of the workload. This will help the department to develop the supervision practice that is effective and solves issues that mostly confront social workers when dealing with their clients.

The responses of both social workers and supervisors on what they believed to be the ideal supervision, does not come from a certain source of literature but their day-to-day experience. These participants' experiences are necessary to initiate a certain degree of change within the organizations but there must be deliberate efforts to conform the current supervision framework to the goals and objectives of a developmental perspective and then fix problems such as the ones noted as the participant's experiences to supervision. Francis, *et al* (2015) affirm that supervision is important in social work practice as it also describes how social work will look in the future. Therefore, to fulfill the goals of the developmental social welfare goals it is vital that supervision is fixed and be aligned with such goals and objectives.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter began by outlining the objectives that were meant to be answered by the collected data that was to be analyzed. It gave a detailed profile of the participants that had participated in the study. It also gave an overview of the themes that were to be used in the process of data analysis. Finally, four themes and subsequent subthemes and categories were established and thoroughly analyzed. These themes included experiences of social workers and supervisors on supervision, the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization, the nature of supervision applicable to the organization, and participant's understanding of how supervision should be administered. The next chapter will present various conclusions drawn from the empirical study. Besides, appropriate recommendations following established conclusions will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND FINDING**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with the data analysis and findings emanating from the collected data from the participants. The main aim of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors in the DSD, so as determine how are their experiences have an impact on the provision of quality and sustainable services to their clients. This chapter presents the summary of how the study was conducted and conclusions and recommendations arising from the empirical findings and the body of literature that was utilized to verify findings.

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To explore and describe the experiences of practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the DSD.
- ii. To examine the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization.
- iii. To explore the nature of supervision that exists within the identified organization.
- iv. To examine how social work practitioners, understand the execution of supervision in the identified organization.

#### **5.1. Summary of the Study**

The study had four previous chapters and these chapters included, research proposal, literature review, data collection, and data analysis and findings. The last chapter concludes the study and provides recommendations. Below is the summary of each chapter of this study:

##### **5.1.1. Chapter 1**

This chapter was mainly concerned with laying the foundation and the overview of the whole study and providing the reader with an insight into what the study is all about. This chapter provided the reader with the aim and objectives of the study, accompanied by the research questions linked with the research title. The review of the literature and theoretical framework that was going to guide the study were also discussed. It also provided an overall research methodology that was going to be used

when the study was conducted. The overview of the ethical considerations, target population, and sampling techniques was also discussed in this chapter.

### **5.1.2. Chapter 2**

This chapter focused on providing a literature review on social work supervision and its significance to the DSD. The chapter provided a unique description of the DSD at King-Cetshwayo District as it was the focus of the study was provided. The role, functions, objectives, and purpose of supervision were outlined in detail. Much focus and scrutiny were also given to the role theory as the main theoretical framework to guide the study in an attempt to of facilitate an understanding of the implementation of social work supervision, where roles are significant.

### **5.1.3. Chapter 3**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the method that was used in collecting data from the participants. Research paradigm, research design, research instruments, sampling method and process, data trustworthiness, and ethical considerations were appropriately discussed in this chapter.

### **5.1.4. Chapter 4**

This chapter presented findings from the collected data from the participants and a detailed analysis of those findings. The researcher interpreted the data findings. The research findings were then presented through the formation of themes, sub-themes, and categories. This was done in the direct application of the qualitative research as outlined in the first chapter.

Presented below are conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the findings of the study. Key on both conclusions and recommendations, particularly the latter is that they were raised with the view to suggest how the implementation of social work supervision in the DSD at King Cetshwayo District could be strengthened to better respond to service user needs without compromising the well-being of social workers and supervisors.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

After the in-depth and detailed analysis and interpretation of data, the researcher made some conclusions. Since the study explored the experiences of both supervisors and social workers, the conclusions may be irrelevant for others and that made the researcher separate conclusions into the three categories, (general, social workers, and supervisors). General conclusions are those conclusions applicable to both social workers and supervisors. There will be conclusions based on supervisors and social workers specifically. The conclusions are as follows:

### **5.2.1. General conclusions**

- The main conclusion drawn from the collected data was that at King Cetshwayo District, the DSD has no unified supervision strategy. Almost all service offices were unable to appropriately implement supervision in a manner that strikes a balance on different functions of supervision appropriately. In this regard, both social workers and supervisors placed emphasis on the administrative functions with the educational and supportive functions pushed to the periphery. The detrimental nature of this practice cannot be overemphasized.
- All participants understood the significance of supervision in their practice and profession and had a reasonable apprehension of supervision.
- Supervision becomes an enormous and demanding task to appropriately implement according to the Supervision Framework developed by DSD and SACSSP, with the shortage of supervisors and social workers identified as the main reason.
- Time was identified by all participants as a major factor that was believed to prevent the execution of quality supervision in almost all service offices. Lack of investing time for supervision could be viewed as degrading this crucial responsibility to be the mere discretionary activity that is undertaken when time permits. In tandem with this view, there is a notion that supervision is not integrated as the key performance area (KPA) in the employee performance management and development system (PDS).

### **5.2.2. Conclusions that are specific to Supervisors**

- The pressures mounting from the high workloads of supervisors hindered their ability to balance their roles within the supervisory relationship which often portrays them as incompetent and unprepared to their supervisees.
- Most supervisors believed that the Department had not done enough to support them with trainings and emotional support services. They feel neglected and without sufficient help to enable them to operate as expected.

### **5.2.3. Conclusions that are specific to Social Workers**

- Social workers value the significance of supervision and had a fair basic understanding of how supervision should be assisting them. Most social workers had negative experiences of supervision and believed that supervision was dysfunctional or partly functional within the Department.
- Most social workers do not rely on supervision nor supervisors because of their negative experiences. This is mostly immature independence that Social workers resort to as a means of finding other ways to support and help themselves to carry out their roles within the Department.
- Most social workers consider the ward-based system that was adopted by the Department as a cause of high levels of workload. However, some believed that it was the inabilities of the Department to plan and organize itself that contribute to high levels of workload.

## **5.3. Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made, based on the conclusions of the study:

### **5.3.1 Recommendations in relation to the study**

- It became apparent that supervision in the DSD is left to the discretion of supervisors to implement it as they wish. There were no compelling departmental policy or/and performance requirements for supervisors concerning the implementation of supervision. Therefore, it is recommended that the DSD ensures that supervisors report on the supervision of social workers becomes one of the main performance areas. This will help ensure that at least methods of supervision are implemented in the Department.

- It is also recommended that the Department at a District level is engaged in intense strategic and performance planning. This will ensure that there are no continuous interferences on the schedule of service offices that end up disorganizing the functioning of service offices and the impact on supervisors and social workers negatively.
- It is recommended that the DSD relooks at the ratio between the supervisor and the supervisee. There may be a need for employment of more social workers and supervisors to ensure that there are no gaps and over-tasking of the currently employed staff.
- It is recommended that the DSD at King Cetshwayo District puts measures in place to ensure that issues such as lack of capital resources and unmanaged workloads are dealt with as a matter of urgency.
- It is also recommended that the DSD form a partnership with Universities that offer social work studies for the continuous training and development of supervisors concerning the matters of supervision training and capacity building.
- It is recommended that the DSD migrate from the manual system of administration to the digital system. That will reduce some of the internal problems that social workers and supervisors deal with daily. Digitizing the administrative function would mean less time spent on administration and give more time for other organizational activities to be undertaken more effectively.
- As social work practice is very challenging and demanding for both social workers and supervisors, it is recommended that the DSD at King Cetshwayo District employs a reasonable number of Employee Assistance Practitioners to deal with work and non-work-related issues faced by both social workers and supervisors. This service should be formally structured and must not undermine the supportive function within the service office.

### **5.3.2. Recommendations for Future Studies**

This research only focused on the DSD at King Cetshwayo District. The findings in this study demonstrate that there is still a need for further extensive studies that focus in the DSD at District, Provincial, and National level that seeks to explore supervision. These recommended studies should focus on attempting to make contributions on how supervision in social work practice could be best implemented and executed

within all levels of the department. This will help the people who largely depend on services provided by the Department. Researchers should also engage in studies on how social work supervision could be linked with the South African context, considering the country's adoption of a social developmental approach as a policy directive to social welfare. Supervision should be localized to help serve the needs of the developmental approach adopted by the government. This will help in the generation of literature that would help educate aspiring social workers in tertiary institutions and make supervision specific to our context of social work practice. Therefore, the DSD should be an open field for researchers who seek to better the organization and contribute to ensuring it realize its mandate.

#### **5.4. Concluding Remark**

While recognizing the efforts made by the DSD at King Cetshwayo District in ensuring that supervisors and social workers receive the support they need, there's still a lot that needs to be done. Supervision is proving to become the sole hope of social workers to cope with their demanding and ever-changing environment while supervisors feel that they do not have enough resources to help social workers cope and function effectively in their environment. These research findings show that the supervision process is still overwhelmed with many factors that end up negatively affecting its proper implementation. From the research that the researcher undertook, it was clear that both social workers and supervisors have no time due to high workloads. It was also evident that there is a lot of interference from the upper structures of the department on services offices that end up interrupting the way service offices function because of the work they impose that changes the entire working schedules for social workers and supervisors. This was evident when the participants responded to the research question that aimed to understand the experiences of social workers and supervisors on the implementation of supervision.

This research, therefore, grants an opportunity to the DSD at King Cetshwayo District to employ efforts that are meant to improve the process of effective supervision. It also grants them an opportunity to advocate for their district services and resources they do not have powers to deliver. they, however, need to ensure that their workers are satisfied with the working environment to the Provincial and National offices. The researcher stands by the research recommendations provided as ways that could help if implemented in good faith, improve supervision within the department.

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## 7. Appendices

### APPENDIX 1: GATEKEEPER LETTER



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

#### DIRECTORATE: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

FAXMAIL : 086 762 2427

Telephone/ Ucingo/ Telefoon : 033 264 2078

Enquiries/ Imibuso/ Navrae : Mr. VW Gumede

E-mail : velaphi.gumede@kznsocdev.gov.za

Reference :

Room 112, 174 Mayor's Walk

Private Bag X9144

Pietermaritzburg

3200

**Mr SN Gumbi**

School of Applied Human Sciences  
University of KwaZulu - Natal

Contact No: 082 842 8114

Email: [gumbisn@gmail.com](mailto:gumbisn@gmail.com)

Dear Mr Gumbi

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH UNDER A TOPIC "SEEKS TO EXPLORE THE EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS AND SUPERVISORS ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT"**

1. This matter has reference.
2. Kindly be informed that the permission has been granted by the Head of Department for you to conduct research in the department for you to fulfill the requirement of your Master's Degree in Social Work.
3. The permission authorizes you to: -
  - (a) Interview at least 20 Social Workers working in three offices under King Cetshwayo District, at their consent deemed relevant to your research project and maintain high level of confidentiality; and
  - (b) Share your findings with the Department.

Wishing you success during your research project.

Yours Faithfully

**MRS N. VEARAY**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

DATE: 04/08/2020

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

## APPENDIX 2: UKZN ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



19 October 2020

Mr Sandile Ntethelele Gumbi (219073275)  
School Of Applied Human Sc  
Howard College

Dear Mr Gumbi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002004/2020

Project title: Exploring the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of social work supervision in the Department of Social Development: A Case Study of King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 24 August 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL** on the following condition:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 19 October 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 – 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8360/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Websites: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/research-ethics>

Founding Campus:

Edgewood

Howard College

Medical School

Pietermaritzburg

Wahlville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



### Interview Schedule for the Study

**Research Tittle:** Exploring the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the Department of Social Development: A Case Study of King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

#### Part A: For Social Workers

**Objective 1:** This study aimed to explore and describe the experiences of practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the Department of Social Development.

- a. What is supervision, according to your own understanding?
- b. Is your understanding of supervision different from the type of supervision at play in this organization?
- c. In your own understanding how supervision should be administered to social workers?
- d. How you experience supervision in this organisation?

**Objective 2:** To examine the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization.

- a. What background do most of your clients come from?
- b. Can you describe how do your organisational supervision help you serve your clients?
- c. What impacts or effects do this type of context you described impact on your day to day duties as a social worker?
- d. How functional or dysfunctional supervision is in the manner which social workers fulfil their professional mandate towards their profession, organization and clients?

**Objective 3: To explore the nature of supervision that exists within the identified organization.**

- a. According to your own understanding what type of supervision exist in this organization?
- b. How does this type of supervision make you feel about your job?
- c. How would you then describe the nature of this supervision towards you and your work as social worker?

**Objective 4: To examine how social work practitioners understand the execution of supervision in the identified organization.**

- a. As a social worker how do you think supervision should be executed in this organization?
- b. How will this help you towards carrying your social work duties?
- c. What advantage will it have to your clients?

## **Part B: For Social Work Supervisors**

**Objective 1:** To explore and describe the experiences of practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of supervision in the Department of Social Development.

- a. What is supervision, according to your own understanding?
- b. Is your understanding of supervision different from the type of supervision that you provide in this organization?
- c. In your own understanding how supervision should be?
- d. Can you describe the challenges you experience you encounter with providing supervision to social workers?

**Objective 2: To examine the context within which supervision takes place in the identified organization.**

- a. What background do most of your clients come from?
- b. Can you describe how do your organizational supervision to social workers help your organization serve your clients?
- c. What impacts or effects do this type of context you described impact social workers that you supervise?

- d. How do you help your supervisees adapt to everchanging needs of your clients or organization?

**Objective 3: To explore the nature of supervision that exists within the identified organization.**

- a. With the knowledge of your supervisees needs what kind of supervision do you provide?
- b. How does this type of supervision assist your supervisees to implement their duties?
- c. What challenges as a supervisor that you encounter dealing with social workers who work with clients of this location?

**Objective 4: To examine how social work practitioners understand the execution of supervision in the identified organization.**

- a. As a social worker how do you think supervision should be executed in this organization?
- b. How will this help you towards carrying your social work duties?
- c. What advantage will it have to your clients?

## APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

### Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form for Social Workers and Supervisors

**Name** : Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi  
**Student number** : 21901730  
**Reference Number** : HSSREC/00002004/2020.

### UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

### FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

### INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

### Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 2020/01/29

My name is **Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi**. I am a Master's student from Social Work Discipline in the School of Applied Human Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

You are being invited to consider participating in a research study titled, "*Exploring the experiences of social work practitioners and supervisors on the implementation of social work supervision in the Department of Social Development: A Case Study of King Cetshwayo District Municipality*". The aim and purpose of this research is to explore and understand the practitioner's experiences on the implementation of social work supervision in the Department of Social Development at King Cetshwayo District. The duration of your interview will be approximately 50 minutes to 60 minutes. The study is not funded by any organization or individuals.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and has the approval number **HSSREC/00002004/2020**.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating at any stage during the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 50 minutes to 60 minutes.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- Please note that there will be no form of reward or compensation if you choose to participate in this research.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher via email on [gumbisn4@gmail.com](mailto:gumbisn4@gmail.com) or telephonically at 082 842 8114. You can also contact my supervisor Mr. M.S. Sithole at [SITHOLEM3@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:SITHOLEM3@ukzn.ac.za) or telephonically at 031 260 3802 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

#### **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email:

[HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

## CONSENT FORM

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study entitled by the UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the KZN Department of Social Development by the researcher, **Mr. Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi**.

- i. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
- ii. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- iii. I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
- iv. I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me because of study-related procedures.
- v. If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher on email at [gumbisn4@gmail.com](mailto:gumbisn4@gmail.com) or telephonically at 0828428114.
- vi. If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Research Office, Howard Campus

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Tel: 27 31 2604557

Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Additional Consent

I hereby provide consent to Audio-record my interview: YES/NO

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF THE LANGUAGE EDITOR



# YOVE EDITORS LIMITED



To whom it may concern

Re: Editorial/proof reading

This letter confirms that Yove Editors edited and proofread Mr S. Gumbi's MA dissertation. The work done included language and rearranging paragraphs. This was cosmetic proofreading and editing, the content of the work was not altered.

We are delighted to do business with you.

Sincerely,

Yove Editors



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*16 St Mary 16 St Mary Street, NP20 4DG, Newport, Gwent, United Kingdom*

*UK mobile: +447810238565*

*South Africa mobile: +27633794913*

*yoveeditors1992@gmail.com*

*<https://www.yoveeditorslimited.co.uk>*